

INTENTIONAL CHANGE THEORY, COACHING AND LEADER EFFECTIVENESS

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Short Abstract

Leader development programs have had limited success in equipping leaders with the resources to be effective in an increasingly hyper-complex world. Programs have largely focused on developing external resources such as tools, techniques and behavioural competencies. Executive coaching is emerging as a developmental approach well positioned to enhance inner resources of leaders. Intentional Change Theory (ICT) (Boyatzis, 2006, 2008) is well supported by research, and is proposed in this study as an evidence-based framework to guide executive coaching that has underpinnings in complexity theory and is well matched to the demands of the current complex environment. A mixed methods approach was adopted to answer the research question *'How does coaching informed by Intentional Change Theory enhance leader effectiveness?'* Quantitative and qualitative data were obtained over a 2-month period from nineteen leaders, comprising a survey to measure the impact of the coaching on the leaders, and in-depth interviews to explore their experiences of the coaching. Results from the semi-structured interviews indicated that the coaching contributed to the development of inner resources such as self-efficacy, self-awareness, and psychological capital, all of which formed part of an emerging leader identity. Furthermore, the data indicated that an appetite for reflection, and increasing comfort with ambiguity and feelings of vulnerability were important for leader effectiveness, and could be enhanced through coaching. The survey results revealed general improvement in indicators across time, although the differences were not statistically significant. This may have been

explained by the short program duration, or by the measurement items. This research corroborates existing studies indicating the positive impact of executive coaching, extending this to suggest that coaching informed by ICT can enhance the development of additional inner resources contributing to the effectiveness of leaders working in today's complex environment. Its contribution will be of practical value to those offering leader development programs and to those supporting change at the individual leader, team or organisation level.

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List of Abbreviations

ICT	Intentional Change Theory
LRE	Leader Role Efficacy
LTS	Leaders Trust in Subordinates
MMR	Mixed Method Research
PCQ	Psychological Capital Questionnaire
PsyCap	Psychological Capital

Statement of Original Authorship

The work contained in this thesis has not been previously submitted to meet requirements for an award at this or any other higher education institution. To the best of my knowledge and belief, the thesis contains no material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made.

QUT Verified Signature

Signature:

Date: 8 December 2017

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“Nel mezzo del cammin di nostra vita, mi ritrovai per una selva oscura ch  la diritta via era smarrita.” Dante Alighieri, Inferno, Canto I, Line 1

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“Da una piccola scintilla pu  scoppiare una fiamma.”

Dante Alighieri, Paradiso, Canto I, line 34

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Context: the hyper-complex environment

In today's hyper-complex global environment of wicked problems (Churchman, 1967; Qvortrup, 2003) characterised by interconnectedness and unpredictability, disruption, constant ambiguity, and multiple stakeholder perspectives (Berger, 2012), the accelerating pace of change means that organisations must constantly adapt in order to survive and succeed. While rapid technological innovations and the advancement of globalization have brought economic benefits for many, the flipside however is the ensuing economic pressures on organisations and the unprecedented challenges on the people who lead them. Organisational leaders at all levels are increasingly being asked to accomplish more with fewer resources in an environment that is volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous (VUCA) (Rodriguez & Rodriguez, 2015). The skills that have helped leaders to succeed in the past no longer seem to work, with many leaders feeling 'in over their heads' (Kegan, 1994) in an organisational landscape that feels challenging and often so overwhelming that leaders feel exposed and vulnerable (Hodson, Schwartz, Van Berkel & Otten, 2014).

Leader effectiveness may be compromised by the pressures associated with the current complex and dynamic environment, and thus demands that leaders are armed with the resources deemed necessary to navigate these turbulent times. These resources have often been framed in economic terms, being financial, human and social capital. In order to keep pace with the change, however, leaders need to constantly orient themselves within the complex environment and find responses appropriate to the turbulence and unexpected disruptions. They also need coping mechanisms to deal with the various emotional and stress-related pressures arising from diminishing stability and control (Holmberg, Larsson & Bäckström, 2016, p155). As a result, inner resources (personal and psychological) have

become increasingly important to help leaders cope with challenges, and sustain effectiveness (Bardoel, Pettit, De Cieri & McMillan, 2014).

Leaders need a response appropriate for this hyper-complex context that enables them to develop the capacity to deal with these pressures and to sustain their effectiveness. Leadership development programs can be costly to organisations and have not always delivered the required outcomes, partly due to poor timing and targeting of programs (Mumford, Zaccaro, Harding, Jacobs & Fleishman, 2000). Executive coaching has emerged as a leader development intervention well matched to the current environment, due to its individualised and responsive characteristics (Day, 2000; Ely, Boyce, Nelson, Zaccaro, Hernez-Broome & Whyman, 2010; Grant, 2014; de Haan, Grant, Burger & Eriksson 2016; Burt, 2017; Schalk & Landeta, 2017). It offers an evidence-based intervention through which leaders can be challenged and supported in co-creating a developmental space that is adaptive to their unique needs and best prepares them for the complexity of the business environment.

Intentional Change Theory (ICT) (Boyatzis, 2006, 2008) is an evidence-based framework that facilitates leader development within a context of complexity, and is representative of a new paradigm that can assist leaders to make desired changes that will enhance and sustain their performance and that of their organisations. ICT is well suited for the VUCA environment due to its situation at the edge of theory and practice, and in the connections between coaching, complexity, neuroscience, positive psychology, emotional intelligence and change. A key feature of the model is that although it is displayed as cyclical, it is not one-directional, and can operate in non-linear patterns. This reflects the ‘real’ change processes affecting leaders and organisations that tend to be messy and involve iterations between different elements and ideas. The ICT framework is also consistent with systems theory, and is thus particularly suited to organisational contexts that mirror the characteristics of complex adaptive systems.

1.2 Research Problem and Research Questions

The purpose of this study is to examine executive coaching as informed by ICT as an adaptive and responsive leader development tool, well suited to the development of effective leaders in this complex environment. The sample of participants is drawn from senior leaders who are also Executive MBA students at an Australian Graduate School of Business. The study seeks to make a contribution, both scholarly and to practice, by adding to current knowledge about how leader effectiveness might be enhanced through coaching informed by ICT (Boyatzis, 2006, 2008). Based upon this overall purpose and on the resulting research framework as developed in Chapter Two - Literature Review, the central research question asks: *How does coaching informed by Intentional Change Theory (ICT) enhance leader effectiveness?* Three sub questions have also been formulated to guide the data collection process:

- What are participant experiences of the process of coaching informed by ICT?
- How do participants experience enhanced leader effectiveness as a result of coaching informed by ICT?
- What other contingent factors influence how an individual experiences coaching informed by ICT?

1.3 Contribution to Theory

Leadership development is reported as among the least explored topic within the field of leadership research and theory, with a clear gap in terms of empirical and theoretical contributions (Avolio, Avey & Quisenberry, 2010). It is hoped this study will add to the body of knowledge supporting executive coaching as an integrative leader development approach and one that is flexible and responsive to individual leader development needs. Acknowledging the challenges and complexity of the current organisational environment, this

study also aims to add to the literature by examining the coaching experiences of leaders and seeking an understanding of what might contribute to their effectiveness beyond the usual leader development offerings that too frequently rest on the assumption that ‘one-size-fits-all’.

Second, extending the current evidence that coaching works (Theeboom, Beersma & Van Vianen, 2014; Grant, 2014; Sonesh, Coultas, Marlow, Lacerenza, Reyes & Salas, 2015; Jones, Woods & Guillaume, 2016), this study will contribute to a better understanding of how coaching works and of the causal mechanisms by which coaching interventions are effective (Fillery-Travis & Lane, 2006; Ely et al., 2010). In particular, it will contribute to the theoretical framework development of what happens during an executive coaching intervention by examining it from the perspective of participants (Theeboom et al., 2014). Proposing coaching informed by ICT as an effective leader development tool, the study will examine how Boyatzis’ (2006) ICT model might contribute to intentional desired change among a sample of leaders. Specific insights into how elements of the ICT model (the five “Discoveries”) contribute to developing leader effectiveness will be offered as a contribution to the leader effectiveness and ICT literatures.

1.4 Contribution to Practice

This study will add practical value to the fields of leader development and executive coaching by identifying factors contributing to leader effectiveness outcomes. With this knowledge, coaching interventions may be enhanced to better meet the needs both of contemporary leaders and provide resources relevant to potential challenges that organisations will confront in future years. In particular, findings may contribute to knowledge informing both the process and outcomes required to more effectively respond to the challenges and ambiguities of a hyper-complex environment.

1.5 Overview of Methodology

The study employs a mixed methods approach to investigate the central research question: *How does coaching informed by Intentional Change Theory (ICT) enhance leader effectiveness?* The study will investigate the experiences of nineteen leaders participating in two coaching sessions using ICT as a framework, and measure resulting changes in their effectiveness. Data from a quantitative survey and qualitative interviews will be collected concurrently and analysed. Mixed methods research (MMR) is an approach for collecting, analysing, and interpreting quantitative and qualitative data in a single study or in a series of studies that investigate the same underlying phenomenon (Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2005; Creswell & Plano-Clark, 2011). This methodological approach best fits the purpose of the study and is most suitable for answering the research question posed, since it allows a multi-tiered investigation of the interrelationships between coaching informed by ICT and leader effectiveness (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2003).

The selection of leader effectiveness measures in this study was contextualised alongside an individual leader's capacity to function as a leader in a contemporary flexible and fluid organisation, where both work contexts and specific tasks might vary (Holmberg et al., 2016). Leader Role Efficacy (LRE) and Leader Trust in Subordinates (LTS) were selected as quantitative measures of an individual leader's capacity to function in a leadership role (Ladegard & Gjerde, 2014). Psychological Capital (PsyCap) was provided as an additional internally focussed measure of effectiveness that is state like and is developable (Luthans, Avey, Avolio & Peterson, 2010). Qualitative measures of leader effectiveness emerged from the participant interviews as informed by the literature review.

1.6 Structure of Thesis by Chapter

This study comprises 5 Chapters. Following this introductory chapter, Chapter Two presents the Literature Review. First, the key academic literature on leader development is discussed, then literature pertaining to characteristics of effective leaders is explored, followed by a summary of research on how to develop effective leaders. An overview of executive coaching literature is then provided along with a description of the underpinning framework of this study, Intentional Change Theory. Finally, the chapter concludes with a discussion of some of the gaps in the literature, leading to development of the research questions and hypotheses to be investigated in the study.

Chapter 3 provides a detailed description of the mixed methods research methodology employed in this study. First, the mixed methods design and its relevance to the research question is presented. This is followed by a description of the method for selection of participants. A detailed discussion of the data collection and analysis procedures for both qualitative and quantitative methods follows, including a description of measures used in the quantitative phase and the approach to the qualitative phase. Issues associated with reliability and validity and the ethical considerations of the project are also discussed.

Chapter 4 will then present the findings derived from both the qualitative and quantitative research. The chapter begins with a summary of the sample demographics, after which the qualitative findings are presented. These include findings associated with participant perceptions of the coaching process generally, and also of the ICT model and its five discoveries. Survey results and interview data are integrated to present findings associated with enhanced leader-participant effectiveness. Thus is followed by a discussion of a number of emerging themes that may help more fully answer the overarching research question.

The final chapter provides a discussion of conclusions arising from this study. This chapter further interprets the findings and presents the contribution of this study to both the literature and framework of theories. The theoretical and practical implications are discussed, and the limitations and suggestions for future research are also presented. Chapter 5 closes with an overview of the findings and final conclusions of the thesis.

1.7 Chapter Summary

The introductory chapter of this thesis has outlined the background and justification for the research. In particular it has provided a broad overview of the context driving the study, being one of sustainable leader effectiveness in conditions of complexity and continual change. The research problem and research questions have been presented along with the methodology proposed to address them. The next chapter (Chapter 2 - Literature Review) explores the theoretical basis for this research, with a detailed discussion of the relevant literature and subsequent development of research questions.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

In today's increasingly volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous world (Rodriguez & Rodriguez, 2015), change has become the new normal, with leaders increasingly facing turbulence and unexpected disruptions, and being asked to do more with fewer resources. Leader performance may be compromised by the diverse pressures associated with this hyper-complex and dynamic environment (Qvortrup, 2003). As a result, the development of effective and sustainable leaders has become key to organisational success, driving researchers to propose a large number of definitions of what an effective leader is, and theories on how this can be achieved. The increasing popularity of executive coaching as a leader development approach (Ely et al., 2010; Grant, 2014; de Haan et al., 2016) reflects perceptions that it is an intervention that is responsive and adaptive to emergent leader needs. Intentional Change Theory (ICT) (Boyatzis, 2006, 2008) is an evidence-based framework that facilitates sustainable leader development within a context of complexity, offering a solid foundation for leader coaching. This study brings together the leader development, executive coaching and Intentional Change Theory (ICT) literatures, to explore how coaching informed by ICT can enhance leader effectiveness.

This chapter begins with a brief summary of the context for contemporary leadership, including an overview of Complexity Leadership Theory. This is followed by a discussion of essential characteristics of effective leaders and current approaches to developing these. Next, the relevant literature regarding executive coaching, and specifically Intentional Change Theory, is presented. The chapter concludes with a discussion of some of the gaps in the literature, and presents a research framework along with the overarching research question for the study.

2.1 Theoretical Context of Leadership

It is difficult to find an agreed-upon definition of leaders and leadership in the literature. In part, this is as a result of the evolving nature of our understanding of leadership and of the rapid propagation of theories within the leadership field, with emerging theories frequently building upon previous ones. Dinh, Lord, Gardner, Meuser, Liden and Hu's (2014) review of the leadership literature identified sixty-six separate theories in the published work since 2000. Despite the growing sophistication of the field, this proliferation of theories and absence of an agreed taxonomy has led to research that is at time disparate and fragmented (Glynn & Raffaelli, 2010), making an already complex topic more difficult.

Many of the leadership models of the last century reflect the top-down, bureaucratic paradigms of the industrial era, and are poorly aligned with today's knowledge-oriented economy (Uhl-Bien, Marion & McKelvey, 2007). In particular, the volatile and dynamic environment and the discontinuous nature of much of the change experienced in organisations today plays out as increasing complexity in the situations being faced by leaders. In complex situations, causality is not linear or predictable and the future cannot be predicted from the past. Things are interconnected, with Lorenz' (1995) "butterfly" effect explaining how a small change in one place has an unpredictable impact in another place (Grobman, 2005). Demands on leaders are increasingly contradictory and paradoxical, meaning that the old ways of leading are no longer working, and leaders must find new approaches in order to be effective (Waldman & Bowen, 2016, p318). Furthermore, and to exacerbate pressures on leaders, these seemingly random changes in the environment often run in parallel with discontinuous changes in responsibilities and behaviours for leaders as they transition along their career path. Even in stable times leaders have the responsibility of coordinating work in complex systems in which distractions, systems deterioration, and external challenges are constant (Mintzberg 1973, in Van Wart, 2013). This is compounded

in unstable times so that the increasing distractions, disruptions and challenges often require a completely different set of skills, many of which are internally rather than externally focused (Wheatley, 2006. In Van Wart, 2013).

2.1.1 Leaders in Complexity. Context is integral to the leadership system (Kellerman, 2016). The hyper-complexity characterizing today's organisational landscape implies not only ever-increasing complexity in a quantitative sense, but points to the emergence of a polycentric world with an explosion of different perspectives and viewpoints (Qvortrup, 2003; Urry, 2006). Leadership today is embedded in a context of digital disruption, technology mediated environments, globalization and millennial values. The intractable nature of these problems that are incredibly complex and continuously changing and the difficulty in solving them, qualifies them as "wicked" (Rittel & Webber, 1973). Lack of attention to these contextual factors can undermine leader effectiveness (Gurdjian, Halbeisen & Lane, 2014; Kramer, 2016).

In contexts marked by unpredictable change, with ambiguous, unknowable, or unstable chains of cause and effect, leaders need models that enable them to function in the spaces characterised by ambiguity and anxiety (Cavanagh & Lane, 2012). Complexity Leadership Theory (Uhl-Bien, Marion & McKelvey, 2007) offers a framework for leadership in a dynamic and volatile context, viewing leadership not only as a position and autonomy, but also as "a complex interactive dynamic through which adaptive outcomes emerge" (Uhl-Bien et al., 2007, p314). Complex adaptive systems are systems in which the system members are agents in their own right, thus allowing them to adapt to system inputs in unpredictable and novel ways (Cavanagh & Lane, 2012, p76). Other characteristics of complex systems include self-similarity and fractals, with complexity arising from the interaction of system variables (Schneider & Somers, 2006). In an organisational sense, and relevant to this study, this allows a focus extending beyond an individual leader to encompass the interconnectedness

between different organisational system levels (i.e. self, team, organisation). While this study's system of focus is the individual, complexity theory offers possibilities to extend this to multi-levelled and organisation-wide interactions.

Complexity Leadership Theory recognises that the characteristics of adaptation and emergence are key for successful leadership and are positioned as an appropriate response to the hyper-complex environment (Schneider & Somers, 2006; Lowell, 2016). Adaptive challenges are problems that require new learning, innovation and new patterns of behaviour (Kramer, 2016, p30). Adaptive leaders must learn their way out of problems that could not have been predicted (Uhl-Bien et al., 2007, p300). Adaptive leadership arises in response to an emergent interactive dynamic that produces adaptive outcomes in a social system (Uhl-Bien et al., 2007, p306). Self-organisation is a critical component of adaptation to the environment. This is a key source of change in an organisation, emerging from interactions where the balance and status quo is disrupted, reflecting the complexity, accelerating change, competition, and innovation in which leaders operate today. Drawing from complexity theory, Snowden and Boone's (2007) Cynefin model suggests that when cause and effect is not fully understood, then an emergent approach is more effective. Emergence denotes order arising out of chaos, with emergent phenomena considered to be unpredictable and irreducible (Lowell, 2016). Change, rather than appearing as a smooth transition, is often unpredictable, and appears non-linear and discontinuous. Framing change within the emergence aspects of complexity leadership, affords us insight into some of the challenges facing leaders, with a key reason for leaders not embracing change being that it implies accepting risk and relinquishing control (Lowell, 2016). The challenges of the hyper-complex environment are so extreme, with uncertainty pervading all aspects of the environment, that many established leadership assumptions are no longer valid. Leadership practices must evolve to meet these challenges. Complexity Leadership Theory recommends

that leaders work to increase flexibility within the system and maximise adaptation to the environment (Lowell, 2016)

Complex systems keep changing continuously by remaining poised between order and disorder, at the "edge of chaos" (Lowell, 2016), in an intermediate zone, that never quite settles into a stable equilibrium but never quite falls apart (Brown & Eisenhardt, 1997). Complex systems change underpins the assumption in Complexity Leadership Theory that rather than ever reaching a stable equilibrium, leaders must continually develop themselves and their organisations and adapt in response to the dynamic environment. A major role for leaders is to drive change in their organisations, with individual level personal change as a prerequisite for underpinning effective organisational change.

The underlying systemic complexities in the environment frequently manifest as polarities. A polarity is a state where two ideas or tendencies are in opposition. Leaders in complex situations may face polarities where there are no simple 'either/or' solutions, and where solutions encompassing multiple alternatives are necessary (Petrie, 2014). This view of the world that embraces contradiction, oppositeness, and the ability to hold on to multiple systems of thinking reflects Kegan's Fifth Order (1994) that posits that self-transforming adults are less likely to see the world in terms of dichotomies or polarities. The notion of "paradox-oriented leadership" (Waldman & Bowen, 2016, p316) becomes relevant in an environment of mounting challenges and conflicting demands. A paradox comprises contradictory elements that are however interrelated and exist simultaneously, persisting over time (Zhang, Waldman, Han & Li, 2015). Complexity Leadership Theory concurs that paradoxes can exist simultaneously and proposes that they can inform the complex-adaptive approaches to problem solving required by effective leaders (Zhang et al, 2015). In sum, the unique demands arising from the underlying complexity of the current environment render Complexity Leadership Theory a relevant lens through which to frame leader effectiveness.

2.2 Characteristics of Effective Leaders

Effective leaders are needed for these complex times. The unpredictable impacts of the current dynamic and fast paced environment, characterised by a new competitive landscape driven by globalization, technology, deregulation, and democratization (Uhl Bien et al, 2007, p300) situate Complexity Leadership Theory as well placed as a response to this context. Before exploring characteristics of effective leaders, it is necessary to look at what is meant by the term leadership, as distinct from the term leader, and to specify the usage to be adopted in this study. The study proceeds to then explore what is meant by leader effectiveness and discusses a number of characteristics essential to leader success.

2.2.1 Leader development versus leadership development. The constructs of leader development and leadership development are used interchangeably in much of the literature, with no evident distinction made between them (Day, 2000; Ardichvili & Manderscheid, 2008; Day et al., 2014). Kellerman (2016) posits leadership as a system that consists of three parts, being leader, follower and context, a view reflected in research suggesting that it is co-created within systems of interconnected relationships and interactive contexts (Fairhurst & Uhl-Bien, 2012). Leadership development is thus frequently described as a dynamic process involving multiple individuals, and spanning various levels within and outside the organisation. Organisations must increasingly invest in leadership not only as an individual capability but also as a collective organisational capability (Ziskin, 2015). Many scholars also position the leadership development process as inherently interpersonal and long term in nature, involving interaction between an individual leader and the surrounding socio-cultural environment (Ardichvili & Manderscheid, 2008; Dinh et al., 2014). This view emphasises a collective mindset, concerned with “expanding the collective capacity of organizational members to engage effectively in leadership roles and processes” (Day, 2000, p. 582). Under this view, *leadership* development, therefore, focuses on building and enhancing social

capital and involves developing interpersonal competence (Day, 2000; Day et al., 2014).

Whilst acknowledging the aforementioned collective aspects of leadership, leader development involves multiple levels of analysis, and so examination of the conditions that promote *individual* development continues to be both theoretically and practically significant (Solansky, 2014, p619). The best way to unleash an organisation's power is to realise the full potential of its individual employees (Kegan & Lahey, 2016). Although the evolving study of leadership continues to allow progressively better understanding of what a leader is supposed to have or be or do, and how to measure the multiple facets of this phenomenon, neither practice nor theory as yet offer universally accepted criteria for what constitutes a successful leader development outcome (MacKie, 2008; Ladegard et al., 2014). The construct of leader development refers to the building of human capital on an individual level. Human capital includes unique skills, abilities, work experience, and is thus focused on intrapersonal competence (Day, 2000), being "mostly directed at expanding an individual leader's capacity" (McCauley & Van Velsor, 2004). Leader development refers to "the capacity of individuals to successfully fulfil leadership roles, responsibilities, and tasks, while emphasizing development of knowledge, skills, and capacities related to effective leadership" (Frizzell, Hoon & Banner, 2016, p21). This view of leader development focuses on how an individual may build better leadership skills, as opposed to examining how systems function effectively or how they are integrated into the organisational environment. This study centres on individual leader development, and adopts Day's (2000) conceptualisation whereby the focus "remains resolutely leader centric" (Kellerman, 2012, p.1, as cited in Ardichvili, och Dag & Manderscheid, 2016). Its focus is also less on the technical and cognitive aspects of acquiring new knowledge, skills or capacities rather on exploring the psychological characteristics and mindsets that underpin the inner world of effective leaders.

The multifaceted nature of the leadership construct provides insight into the diverse

ways of understanding the processes, traits and skills associated with leading (Fairhurst, 2016). Running parallel is the necessity of acknowledging the potential problems that may arise from endorsing too narrow an understanding of leadership (Haslam & Reichter, 2016), a risk exacerbated by the rapidly changing and volatile current environment. Leader effectiveness demands that leaders are armed with resources to navigate these turbulent times. DeRue, Nahrgang, Wellman and Humphrey's (2011) meta-analysis of 59 studies examining the relative predictive validity of leader traits and behaviours across a range of leadership effectiveness criteria indicates that having certain traits may predispose individuals to certain behaviours that might predict their effectiveness.

In sum, the essence of leadership continues to elude us (White & Shullman, 2010, p96). In determining *what* to develop, and in the absence of a validated universal theory of leadership, there can be no single generic leader effectiveness outcome. Rather, effectiveness is contextual, requiring agile and adaptive leaders whose behaviours and skills are deployed in a response to unique demands, and with different contexts requiring different leadership facets (Day et al., 2014). Adherents of a contextual approach point to the importance of considering the various features of the prevailing social context, whether organisation, industry, culture or team, that either facilitate or else compromise the effectiveness of an individual leader (Haslam & Reichter, 2016). One commonality among leaders today, is associated with the external context of the VUCA / hyper-complex environment (Qvortrup, 2003) in which leaders must operate, and which requires characteristics quite distinct from those characteristics that might have been effective in the past. Another, more internally focused, commonality situates the process of leader development as part of a larger process of adult development, and recognises the unique aspects of the individual as contributing to the development of leadership skills and expertise (Day, Harrison, and Halpin, 2009). The progressive stages of adult development have been explained alternatively as a progression

through stages of moral growth and individuation, or through the socialised, self-authoring, self-transforming mind, or as an individual's progression through stages of cognitive and moral development (Kegan, 1982; Kegan & Lahey, 2016; Ardichvili & Manderscheid, 2016). Under this model, development reflects the level of maturity of the leader's inner resources, and this in turn mediates the effectiveness of outer-game of leadership (Anderson & Adams, 2015).

The literature suggests a number of internally focused characteristics of effective leaders, some of which will be discussed next. Given the broad nature of the term "leader effectiveness" there is a vast range of potential criteria, many of which were excluded from this study due to scope limitations. Examples include leader feedback receptivity/orientation (Steelman & Wolfeld, 2016), and leader humility/narcissism (Owens, Johnson & Mitchell, 2013; Ou, Tsui, Kinicki, Waldman, Xiao & Song, 2014; Owens, Wallace & Waldman, 2015). The focus in this study aligns with Yukl's (2012) view that the selection of appropriate leader effectiveness criteria depends on the objectives and values of the person making the evaluation, and that since people have different values, it is recommended to consider a range of leader effectiveness criteria. This mixed methods study draws different effectiveness characteristics from a mix of qualitative and quantitative and empirically validated sources, including characteristics associated with Complexity Leadership Theory (i.e. adaptation and emergence), psychological capital, and two generic outcome variables from leadership coaching (i.e. leader role efficacy and leader trust in subordinates (Ladegard & Gjerde, 2014). All of these are inner resources, the development of which is reliant upon leader self-awareness and the notion of a developing leader identity (Day & Harrison, 2007; Maurer & London, 2015). Justification for the selection of these criteria is provided below. First, the selection responds to an intent to consider a range of characteristics, dimensions, and targets of evaluation that provides an individual-level, leader-focused assessment of overall

effectiveness, quite distinct both from group-level, or other-focused assessment of leadership effectiveness. Second, it was important to include only those criteria that have been empirically validated across a number of studies. Third, the sources provided characteristics congruent with the hyper-complex environment. Each of these inner characteristics is discussed in turn and presented along with a discussion of how they might contribute to an emerging leader identity well suited for effectiveness in the hyper-complex environmental context.

2.2.2 Leader self-awareness. Traditional leader development approaches typically focus on developing relatively specific skills or competencies, such as technical, cognitive, interpersonal, business or strategic skills (Mumford et al., 2007; Day et al, 2014). The widely embraced development model whereby the requisite individual competencies are defined according to the company's strategy and then implemented via training programs designed to develop those competencies, fails to acknowledge the complexity of the environment or the organisational demands at play on the individual leader (Beer, Finnstrom & Schrader, 2016). This traditional focus on developing skills and knowledge with an emphasis on outer game considerations (such as meeting expectations, creating domain knowledge, honing competencies) is more suited to the mechanistic conceptualisation of leaders originating in the industrial era. Recent research on the leadership mindset required to avoid derailment and to thrive and survive in current organisations, suggests the need for a transition away from technical and analytic skills to a new set of assumptions that include the capacity to reflect and focus on inner world aspects (Benjamin & O'Reilly 2011, p463; Maurer and London 2015).

For leaders to act effectively in a wide range of contemporary contexts, becoming aware of their responses and potential derailers in challenging and ambiguous situations is key. The degree and type of personal change that may occur in leader development includes

both changes in observable behaviour and intrapersonal processes (Maurer and London, 2015). External manifestations and perspectives are important, however the inner world is equally so. The ability to balance conflicting expectations and complex demands requires that leaders are self-aware, that they understand who they are, what they value and the consequences of their actions (Covey, 2004, as cited in Caldwell & Hayes, 2016, p1163). Among components of self-awareness that have been identified as key to leader effectiveness, are “the internal (recognising one’s own inner state) and the external (recognising one’s impact on others)” (Hall, 2004, p. 155), both of which have strong linkages to self-awareness aspects of emotional intelligence (Goleman, 2007).

One way self-awareness may be developed is through introspection, reflection and purposeful thought, “deliberately thinking about action with a view to its improvement” (Hatton and Smith, 1995, p34), involving critical reflection, analysis and evaluation of leadership practices, reflecting in, on, and for the next actions (Schön, 1991). Among studies indicating that successful leadership behaviours are impacted by the inner capabilities of leaders, are some that suggest that reflection and integration are essential elements of learning leadership, offering challenges to existing ways of seeing and the capacity to reinterpret and make meaning from experiences contributing to accelerated development (Senge, 1999; Avolio & Gardner, 2005; Petriglieri, Wood & Petriglieri 2011; Frizzell et al., 2016). White and Shullman (2010) make the case for the ‘uncertain’ leader, as being more open to reflection and to consideration of new ideas required for the best possible solutions.

Enhanced self-awareness and inner focus can facilitate transcendence in the face of the hyper-complex global leadership challenges of the knowledge and technology eras. Leaders need to take the necessary steps to reflect upon their leadership attributes and be willing to make the necessary adjustments to build their capacity to close any gaps in their leadership (Bennis, 2007). An assumption underpinning many leadership theories is that if it is known

what it takes to be an effective leader, then a leader can choose to behave in the most appropriate way as suggested by that theory. This choice, or intentional change, is facilitated by the leader's self-awareness of current strengths and weaknesses, and of the gap between where they are now and where they wish to be (Boyatzis, 2006, 2008). Gardner, Coglisier, Davis and Dickens (2011) are among those to discuss the self-awareness and self-regulatory processes of leaders as they attend to their self-development.

2.2.3 Leader role-efficacy (LRE). Leader development holds a broader meaning than simply developing leadership skills, whether through on-the-job learning, role rotation, short-term assignments, stretch assignments or other developmental experiences (Day et al., 2014). Leadership is about taking risks, making difficult decisions and going against popular opinion. Self-efficacy is important for both task and role performance (Paglis, 2010, Wang & Hsu, 2014), and posited as the key cognitive variable regulating leader functioning in a dynamic environment (McCormick, 2001). Hannah, Avolio, Chan & Walumba (2012) take a broader perspective, suggesting that a leader's efficacy must span the leader's thoughts and motivations, their actions, and the context in which they operate. Leader self-efficacy is also seen as a key element of their competence or ability and is influenced by beliefs about the degree to which a leader controls his own destiny (Caldwell & Hayes, 2016). It has been associated with a leader's confidence that he has the knowledge, skills and confidence to lead others (Paglis, 2010), and with an increased willingness to accept a leadership role (Hannah, Avolio, Luthans & Harms, 2008; Hoyt & Blascovich 2016). Ladegard and Gjerde (2014) posit Leader Role Efficacy (LRE) as a generalised capability that is related to a leader's intrapersonal belief in their own capacity to function as a leader. LRE is proposed as a measure of leader effectiveness in this study, aligning with the perspective that focuses upon the intrapersonal characteristics that may enhance individual leader effectiveness (Day et al., 2014).

2.2.4 *Leader trust in subordinates (LTS)*. A leader's effectiveness is highly dependent on his abilities to navigate and manage interpersonal relationships (Holmberg et al., 2014). While this study does not explore the leader-follower definitions of leadership, it acknowledges that success in influencing followers is a common measure of leader effectiveness. The leader's own perception of his ability to trust in subordinates may be indicative of relationship quality with subordinates, and indicative of the leader's ability to effectively understand, empathise with and influence others to act in emotionally intelligent ways that enhance the leader's own effectiveness (Ladegard and Gjerde, 2014).

The ability to delegate is also a key pillar in effective leadership (Breevaart, Bakker, Demerouti, Sleebos and Maduro, 2014). The degree to which leader can delegate may be indicative both of his trust and of his willingness to be vulnerable (Spreitzer and Mishra, 1999). Relinquishing control and giving autonomy to subordinates is a risk-taking action by a leader; by letting subordinates decide how they carry out their duties, a leader's dependency on the subordinate's competence as well as upon their goodwill, integrity, and benevolence increases (Seppälä, Lipponen, Pirttila-Backman and Lipsanen, 2011). The intention to accept vulnerability and to expect positive intentions or behaviour of another is another risk taking action, and a common definition of trust (Rousseau, Sitkin, Burt, and Camerer, 1998). Trust follows on from an assessment of followers' trustworthiness and of a leader's own willingness to take risks (Spreitzer and Mishra, 1999; Schoorman, Mayer, and Davis, 2007).

A leader's willingness to trust subordinates requires the leader to be vulnerable (Nienaber, Hofeditz and Romeike, 2015). Accordingly, a leader's ability to trust in subordinates could act as an indication of an appetite for risk taking and willingness to step outside his comfort zone. In this study leader trust in subordinates (LTS) is proposed as a measure of a leader's effectiveness on two dimensions: first as an indication of the leader's appetite for the risk associated with giving up control; second as a crucial component of a

high-quality leader–subordinate relationships (Ladegard and Gjerde, 2014).

2.2.5 Leader psychological capital. Traditional views of strategic resources have focused on financial, operational or human capital. Increasingly however, in literature and in practice, and reflecting its influence on human performance, and importance to the development of a leader’s mindset, these resources are including psychological capital (PsyCap) (Luthans and Youssef, 2004; Ardichvili et al., 2011; Newman, Ucbasaran, Zhu, and Hirst, 2014). PsyCap is defined as an individual’s positive psychological state of development (Luthans et al., 2007) and describes psychological capacities that can be measured, developed and harnessed for performance improvement (Luthans and Youssef, 2004). Four main psychological resources, each with a solid theoretical basis, characterise the construct of PsyCap: self-efficacy, hope, optimism and resilience (Luthans and Youssef, 2004; Luthans, Youssef, and Avolio, 2015).

The performance focus of PsyCap is important for this study’s context of leader effectiveness (Luthans et al 2007). Empirical studies indicate the impact of workplace PsyCap on organisational outcomes such as performance and productivity (Luthans et al., 2007, 2010; Youssef and Luthans, 2007; Avey, Reichard, Luthans, and Mhatre, 2011). Each of the four components of PsyCap have positive workplace outcomes. Specifically, hope has been shown to be related to employee performance, satisfaction, happiness, and retention, self-efficacy has a positive relationship with work performance (Stajkovic and Luthans, 2001) and work engagement (Salanova, Llorens, and Schaufeli, 2011), resilience has a positive relationship with employee performance and happiness and satisfaction, and optimism is related to employee performance, satisfaction, and happiness (Youssef and Luthans, 2007; Newman et al, 2014).

The theoretical grounding of the construct is important. PsyCap has strong roots within positive psychology (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000; Peterson, 2006), positive

organisational scholarship (Cameron, Dutton, Quinn & Wrzesniewski, 2003) and positive organisational behaviour literatures (Wright, 2003; Avey, Reichard, Luthans & Mhatre, 2011). Key criteria have been set for inclusion within the PsyCap construct, including the requirements that each element is state-like and thus open to development (Luthans, Avey et al., 2010). Other criteria are that each PsyCap element has a valid measurement scale, is relatively unique to the organisational behaviour field, and has a performance focus.

It is of note that PsyCap is distinct from other forms of people-related capital, namely human and social capital. Human capital is primarily concerned with ‘what you know’, referring to an individual’s stock of knowledge, skills and abilities that can be increased by experience and/or investment in education and training (Becker, 1993). Social capital relates more to ‘who you know’ i.e. the resources that underpin one’s durable network of relationships (Bourdieu, 2011; Coleman, 1988). PsyCap on the other hand is distinguished by a focus on ‘who you are’ and ‘who are you becoming’ (Luthans & Youssef, 2004; Luthans, Avey, Avolio, Norman & Combs, 2006). This sense of becoming a leader, and an emerging leader identity is further discussed below in Section 2.2.7.

2.2.6 Adaptation and emergence. In response to the demands of the knowledge era, characterised by challenging organisational environments and the associated hyper-complex and flexible role expectations, the required capacities for leaders have changed dramatically and abruptly (O’Connell 2014). It is now increasingly relevant to focus on broader capacities that are adaptable to the infinite set of contingencies and contexts leaders will encounter. These broad generic capacities and skills are becoming more relevant for leaders than deep or specific skills because tasks and contexts quickly vary, making learning and adaptation more important than having a range of specific skills (Holmberg, Larsson & Backstrom, 2016, p155). Many organisations feel that strengthening their agility and responsiveness is key to addressing the complex changes in today’s marketplace, and that developing leaders who can

embrace constant change is key to future success (Burke, 2017). A distinction is made between the technical and adaptive challenges facing leaders, suggesting that adaptive challenges arise from gaps generated by bold aspirations amid challenging realities (Heifetz, Linsky & Grashow, 2009). Adaptive challenges are too complex for a leader to analyse all the variables and know the correct answer in advance. They can only be solved through the voluntary and intentional engagement of leaders who are open to change what they do and how they think (Bushe & Marshak, 2016), thus will require leaders to examine their own mental models and re-think them (Kramer, 2016).

Leaders are agents of change, organisationally, professionally and personally, with leader derailment linked to the inability to change and adapt (Leslie & Van Velsor, 1996). Effective leaders see change as an opportunity for growth and undertake intentional and desired change for themselves and their organisations (Boyatzis, 2006; Burke, 2017). Framing change as an opportunity to learn and develop is important, and leaders who view change in this way, as opposed to a threat to the status quo, are more likely to reach and exceed their potential. Disruption is required for transformational adaptation and change (Bushe & Marshak, 2016). Effective leaders in complex organisations understand the value and importance of introducing an element of uncertainty and ambiguity into a system in order to create a certain amount of chaos (Grobman, 2005). They understand that disruption is integral to transformational change, and embrace it (Holman, 2010). Self-organisation occurs when there is ambiguity and space for innovation and adaptation to emerge (Bushe & Marshak, 2016). Effective leaders can manage complexity through emergent change processes, and can hold ambiguity and uncertainty in ways that encourage people to manage their discomfort whilst encouraging innovative and adaptive responses (Bushe & Marshak, 2016).

Effective leadership in a complex environment is seen to require a balance between

seemingly opposing forces, including complexity dynamics and bureaucracy, enabling and coordinating, exploration and exploitation, complex adaptive systems and hierarchy, and informal emergence and top-down control (Uhl Bien et al, 2007, p304). The paradoxical nature of these effectiveness criteria suggests that leader performance cannot be evaluated without considering simultaneous opposites (Cameron, 1986). Accomplishing an appropriate balance poses unique challenges for leaders. In order to respond effectively and holistically, they need to embrace rather than avoid the paradoxes.

What is required is a high tolerance of ambiguity, defined by a learning style of leadership whereby the effective leader recognises the need to both influence this emergent dynamic and its outcomes, and to respond in a way that that enable conditions for creative problem solving, adaptability, and learning (Uhl-Bien et al., 2007). This means that effective leaders need to be able to successfully navigate an environment of uncertainty and continual change, where problems cannot be solved by simple elimination of one of the alternatives, and where tensions are created that are not fully solvable. To do this, they must focus on continuously and actively learning new skill sets, seeking more challenging assignments, and being open and adaptable to new ideas and more flexible styles (Martin, 2007; Manderscheid and Harrower, 2016). Indeed, learning agility is critical for leaders to keep up with continual change (Lombardo & Eichinger, 2000). In particular, for leaders to sustain effectiveness they will increasingly be required to develop capacities allowing them to deal with cognitive and behavioural complexity across their lifespan, with the ability to synthesise and take decisions incorporating multiple conflicting perspectives. Among requirements will be the ability to collaborate and reflect, and to synthesise knowledge from fields beyond leadership and psychology to encompass the social and biological sciences (Denison, Hooijberg & Quinn, 1995; O'Connell, 2014). Furthermore, for leaders to be sustainably effective, a high tolerance for not knowing is required, with a mind-set allowing them to fully embrace the

ambiguity and its resulting uncertainty (Kramer, 2016, p36).

The increasing complexity of the business environment wherein ambiguous environments and the expectation of ever-faster response times, will reward leaders who are prepared to step outside their comfort zone (White & Shullman, 2010). Successful leaders will need to reach for broader and more complex leadership roles with unfamiliar and uncomfortable responsibilities, and to develop beyond conventional ways of thinking, acting and being (Bushe & Marshak, 2016). Leaders who give up certainty for curiosity and who embrace the inevitability of paradoxes are likely to be more successful (Lowell, 2016). Part of this involves demonstrating a strong commitment to a new direction, but also requires leaders to embrace emergent change processes and accept that they do not have all the answers. This ability to work in ambiguous spaces with emergent phenomenon and a high degree of unpredictability are characteristics of Complexity Leadership Theory (Uhl Bien et al., 2007).

2.2.7 Emerging leader identity. For leaders to be effective they need to feel leader-like. Leaders themselves (rather than followers or researchers) must determine their effectiveness, following consideration of the vital elements of a particular leadership role, and the degree that the leader is confident in his/her ability to be effective (Ladegard & Gjerde (2014). The notion of a developing leader identity (Day, Harrison and Halpin, 2009; Petriglieri & Stein, 2012) is one aspect of leader development proposed in recent literature, and supports the claim that the key to leader effectiveness requires a focus beyond cognitive and technical abilities. In their leadership roles, individuals make deliberate efforts to display leadership characteristics as they strive to be perceived as leaders by others and by themselves (Guillen, Mayo & Korotov, 2015). Role identity relates to defining oneself in relation to a role, suggesting that a leader will work towards the development of a leader identity as a central part of their self-concept (Maurer & London, 2015, p11). Within the identity change

literature, authors have referred to the process of making sense of new roles, and adaptive identity development (Dutton, Robers & Bednar, 2010). A leader's self-concept evolves as his/her abilities become enhanced, and as (with enhanced self-awareness) a clearer understanding of their competencies emerges (Wood & Bandura, 1989). Enhanced self-awareness and self-efficacy can be associated with the changing identity of a leader, and the growing understanding of his/her own capabilities and identity. Leader effectiveness though, goes beyond self-awareness and self-efficacy to encompass a fundamental shift of the leader's worldview (Senge, 2010). Part of the process involves acquiring skills and knowledge associated with a new role, however the inner work involves a transformation in self-concept and changing a leader's definition of who they are, and how they succeed and achieve fulfilment, along with underlying motivational constructs, including intrinsic and extrinsic influences.

Role identity shift has been identified as a process necessary for development of leaders, with a transition/ transformation from high performing individual contributor, into a leader in identity and behaviour (Maurer & London, 2015). This transition is not a smooth progression rather a series of discontinuous changes from one level to the next. Disruptive and discontinuous change is a characteristic of complexity. Trying to survive and prosper in a fast changing business environment requires the ability to generate on-going innovation while continuously evolving and adapting to various internal and external changes (Lowell, 2016). Role identity shift has been identified as a process necessary for development of innovative leaders, whereby destruction is considered as a relevant process for a new leader identity and self to take root and grow. In a similar vein the transition from one level of leadership to another and the forging of a new leader identity involves a period of discontinuous change in roles responsibilities and behaviours (Maurer & London 2015). This discontinuous change perspective casts leadership development within an innovation

framework (Petrie, 2011).

The role identity literature is useful for leaders working in a complex world because it allows for adaptation and emergence, and provides a theoretical framework to explore the shift in role from a zone of predictability, control and comfort, to one that is initially unpredictable, unfamiliar and ambiguous (Maurer & London, 2015). Benjamin and O'Reilly (2011) discuss the new set of assumptions “new leadership mind set” (p463) that is required for developing effective leaders, whereby leaders leverage advantages from an ability to work in areas of uncertainty and confusion. In a similar vein Kramer (2016) highlights the importance of a transition in focus, from developing a leader skillset to developing a leader mindset, as underpinning a new paradigm of leader development. Transforming a leader's mindset requires transforming the leader and changing parts of the leader's identity (Kramer, 2016, p39). Inherent within this emerging leader identity, is the notion of future oriented possibilities or a possible self, representing what a leader thinks they could become. Success and achievement leads to expectations of successful future outcomes (Fitzgerald & Schutte, 2010). The awareness of a gap between what one actually is and what one could possibly become may stimulate a significant motivation for development (Maurer, 2002). This self-view as a leader is not only related to formal leadership roles, but also “how an individual comes to think of oneself as a leader” (Day et al., 2009, p. 183). The next section explores how leader development programs, in particular executive coaching, can deliver these outcomes appropriate for an effective leader.

2.3 Developing Effective Leaders

The gap between the demands of the global work environment and the developmental maturity of its leaders has been associated with heightened vulnerability to performance decline (Frizzell, et al., 2016, p15). While the increasing complexity demands increased

capability and leaders who can navigate through the challenges, foster innovation, and build organisations where people thrive, the leadership skills that worked previously may not work in new situations or in changed environments (Van Wart, 2013). It also means that leaders relying entirely on natural leadership talents, regardless of maturity, are likely to risk derailment. These challenges along with the instability associated with the knowledge economy, provide a context for leader development that demands a view of it not as a once-of activity for an individual leader, but rather as an on-going lifelong process of learning and intentional desired change that requires continuous honing if the leader is to avoid reaching a plateau (Van Wart, 2013).

Many organisations have turned to formal leader development programs to meet the challenge. Some estimates are that American companies spent \$160 billion in the United States and close to \$356 billion globally in 2015 alone on employee training and education (Beer et al., 2016). A report from Bersin by Deloitte (2014) (as cited by Ardichvili, och Dag & Manderscheid, 2016) indicates that leader development in the US makes up 35% of total learning and development budgets, with estimates of US\$45 billion spent on leader development globally each year (Ardichvili et al., 2016). Leader development has become a central component of human resource development theory and practice and “is arguably one of the most important activities undertaken by HRD professionals” (Callahan, Whitener & Sandlin, 2007, p. 146, as cited in Ardichvili et al., 2016). Studies show that investing in leader development is positively associated with leader capabilities and self-efficacy (Gahan, Adamovic, Bevitt, Harley, Healy, Olsen & Theilacker, 2016), and also certain problem solving and resilience building skills, which in turn significantly predicts workplace performance and innovation (Avolio, Reichard, Hannah, Walumbwa & Chan, 2009; Mumford et al., 2000). Contrasting this is evidence suggesting that the effectiveness of leader development programs is less than compelling (Day et al., 2014), with many other

findings indicating that returns on investment are not assured (Pfeffer, 2016). For example, Collins and Holton's (2004) meta-analysis of eighty-three studies found a lack of empirical evidence for measureable outcomes associated with the effectiveness of leader development interventions. More recently, McKinsey's poll of 500 executives globally, found that only 11 percent strongly agreed with the statement that their leadership-development interventions achieve and sustain the desired results (Feser, Nieklsen & Rennie, 2017). One contributing factor may be that the dynamic environment experienced by many workplaces creates a fluidity in developmental needs that is not matched by responsiveness in development programs, with the result that leader development spending can occur without necessarily matching the right person with the right content at the right time (Gahan et al., 2016). In sum, one size does not fit all (Sinar, Wellins, Ray, Abel & Neal, 2015) and poorly targeted and scattergun approaches to leader development can be costly and ineffective.

Meta-analytic evidence (based on 140 independent effect sizes and from 13,656 unique participants), indicates that leadership is learnable (Avolio et al., 2009). The previous section offered clarification of what is intended to be developed during the leader development processes (Day, 2000). From a leader development program context, success has been suggested as the degree of improvement or change in leader skills (Solansky, 2016, p624). This study now explores executive coaching as a process of development that may successfully produce the desired effects.

2.4 Executive Coaching

This study positions leader development largely as an individual phenomenon, and assumes more effective leadership occurs through the development of individual leaders. One way of developing leaders is via executive coaching. Coaching offers an evidence-based intervention through which leaders can be challenged and supported as they co-create a

developmental space that is adaptive to their unique needs and best prepares them for the complexity of the business environment. Bachkirova, Spence & Drake (2016) in *The Sage Handbook of Coaching* acknowledge difficulties in achieving a unified, universal and unique definition of coaching. A sample of definitions associated with coaching is included in Appendix A. This study's aim to contribute to the knowledge base of coaching by offering inputs to the "multidimensional picture of the way coaching is preconceived and practised in the real world." (p7), acknowledges that the terms "workplace coaching", "executive coaching", and "leadership coaching" are often used interchangeably (Grant, 2014; Bartlett, Boylan & Hale, 2014; Jones et al., 2016), with "executive coaching" the term used throughout this study.

A universal definition of executive coaching has not yet emerged. Definitions range from a focus upon improvements in the effectiveness of the organisation as achieved through the coaching process (Cox, Bachkirova & Clutterbuck, 2014; Sonesh et al., 2015), to a focus upon the personal learning, growth and improvement of the individual coachee (Grant, 2008; Passmore & Fillery-Travis, 2011). Whitmore's view of coaching links it to optimizing people's potential and performance (1996); Ely et al., (2010) see it as centring on work-related conversations with leaders with the aim of improving their leadership effectiveness. Grant (2014, p259) see it as "a helping relationship" whereby the coach uses "a range of cognitive and behavioural techniques in order to help the client achieve a mutually defined set of goals with the aim of improving his or her leadership skills, professional performance, and well-being and the effectiveness of the organisation." The notion of a guided process of discovery has underpinned much coaching research and many publications in the past decade, contributing to Passmore and Fillery-Travis' (2011) definition:

"a Socratic based future focused dialogue between a facilitator (coach) and a participant (coachee/client), where the facilitator uses open questions, active listening,

summarises [sic] and reflections which are aimed at stimulating the self-awareness and personal responsibility of the participant.” (p. 6)

Much coaching research to date has focused on the outcomes, with coaching shown to enhance leader effectiveness across a range of measures. Evidence-based coaching contributes an approach that has well validated empirical support and has at its core a rigorously researched theoretical framework (Locke and Latham 2006; Theeboom et al., 2014). Attempts to establish the legitimacy of the intervention have included empirical studies that have demonstrated its effectiveness across a variety of different timeframes, contexts and populations. For example peer-reviewed randomised-controlled studies have shown coaching as highly effective in terms of facilitating attainment (Grant, Green & Rynsaardt, 2010), enhancing well-being and resilience (Grant, Curtayne & Burton, 2009), increasing solution-focused thinking and associated ‘growth mind-sets’ (Theeboom et al., 2014). Other positive outcomes have been associated with enhanced goal attainment and well-being (Grant et al, 2009; Ladegard & Gjerde, 2014; Mackie, 2015), greater ability to deal with change, increased leader self-efficacy and resilience (Grant et al., 2009; Ely et al., 2010; Grant 2014;), as well as a range of improvements in individual achievement and performance levels (Theeboom et al., 2014; Jones et al, 2016; Blackman, Moscardo & Gray, 2016). Jones et al.’s (2016) 17-study meta-analysis of learning and performance outcomes from coaching adds to evidence supporting coaching’s emergence as a flexible and adaptive development tool that can enhance individual, team and organisational performance (Day, 2000; Ely et al., 2010).

These and other studies position executive coaching at the leading edge of leader development programs for the future, and among the most commonly used leadership development interventions (Day et al., 2014). Studies have also demonstrated how executive coaching may address a variety of leader effectiveness derailers, including workplace well-

being, resilience, stress and depression (Grant et al., 2009). Despite this evidence base suggesting that coaching can be an effective leader development initiative in a complex world, there has been scant research on the fundamental mechanisms that make coaching interventions effective, and in particular on the causal mechanisms by which coaching is effective (Fillery-Travis & Lane, 2006; Ely et al., 2010; Theeboom et al., 2014; Dippenaar & Schaap, 2017). Segers, Vloebergs, Henderickx and Inceoglu, (2011) observe that an understanding of the coaching process is important to enable better targeting of what is a relatively costly leader development intervention. The present study aims to add to this understanding by shedding light on the coaching process, by exploring how coaching can help leaders enhance their effectiveness and make meaningful and lasting change. In addition to the theoretical contribution, this question is fundamental to coaching practitioners, and organisations wanting to invest in leader development.

Just as there are many models of personal and professional change, there are many coaching frameworks that are both evidence-based and solutions focused. One of the foundational coaching models is the GROW model popularised by Sir John Whitmore (1996). The GROW model structures coaching conversations around growth, reality, options and ways forward. Many other models build on these core elements. Strength-based approaches have also underpinned many coaching models, orienting individuals to focus on individual strengths, on what is going well, and on how these current strengths can be leveraged going forward to make a unique valuable contribution. Adopting this broad framework Kauffman (2006 p 220) describes the language of strengths and vision rather than of weakness and pain as the firm foundation upon which coaching rests. Many of the current models draw from the positive psychology literature (Seligman, 1998), including flourishing (Fredrickson & Losada, 2005), and self-determination theory (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Regardless of this broad range of theoretical frameworks contributing to an understanding of

coaching (Passmore & Fillery-Travis, 2011), a common set of principles underpin the process, with Bartlett, Boylan and Hale's (2014) integrative literature review of 533 publications, finding 'relationship', 'goals', 'performance', and 'learning' to be keywords used most often in defining executive coaching.

2.4.1 Coaching process. The literature reveals a range of core elements that are relevant for an understanding of the coaching process (Grant et al., 2009; Ely et al., 2010; Theeboom et al., 2014). The Executive Coaching Handbook explains that coaching is conducted through 'one-on-one and/or group interactions, driven by data from multiple perspectives, and based on mutual trust and respect; the organisation, an executive, and the executive coach work in partnership to achieve maximum impact' (The Executive Coaching Forum, 2008, p. 19). Abbott, Stening, Atkins and Grant (2006), present coaching as a systematic goal-directed process, which aims to facilitate sustained change by fostering the ongoing self-directed learning and personal growth of the participant. Bluckert, (2005), Sonesh et al., (2015), and Mosteo, Batista-Foguet, Mckeever and Serlavós (2016) are among those making the distinction between the outcomes from two types of executive coaching: one focusing on improved performance, the second focusing on learning and development as a gateway to change. In a similar vein, other studies make a distinction between coaching for compliance and coaching with compassion, suggesting that while coaching for compliance (performance focus) can provide a short term fix, coaching with compassion has a development focus that seeks sustainable change, not only in individuals but in the groups, teams and organisations within which they operate (Jack, Boyatzis, Khawaja, Passarelli & Leckie., 2013; Boyatzis, Smith, Van Oosten & Woolford 2013; Passarelli, 2015). In the present study coaching is seen as extending beyond a goal setting exercise, and is representative of a new developmental paradigm that can assist leaders to make and sustain

desired change (Ordóñez, Schweitzer, Galinsky & Bazerman, 2009; Mosteo et al., 2016, p66).

Coaching relationship and co-creation of learning. Studies indicate the importance of high quality relations between coach and participant to facilitate positive outcomes, including growth and transformation (Boyatzis, Smith, Blaize, 2006; Grant, 2014). The development of rapport and interpersonal closeness is important in generating the high levels of trust and transparency promoting psychological safety and participant engagement in the process (Mosteo et al., 2016). The coaching relationship is characterised by an overall positive emotional tone, fostering psychological states that optimally support behavioural change by facilitating the formation of trust, rapport, and interpersonal closeness in the coaching relationship (Passarelli, 2015). Mosteo et al (2016) refer to this overall positive mood between coach and participant as “emotional saliency”. Following Ford and Harding’s (2007) findings that co-creation of leader development programs have positive results, this study’s conceptualisation of coaching as a collaborative work between the coach and the participant with the aim of co-creating meaning, also sees it as a process based on a “collaborative working alliance” (Grant et al., 2009, p397).

Research suggests that individuals are more committed to an initiative when they have choice in the process (Deci & Ryan, 2000, Solansky, 2015). Self-determination and autonomy are important aspects of leader development and effectiveness. Self-determination refers to the degree to which an individual can choose to initiate actions (Deci, Connell & Ryan, 1989). Autonomy is considered a central premise of self-determination theory, being “a sense of choice in initiating and regulating one’s own actions” (Deci, Connell & Ryan, 1989, p580). Self-determination theorists argue that autonomy maximises performance, psychological well-being, commitment and satisfaction (Gagne and Deci, 2005). This suggests that leaders who choose their development program will be more fully engaged than

those for whom it is mandated, and that benefits will accrue from them being personally involved and acting as co-creators of their experience (Ford and Harding, 2007; Grandy and Holton, 2013; Petrie, 2014). In contrast, the removal of choice and external regulation of leader development carries negative implications in regard to performance and development, leading to diminished possibilities for growth (Deci & Ryan, 2000), with low levels of self-determination leaving an individual with diminished motivation (Gagne and Deci, 2005). A key benefit of coaching can be related to the manner in which the process offers leaders choice, the opportunity to direct attention where they most need development, and to co-create their learning experience.

Flexible individualised process. As technological advances and increasing globalisation combine to produce an environment where faster responsiveness to changing needs is a competitive advantage, the traditional employment model is steadily giving way to more project-based, freelance and short-term engagements (Zishkin, 2015). So too must leader development practices reflect this revolution. The prevalent model for leader development of the future is likely to be increasingly adaptive and responsive to in-the-moment demand, and to be delivered in smaller, customised offerings to better reflect changing workforce expectations and technological realities. Leader development programs and developmental assignments need to accommodate this increasingly dynamic environment with more agile, on-demand, and responsive solutions. Coaching is one such contextualised development strategy increasingly emphasised by both researchers and practitioners along with developmental assignments, on-the-job learning, mentoring relationships, and action learning assignments (Day, 2000; Van Velsor & McCauley, 2004; Petriglieri et al, 2011). Traditional leader development tends to occur primarily through specially designed programs, according to pre-planned schedules, and frequently held in particular locations. Learning, however, is “a continuous process that can take place anywhere” (Day, 2000 p.

586). Hence coaching's flexibility to adapt to an individual leader's development needs and timing is advantageous (Day and Harrison, 2007). Adopting the organisational discourse of performance management, coaching can be seen as a tool for supporting change by improving individual performance and as a mechanism for integrating the process of learning and changing (Pavlovic & Stojnov, 2015). A distinguishing feature of executive coaching may be found in the way that it addresses the challenge arising from the differing individual starting points of participants (Grant, 2008; Ely et al., 2010; Solansky, 2014). Offering an intervention that can be tailored to individual needs and organisational contexts, it accommodates differing experiences, skills, and learning styles throughout an individual's leadership journey (Day and Harrison, 2007).

A significant challenge to the success of leader development programs exists in the lack of targeted attention focused on deeper understanding of the specific developmental needs and timing of an individual leader (Sinar et al. 2015). One size does not fit all, and the hyper-complex environment provides a context for leader development that demands a view of learning not as a once-of activity, but rather as a lifelong process (Van Velsor & Drath, 2004). Executive coaching offers an experiential and individualised development process that builds a leader's capability to achieve short-and long-term organisational goals (www.executivecoachingforum.com). Howard (2015, p2) describes it as a practice "to enhance the performance of 21st century professionals facing constant workplace change, challenge and stress". In this context of rapidly changing environments, coaching's adaptability to context situates it as a tool to help prepare leaders to address key decisions and situations they might face under real life conditions, before they actually have to face them, rather than only learning from experiences and fixing mistakes after they occur.

Opportunity for reflection. Skill and competence development are by no means the only aspects of becoming a leader. Self-awareness has also been identified as a key

characteristic of effective leaders, and requires reflection to facilitate its development (Cunliffe, 2009). Reflection is associated with superior leader performance (Di Stefano, Gino, Pisano & Staats, 2016), and has been described as “an iterative process of returning to what one has studied, thought, experienced, done, and felt, and an autonomous but still relatively structured and disciplined process of synthesizing lessons, conclusions, uncertainties, and questions” (Harvey & Jenkins, 2014). Indeed, one of the strengths of coaching is in its ability to offer leaders the mechanisms and processes to go beyond the business as usual busy-ness of operational or technical matters and devote time to the inner game (Gallwey, 1974). The coaching process offers a space outside of operational matters for a leader to take stock, offering a view of reflexivity as “questioning what we, and others, might be taking for granted—what is being said and not said—and examining the impact this has or might have” (Cunliffe, 2016, p741). Through the process of reflection before action, the coaching space offers leaders the possibility of a perspective that is broader, longer and deeper than for other roles.

An effective transformational leadership development program should cause a fundamental and stable shift of the participant’s worldview (Senge, 2010). Adults have acquired a body of experience throughout their life, as well as habits of mind that define their world. A leader’s over-reliance on habitual ways of reacting and responding can result in self-limiting behaviours. For leaders to negate this and maximise their professional potential, there must be a process of critical reflection on experiences and current assumptions and an openness to changing meaning schemes (specific beliefs, attitudes, and emotional reactions), which in turn leads to a perspective transformation (Mezirow, 1991). Coaching encourages reflection, critical thinking and transformative learning, and can thus help support the rebuilding of habits of mind and establishment of new behaviours contributing to leader effectiveness.

A process of critical evaluation and reflection is required in order for leaders to make sense of their experiences (Solansky 2015). Autonomous motivation arises from choices made after deep personal reflection, with self-determination theory (SDT) making a distinction between autonomous motivation and controlled motivation (Gagne & Deci, 2005). Autonomous motivation tends to be associated with an individual's intrinsic motivation, whereas controlled motivation and extrinsic motivation arises from factors external to the individual (Gagne & Deci, 2005). Autonomous motivation arises from choices, whereas controlled motivation in contrast, arises as a result of an individual's sense of being expected, or required to take action. As such, the reflective opportunities afforded by coaching, being associated with autonomous and intrinsic motivation, may be associated with a leader's enhanced feeling of control over his/her choices. This notion has parallels in the distinction between the ideal self and the 'ought' self of Intentional Change Theory (Boyatzis, 2006, 2008), whereby intentional change is most likely to occur based on what a person wants to do, rather than what they feel they ought to do.

Strengths focus. The increasing popularity and acceptance of executive coaching as a tool for developing leaders has been paralleled by its evolution from being considered a "remedial" intervention for supporting leaders at risk of derailment, to being a recognised investment in top performing leaders that assists them move to even higher levels of performance, by building on their strengths and closing development gaps (Ziskin, 2015). The strengths focus of positive psychology (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000) has underpinned a wide number of theoretical coaching frameworks using a common set of principles based upon a passion for the growth of people, a focus on possibilities and human potential, and the desire to nurture and exploit talent (du Toit, 2007). The strengths based approach underpinning Fredrickson's "broaden and build" research (1998), links positive emotions with heightened levels of creativity, inventiveness, and "big picture" perceptual

focus, as well as the development of long-term psychological resources that contribute to enhanced performance. Dweck's (2008) growth mindset work supports the notion that an individual's belief in the potential for development and personal change is a key factor in priming for growth. Leaders with a growth mindset, therefore, and those who are developed (coached) from a mindset of development as opposed to performance, are thus more likely to reach and exceed their potential. Seeking to inspire stronger performance, coaching in the past fifteen years has experienced a refocusing towards strengths based approaches and orienting people to focus on things they do well (Mosteo, 2016).

2.5 Intentional Change Theory (ICT)

Intentional Change Theory (Boyatzis, 2006, 2008) (ICT) is proposed as a framework to guide this study's coaching process. It is an evidence-based framework for intentional desired change that is well aligned with aspects of effective coaching, and further enhanced as a tool for developing contemporary leaders by its foundations in complexity theory. As a change methodology it adopts a holistic perspective on human growth and behaviour change (Segers et al., 2011), outlining a strengths-focused developmental process with strong theoretical foundations. Adult learning theory offers one theoretical foundation for ICT, useful to coaching practice because it emphasises the self-determination, self-actualization and self-transformation of the learner. Others include Self-Directed Learning theory (Kolb & Boyatzis, 1970), Experiential Learning theory (Kolb, 1984), Transformative Learning theory (Mezirow, 1991), and Self-determination theory (Deci, Connell & Ryan, 1989), Positive Psychology (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000), Broaden and Build theory (Fredrickson, 2001), and Positive Organisational Behaviour (Wright, 2003). A comparison of key elements of these theories is included in Appendix B.

The ICT model of planned change was developed by Richard Boyatzis (2006, 2008)

over more than twenty-five years. Boyatzis is a highly respected figure in education, leadership and coaching and his current work at Case Western University in the USA is right at the edge of theory and practice in the connections between coaching, complexity, neuroscience, positive psychology, emotional intelligence and change. ICT is a ‘meta-model’ of change, offering both a lens, to provide focus on the stages of change progression, and a prism, to reveal the full spectrum of applicable concepts and activities, and thus offers a framework from which many more specific models of change in human systems can be understood and developed. The evidence base of ICT is supported by Grant's view of evidence-based coaching (2016, p80), as represented in his framework for coaching research. Grant posits that strong evidence is achieved by well-designed randomised control trials with a range of populations, and by well-designed case studies, robust mixed methods and extensive qualitative research. ICT research to date has included case studies, mixed methods and extensive qualitative studies, and thus fits within Grant's definition of strong evidence, and sets it apart from many frameworks and methodologies (Segers et al., 2011; Mosteo et al., 2016). Another feature that distinguishes ICT from many coaching models is its strong drawings from complexity theory. This is discussed below.

2.5.1 ICT and Complexity Theory. ICT is a multi-level model that encourages examination of interrelatedness between different system levels (Boyatzis, 2006). The unique manner in which ICT engages the full system, allows it to be applied to individuals, teams, and organisations, thus supporting change to occur at any level of human and social organisation. In this study the system in focus is the individual. However, the power of the ICT model is that it embraces between-level interactions. In this sense, the other levels become fractals of ICT at the individual level. The “multi-levelled” aspect of ICT makes it well suited as a framework for leader development in a complex environment (Boyatzis, 2006, 2008). It engages the full system and avoids a limitation of traditional modes of

executive coaching wherein the focus is mainly about self. This can be relevant in addressing the issues arising from VUCA and hyper-complexity, wherein it is important to recognise the systemic interrelatedness of the environment. Coaching informed by ICT pushes the individual to be constantly mindful of forces outside the team and even outside the organisation.

ICT outlines a developmental process that occurs as a leader creates enduring personal change. The model draws from complexity theory and neuroscience to explain the conditions most conducive to an individual leader's development. A primary feature of a complex system is that the interaction between the levels produces adaptive or emergent behaviour. This acknowledges that our environments are characterised not only by simplicity and predictability, but also by radical unpredictability. Cavanagh and Lane (2012, p79) are among those who argue that it is much more useful to perceive the environments in which leaders operate as non-linear and unpredictable, 'a world characterised by a dynamic mix of simple, complex, and chaotic spaces'.

One of the features of ICT as a complex system suggests that the change process involves a sequence of emergences or discontinuities (i.e. ICT Discoveries) that function as an iterative cycle in producing the sustainable change at the individual level. ICT posits that development is non-linear and that change is discontinuous. For intentional change and development to occur, a disequilibrium needs to arise, often as a result of disruptive forces, causing a tipping point to be reached that acts as catalyst for change (Boyatzis, 2006, 2008; Howard, 2009).

2.5.2. The 5 ICT 'Discoveries'. Intentional Change Theory (ICT) (Boyatzis, 2006, 2008: see Figure 2.1) is a coaching framework that embraces a nonlinear and iterative process model based around 5 discoveries or epiphanies. Specifically, ICT holds that sustained, desired change occurs in a dynamic, non-linear process punctuated by five discoveries or

epiphanies: first, discovery and articulation of the ideal self; second, assessment of the real self as compared to the ideal self; third, formulation of a learning agenda; fourth, implementation of deliberate practices and experimentation with new behaviours; and fifth, the development of mutually supportive resonant relationships.

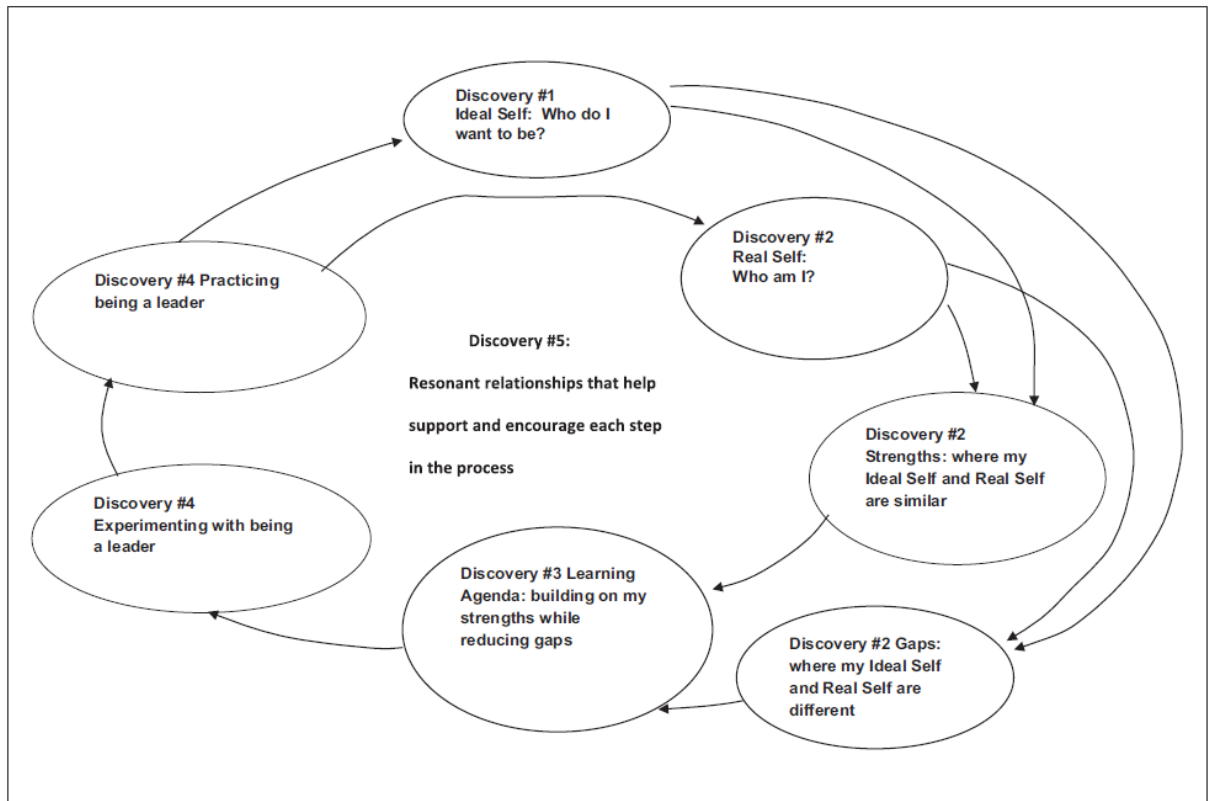


Figure 2.1. Intentional Change Theory.

From “An overview of intentional change from a complexity perspective” by R.E. Boyatzis, 2006. *Journal of Management Development*, 25(7), 607-623.

Discovery 1: The Ideal Self. Intentions are the basic infrastructure driving development and change in our lives, and out of which all our innovations and actions arise. For a leader, discovery of the Ideal Self entails articulating one’s deepest aspirations, hopes, and dreams for the future, as well as positive aspects of one’s core identity. Boyatzis positions ICT along with many theories of leadership (such as transformational, charismatic, servant and spiritual leadership) to include a vision as a central component (Bass & Avolio 1993; Howard, 2009;

Passarelli, 2015). The visioning step in the process starts with the ideal self and the question of ‘What kind of leader do I want to be?’ (Boyatzis et al., 2006). ICT makes the distinction between the ideal self and the ‘ought’ self, emphasizing that the ideal self is based on what a person wants to do, rather than what they feel they ought to do. The "ought" self takes prevention-oriented self-regulatory focus, centred on controlled motivation, and results in only short-term behaviour change. The ideal self draws from autonomous motivation, and is comprised of hope, one's core identity, and the image of a desired future. The ICT focus on the ideal leads to positive emotions and opens up creative thinking. It creates a sense of future purpose, demonstrated as a key variable in promoting human flourishing (Seligman, 2011).

Discovery 2: The Real Self. The real self is posited as the driver of intentional change (Boyatzis & Akrivou, 2006). This involves a comparison of the ideal self with the real self, and results in an assessment of strengths (where the ideal and real are similar) and also of the gaps/ areas of development (where the ideal and real are different) (Taylor, 2006). Leaders are encouraged to develop self-awareness so they can effectively articulate their strengths and as well as the gaps. Formation of an accurate self-reflection requires significant inner work by the individual, including the ability to reflect on what behaviours are working well, and also what not so well. Mindful awareness of strengths, whether via self-reflection or using feedback from others, can help develop insights into areas of potential change and development towards the ideal self.

Discovery 3: Learning Agenda. A learning agenda comprised of broad goals and specific actions is devised in order to bring an individual closer to his or her ideal self. ICT suggests that for sustained change to occur a learning pathway is developed, comprising a plan for actions to move us closer to the ideal self (Boyatzis, 2006, 2008). The model distinguishes between planning to improve and planning to learn, emphasizing a focus upon

development rather than improvement. Improvement plans invoke short-term behaviour change and often, stress and defensiveness. Authentic learning plans foster motivational will and energy to embark upon and sustain the development process. Accordingly, a learning agenda starts with acknowledging participant strengths, with a focusing on leveraging those strengths and the possibilities entailed.

Discovery 4: Experimentation and Practice. Practice and experimentation is required for the learning agenda to be implemented and refined (Boyatzis, 2006). Consistent with Kolb's (1984) Experiential Learning Theory and also grounded in Dewey's (1910) idea of learning through reflection and experimentation, ICT's Discovery 4 emphasises that true developmental shifts can only occur through experimentation with new behaviours. This is the action step in the coaching process, through which participants are encouraged to try something different in a current setting, reflect upon what occurs, and use the learning to inform further experimentation in this setting. An assumption underpinning experimentation is that there will be failure, requiring the adoption of a growth mindset (Dweck, 2008) that values progress through experimentation and where failing is viewed as inherent in the natural process towards positive change. This necessitates understanding and then practicing to handle scenarios and situations that leaders are likely to face on the job. Initial experimentation will occur in a psychologically "safe" context, often role-play, where participants can "try on" a different version of them self. Once a new approach that works is found, this next step is concerned with practice, implementation and refinement. When something is perceived to "work" then deliberately practicing the new behaviours, refining each time, is required to embed the learning. The leaders who thrive are those who can operate and effectively lead in the midst of unending global and technological challenges with a baseline assumption of continuing change. These leaders are prepared to embrace the risks associated with letting go of the assumption that certainty is not guaranteed. This

change through experimentation requires letting go of the past and is enhanced through observing the emotional consequences.

Discovery 5: Resonant Relationships. Finally, a set of trusting, growth-fostering relationships supports each discovery. ICT Discovery 5 recognises that significant behavioural change is difficult, and is even more difficult when attempted in isolation. The Fifth Discovery (Resonant Relationships) recognises that change efforts will be more successful when embedded in a network, with support available when there is an inevitable faltering in the process of change. Per Boyatzis (2006), trusting, resonant relationships provide support and create a context for learning. They also provide energy and challenge at critical junctures; and keep leaders grounded in their understanding of who they are as leaders and who they want to become. Coaching based on positive emotions fosters psychological states that optimally support behavioural change (Passarelli, 2015). This is extended in ICT to posit that resonant high quality relationships are the centre around which desired and sustained change evolves (Mosteo, 2016). The physiological benefits associated with resonant relations contribute to engagement at work for leaders and their teams (Heaphy & Dutton 2008).

2.6 Chapter Summary

This chapter outlines the key academic literature on leader development, executive coaching, and Intentional Change Theory (Boyatzis, 2006, 2008). This thesis aims to build upon the existing literature, and to fill a number of gaps. First, leadership development is reported as being the least explored topic within the field of leadership research and theory, with a clear gap in terms of empirical and theoretical contributions (Avolio, Avey et al., 2010). This study aims to address this gap by examining the coaching experiences of leaders and seeking an understanding of what might contribute to their effectiveness beyond the

usual one size fits all leader development offerings (Solansky, 2014; Gurdjian et al., 2014). Second, extending the current evidence that coaching works (Grant, 2014; Theeboom et al., 2014; Sonesh et al., 2015; Jones et al., 2016), this study aims to better understand *how* coaching works (Fillery-Travis et al., 2006; Ely et al., 2010), and the process by which coaching interventions are effective (Theeboom et al., 2014). It aims to add to the theoretical framework development both of what happens during the coaching process itself and its influence on the internal processing and outcomes experienced by the individual being coached. Third, proposing coaching informed by ICT as an effective leader development tool, the study aims to examine how Boyatzis' (2006) ICT model leads to intentional desired change among the study sample of leaders. Insight may also be offered into how each of the five ICT Discoveries can contribute to leader effectiveness. Last, acknowledging the external challenges arising from the complexities of current organisational environments, the study will contribute to the discussions on strategies whereby leaders might more effectively navigate and thrive therein. Matching the dynamic and complex external contexts requires a coaching approach that focuses beyond an individual leader to encourage a mindset of adaptation and emergence, and to encompass the multi-level interconnectedness between different system levels (self, team, organisation). The study will enhance understanding of how ICT's underpinnings in complexity theory might position it as a coaching approach of relevance for developing contemporary leaders operating in a complex environment.

Figure 2.2 illustrates the research framework that brings together these various literatures and topics, indicating how they relate to each other and contribute to answering the overarching research question "*How does coaching informed by ICT enhance leader effectiveness?*"

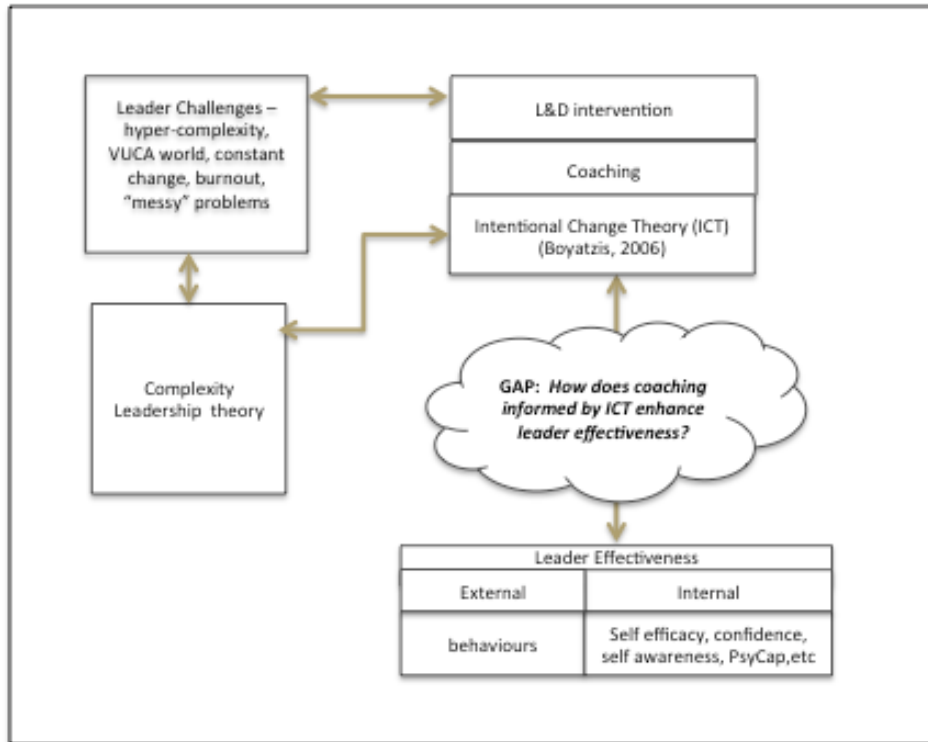


Figure 2.2. Research Framework

The next chapter, *Chapter Three - Methodology*, presents the research design and methodology for this research study.

Chapter 3: Methodology

Chapter 2 provided the literature review and conceptual framework upon which this research is based. This chapter describes the methodology underpinning the study, its purpose and how it was designed and implemented, and provides a rationale for the mixed methods approach. The chapter structure is outlined below in Figure 3.1.

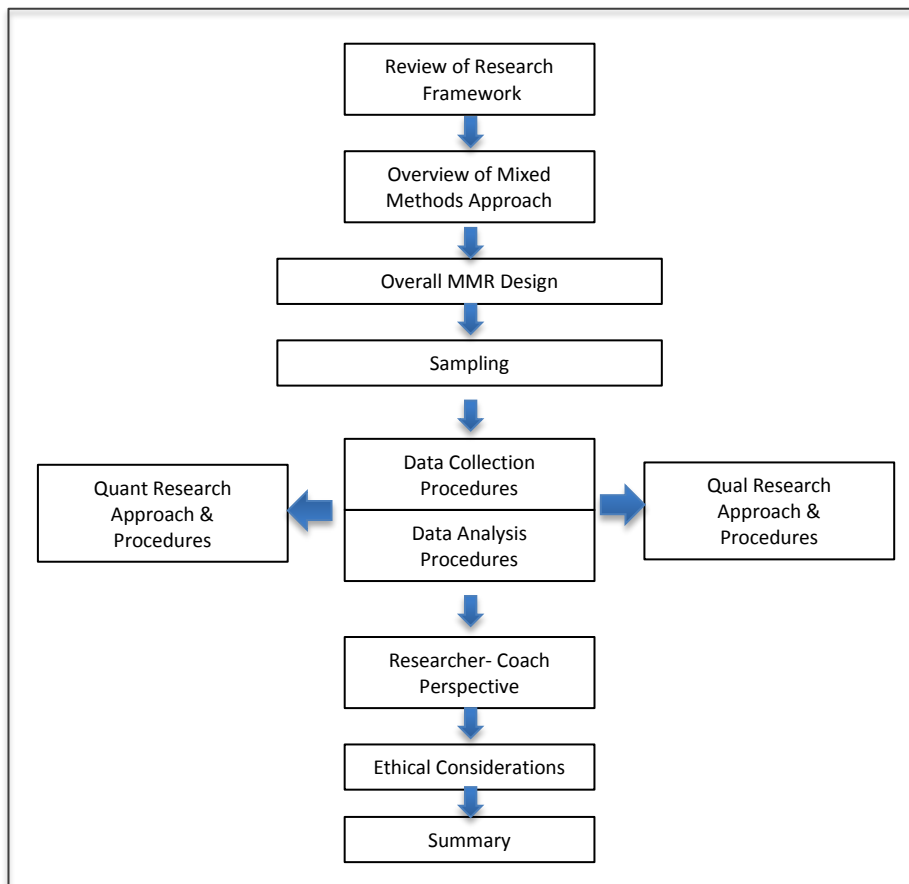


Figure 3.1. Structure of Chapter 3

The purpose of this concurrent mixed methods study is to examine how coaching informed by Intentional Change Theory (ICT) might enhance leader effectiveness. The sample of leaders was drawn from participants on an Executive MBA program at an Australian Graduate Business School. Mixed methods research (MMR) is the method that best fits the purpose of the study and is most suitable for answering the research question

posed, since it allows a multi-tiered investigation of the interrelationships between coaching informed by ICT and leader effectiveness. Furthermore, the mixed methods approach firmly bases the study in the pragmatic worldview where the focus is on “what works” and is a “real-world, practice oriented approach” (Creswell & Plano-Clark 2011, p. 40).

This chapter is organised in the following manner: first is presented an overview of the mixed methods approach and its relevance to the research question. This is followed by a description of the method of selection of participants. A more detailed discussion of the collection and analysis approach for both quantitative and qualitative data, including measures, is then outlined. Issues of reliability and validity and the ethical considerations of the project are also discussed. No results from the application of this methodology are presented in this chapter. All findings are presented in Chapter 4.

3.1 Research Question

The overall purpose of this research is to explore how executive coaching using Intentional Change Theory can enhance leader effectiveness. The sample of leaders was selected from Executive MBA students at an Australian Graduate School of Business. The study aims to investigate the experiences of leaders participating in two coaching sessions using ICT as a framework, and to measure resulting changes in their effectiveness. Through a mixed methods approach, we hope to gain a more thorough understanding of the research problem, to open up its various facets and look at it from various perspectives so that we can achieve more complete answers to the posed research questions.

Drawing from a mixed methodology, the study seeks to answer the central research question: *How does coaching informed by Intentional Change Theory (ICT) enhance leader effectiveness?* The following sub- questions, formulated to guide the data collection process, are based upon the

overall purpose and research framework developed in Chapter Two - Literature Review:

- What are participant experiences of the process of coaching informed by ICT?
- How do participants experience enhanced leader effectiveness as a result of coaching informed by ICT?
- What other contingent factors influence how an individual experiences coaching?

The final question did not emerge specifically from the literature review, but allows for identification of other possible influencing factors during the research.

3.2 Mixed Methods

This study uses a mixed methods design (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2003), which is an approach for collecting, analysing, and interpreting quantitative and qualitative data in a single study or in a series of studies that investigate the same underlying phenomenon (Leech & Onwuegbuzie, 2009; Creswell & Plano-Clark, 2011). It is ‘research in which the investigator collects and analyses data, integrates the findings and draws inferences using quantitative and qualitative approaches or methods in a single study’ (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie 2004, p17). In this study both numerical and text data are collected concurrently in order to help better understand the research problem, with additionally, the triangulation of quantitative and qualitative methods allowing for increased validity.

3.2.1 Research paradigm. Mixed method designs are those that include at least one quantitative method (designed to collect numbers) and one qualitative method (designed to collect words), where neither type of method is inherently linked to any particular inquiry paradigm (Greene, Caracelli & Graham, 1989). In quantitative research, the researcher adopts a post positivist approach to developing knowledge, involving cause and effect thinking, reduction to specific variables, hypotheses and questions, use of measurement and observation, and the testing of theories (Creswell 2013). In a qualitative approach, the

researcher makes knowledge claims based on the constructivist perspective (Guba & Lincoln, 1982): data is collected from participants who are immersed in the everyday life of the setting in which the study is framed, with analysis based on the values these participants perceive for their world, ultimately producing an understanding of the problem based on multiple contextual factors (Cresswell & Miller, 2000). Studies utilising mixed methods are “explicitly seeking a synergistic benefit from integrating both the post-positivist and constructivist paradigms. The underlying assumption is that research is stronger when it mixes research paradigms, because a fuller understanding of human phenomena is gained” (Rocco, Bliss, Gallagher & Pérez-Prado, 2003, p. 21).

3.2.2 Pragmatic philosophy. Mixed method is a research design with philosophical assumptions as well as methods of enquiry (Creswell & Clark 2007, p5). The philosophical underpinnings of this mixed methods study are based in a pragmatic approach. Many mixed methods researchers and theorists draw strong associations with mixed methodology and the philosophy of pragmatism (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie 2004; Biddle & Shaffte, 2015). A major tenet of pragmatism is that quantitative and qualitative methods are compatible, paralleling the mixed-methods design view of the need to respect fully the wisdom of both positivism and constructivism (or quantitative and qualitative designs).

Many pragmatists reject the belief that there are absolute truths and absolute values and posit that the truth is “what works” (Johnston & Onguwbezie 2004; Creswell, 2013). A risk with pragmatism is that it can be misinterpreted as ‘anything goes’, a challenge arising due to its inconsistent and haphazard usage, whereby practitioners embrace a de facto pragmatism, however with the approach lacking the rigor and theory to determine what is truly pragmatic versus what is simply expedient (Hughes & Gosney, 2016, p82). Morgan (2014, p1051) argues however that pragmatism presents a new paradigm going well beyond “what works” to disrupt the assumptions of older approaches based on the philosophy of knowledge, while

providing promising new directions for understanding the nature of social research. Pragmatism is thus seen as shifting away from characterizing social research in terms of ontology, epistemology, and methodology, to embrace questions such as: How do researchers make choices about the way they do research? Why do they make the choice they do? And, what is the impact of making one set of choices rather than another? (Morgan, 2014, p1051). This study supports the view that pragmatism is a perspective that can bridge current divides between scientific paradigms, the theory-practice gap, and academic-practitioner interests (Korte & Mercurio, 2017, p60).

There will be both deductive and inductive components to this research study. The inductive origins, based on researcher observation of individuals leading organisations with varying degrees of effectiveness and resilience, stimulated a desire to exploring subjective meaning and perceptions of participants (Marshall & Rossman, 2011; Creswell 2013) and to describe patterns and regularities in the real world (Blaikie, 2009). This study will use an inductive realist approach to describe how the coaching process unfolds in the real world while also developing findings about participants' lived experience. This will be interwoven with a deductive approach – whereby the established theory within the various bodies of literature (leader development, executive coaching and ICT), will be explored, and potentially modified or extended. In deductive research, theory guides the design and interpretation of results. This study will test the established theory based on research findings and so develop confidence that some parts of it are true or not. It is helpful “to iteratively cycle between inductive theory construction processes and deductive theory testing strategies to produce and develop useful theory” (Edmonson and McManus, 2007, p1166).

Eisenhardt (1989) noted that recognition of a priori constructs helps guide the process of understanding and theory building. The well-researched core constructs underpinning ICT and executive coaching guided the research process. It is important to note that whilst the

constructs are identified as potentially important in the literature review, for this study they are tentative and may not be of importance (or equal importance) in any resultant findings or theory. Whilst the use of a priori constructs was helpful for structure and approach, we were also mindful that “being open to any possibility can lead to serendipitous discoveries” (Merriam, 1998, p.121). While some of the coding emerges from the data, the semi-structured interviews anchor these in theory.

3.3 Overall Design of this Study

Mixed method designs are ideal when seeking comprehensive solutions to complex practical problems, offering the possibility to create synergies and identify patterns that are not available through using traditional mono- research methods. In this study, the volatile and uncertain environment and complexity impacting those aspiring to lead in organisations requires the various facets of the issues to be considered, and for exploration to occur from multiple perspectives (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2003). Today’s research world mirrors the organisational world, in that it is becoming increasingly interdisciplinary, complex and dynamic. Taking a non-purist or mixed position allows researchers to mix and match design components that complement one with another, and that offer the best chance of answering the research question. The mixed methods research paradigm has been recommended as an approach that aligns well with leader self-development (Orvis and Ratwani, 2010). It is considered the best approach to obtain a comprehensive understanding of what motivates, drives and hinders leader development, where contexts, organisations and individuals are substantially different (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009).

The conceptual framework used to guide the study was developed as a result of the literature review and is shown in the previous chapter as Figure 2.2. The study combines a survey, a coaching program and an interview in the aim of benefitting from both qualitative

and quantitative methods and to providing holistic insights on the coaching process and outcomes. The aim was to capture the experience of participants during the coaching informed by ICT and specifically how it might impact their leader effectiveness

3.3.1 Specific design considerations. Within the mixed method approach, there are a number of design issues to be considered including method priority, implementation, and integration (Creswell, Plano Clark, Guttman & Hanson, 2003). This study adopts a convergent parallel mixed method design (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011), wherein data collection and analysis are concurrent. The visual model for the design of this study is presented in Figure 3.2.

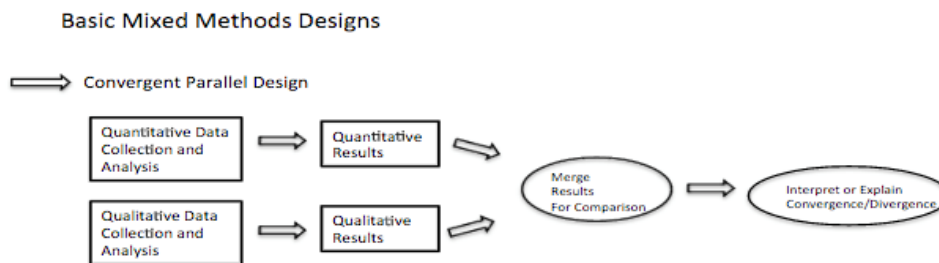


Figure 3.2. Model for Mixed Methods Design

From “*Designing and conducting mixed methods research,*” by J. Creswell and V. Clark, (2007).

The qualitative component of this mixed methods study took priority due to the research focus on capturing the voices of participant-leaders. With a qualitative perspective a researcher is inquiring about how participants are experiencing an event, with questions generally seeking to uncover the perspectives of an individual, a group, or different groups (Agee, 2009). An in-depth perspective was sought that would afford evocative descriptions and deepen understanding of the changes taking place as a result of the coaching informed by ICT. The open-ended responses from semi-structured questions provided leaders the opportunity to elaborate on their experiences of coaching and to contribute insights on the mechanisms through which their effectiveness was enhanced (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). Context was important, as was understanding the outliers, with the qualitative focus

allowing for an exploration of difference and uniqueness (Corbin & Strauss, 2008; Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). The research question aligned well with this inductive approach, allowing exploration of subjective meaning and perceptions of participants (Marshall & Rossman, 2011; Creswell 2013).

At implementation, data collection of both quantitative and qualitative data occurred concurrently, although with differing aims. The quantitative data were collected primarily with the aim of providing statistical results that would numerically support the noted changes in effectiveness as a result of the coaching. The qualitative data were generated through individual semi-structured interviews, and other materials that would help explain participant experiences of the ICT model as used in the coaching process. The qualitative interviews offered a deeper understanding of any perceived changes in effectiveness, and thus a more complete picture of participant experiences. The quantitative data allowed questions to be scaled (i.e. indicating the extent to which coaching informed by ICT enhanced leader effectiveness), while the qualitative data and its analysis explained those statistical results by exploring participants' views in more depth.

The process flow of the research as it was conducted is shown in Table 3.1.

<i>Phase</i>	<i>Procedure (What)</i>	<i>Product (How)</i>	<i>Timeline</i>
Quantitative Data Collection T1	Online Survey	Demographic info Leader Effectiveness Scale PsyCap Scale	Mar-16
Coaching program	ICT Coaching Program	2 x 1hr coaching sessions using ICT model	Mar-June 16
Quantitative Data Collection T2	Online Survey	Leader Effectiveness Scale PsyCap Scale	Jun-16
Qualitative Data Collection	Face to face Interview (recorded)	Semi structured interview questions Interview transcripts Memos, researcher journals	Jun-16
Quantitative Data Analysis	Simple regression	SPSS quantitative software Descriptive statistics, t-test outputs	Jul Aug 16
Qualitative Data Analysis	Review of interview recordings Transcription, coding and thematic analysis	Thematic analysis Codes & themes Visual model	Jul Aug 16
Side by Side Mixed Methods Analysis	Interpretation and explanation of the meaning of the quantitative and qualitative results	Discussion Recommendation for future studies	Sept Oct 16

Table 3.1. Concurrent Mixed Methods Design and Procedures

This study falls within the complementarity category of mixed methods design, whereby the quantitative and qualitative results are used to measure “overlapping but also different facets of a phenomenon, yielding an enriched, elaborated understanding of that phenomenon” (Greene, Caracelli & Graham, 1989, p258). Combining the qualitative and quantitative research paradigms allows a more comprehensive understanding of the coaching experience, and offers a more complete picture of participant developmental changes and the links to their effectiveness. The complementarity intent is supported by the use of a qualitative interview to explore the experience of participants of the coaching program, and uncover influences on these experiences. This is coupled with a quantitative questionnaire to measure the changes in leader effectiveness. An advantage of the concurrent mixed methods design, with simultaneous quantitative and qualitative strands, and data collected for

quantitative and qualitative at approximately same time, is that it offers a mechanism for interjecting context into the research inquiry (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). An additional key advantage is that both verification and generation of knowledge can occur simultaneously (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009).

3.3.2 Validity and reliability of mixed methods. The strengths and weaknesses of mixed methods designs have been widely discussed in the literature (Green et al., 1997; Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011; Creswell, 2013). For this study, in addition to the appropriateness of fit with the research aims, advantages of a mixed method include its convenience in allowing for collection of both quantitative and qualitative data within a short timeframe, thus saving time and costs. A limitation regarding the availability of resources to collect and analyse both types of data, was mitigated by the researcher having recently completed quantitative and qualitative coursework, and thus with research skills in both methods (Creswell & Plano-Clark, 2011).

Arguments against mixing methods are generally founded in the “great qualitative-quantitative debate” (Greene, 2007, p.36), also known as “the paradigm wars” (Denzin, 2010, p. 420). In this study, however, the adoption of a pragmatic research approach avoids questions of ontology, thus relieving itself of the necessity of a quantitative/qualitative dualism. Through the mixing of methods, the study will both obtain self-report survey data of changes in leaders as a result of the coaching, as well as rich qualitative data around their perceptions, capturing some of the complexity of the environments impacting leader effectiveness.

Construct validity has been ensured through the use of previously tested instruments for the quantitative part of the study. Research procedures for the qualitative study were designed and implemented following protocols and coding manuals developed in conjunction with senior academics and textbooks (Denzin, 2010; Yin, 2014). The sample size and

response rate of this study's survey reflect that it was not intended to obtain generalisable data. The analysis of quantitative data was primarily descriptive of situational facts, but included analysis to assess whether statistically significant differences were found as a result of the coaching. Analysis of qualitative data was intended to provide deeper understanding of participant experiences. Through contextualization and triangulation of methods, data and theory, a high degree of construct validity and internal validity is afforded.

In summary, the qualitative and quantitative methods are used to measure overlapping but also different facets of the participants' experiences of the coaching informed by ICT program, yielding an enriched, elaborated understanding of that phenomenon. This use of different methods to assess different levels of a phenomenon has been characterised with the analogy of peeling the layers of an onion (Mark & Shotland, 1987).

3.4 Selection of Participants

This study used a purposeful sample (Patton, 2002; Creswell & Clark, 2007; Creswell, 2013), and sought experienced leaders who are juggling competing priorities, stretched resources, and working in a competitive and hyper-complex environment. The cross section of industries and organisations represented in the sample reflect that the inner characteristics of effectiveness are not industry-, or organisation-specific. Leaders undertaking an Executive MBA exhibited many of the selection criteria; they are completing postgraduate studies in addition to sustaining senior and often challenging leadership roles, thereby adding to the demands placed upon them. All were leaders at middle and upper levels in their organisations with significant leadership experience. From a cohort of 38 EMBA students, 22 volunteered to participate, with attrition during the 3 months study bringing the final sample to nineteen participants at interview. Small participant research is an expected norm in qualitative research, enabling the researcher to gain a deeper understanding of participant

experience and to develop a rich description of that experience (Creswell, 2013; Merriam & Tisdale 2015).

The final sample of participating leaders adopted an identical concurrent sampling design (Onwuegbuzie & Collins, 2007); quantitative and qualitative data was collected from the same people (identical) at approximately the same time (i.e., concurrently). The names of participants were not used and have been replaced with a unique identifier to protect their confidentiality. All study participants had attended a 2-hour introduction to Boyatzis' ICT framework (2006), as part of their EMBA studies. They were invited to participate in the research after a short 30-minute presentation outlining the research aims and methods, and were offered two "free" coaching sessions as a part of the research. Participants were provided with a participant information sheet, and consent form, which they signed as indication of their willingness to participate (Appendix C and D). As part of the research, all participants were invited to complete a survey twice, first before and then again after the two coaching sessions, and also to participate in one hour-long interview.

The study acknowledges the bias inherent in the self-selection of leaders to the program, however this is mitigated by the pragmatic requirement for leaders whose time commitments and engagement levels would allow continued participation over the anticipated 3-month study, and by the belief that that coaching requires effort and commitment on behalf of participants.

3.5 Researcher-Coach Perspective

The uniqueness of this study within a specific context precludes its being exactly replicated in another context. However, statements about the researcher's positions - the key assumptions, the selection of participants, the biases and values of the researcher - will enhance the study's chances of being replicated in another setting (Creswell, 2003). The

researcher-coach was the primary instrument for qualitative data collection and analysis (Merriam & Tisdale, 2015). This means that the researcher acted as ‘interpretive-bricoleur’ (Denzin & Lincoln, 2013), consciously using different lenses to move between and within competing and overlapping paradigms, and performing a number of diverse tasks, ranging from interviewing to observing, to interpreting documents, and to intensive self-reflection and introspection (Merriam & Tisdale, 2015). The researcher-coach’s role in this study was unique; having worked for several years as sessional academic at a business school, and also running an executive coaching practice, the researcher also had 20 years’ experience leading a global professional services Learning and Development function, and so brought deep experience both of the challenges impacting corporate leaders, and of working with them to develop and implement solutions in the real world. There are a number of benefits and limitations arising from the dual researcher-coach role. For example, the affinity of the researcher-coach with participants, having worked in similarly demanding environments, while offering deep insight, may also have caused her to pre-empt responses. Also, the positive relationship between researcher-coach and participants and high levels of empathy inherent in the coaching role, while encouraging trust and openness among participants, may equally have contributed to reluctance for the researcher-coach to challenge or probe deeply. These biases were mitigated to some extent by the significant experience of the coach and her ongoing reflective practice, and by the periodic checkpoints during fieldwork with the associate supervisor who was also an experienced coach. As a process, executive coaching validates the inclusion of the coach’s perspectives; a coach works in tandem with coaching participants to co-create a solution, rather than dispassionately observing from a distance. Some of the limitations inherent in the dual researcher-coach perspective will be mitigated due to the design whereby primary data collection occurs independently of the coaching sessions. Other limitations are discussed in Chapter 5.5 - Research Limitations.

3.6 Qualitative Data Collection and Analysis

The primary source of qualitative data collection was via semi-structured in-depth interviews. This was supplemented by supporting data collected through interim feedback from participants and from researcher memos and reflective journals.

3.6.1 Semi-structured interviews. In-depth interviews afford insights into the subjects' lived world, enabling the researcher to seek an understanding of participants' perspectives of their constructed reality and interpretation of their own experience (Kvale, 1996). The use of semi structured interviews was identified as an appropriate data collection method for this study, combining a pre-determined set of open questions (questions that prompt discussion), inviting a process of exploration and discovery (Creswell, 2007) and providing an opportunity for the interviewer-researcher to explore particular themes or responses further. The interview questions were developed in response to the literature review and the conceptual framework, with the aim of obtaining the relevant information required to address the research questions. Definitions of core constructs were not provided at interview, thus allowing participants complete freedom to describe their experiences without predetermined criteria. Broad categories of questions were devised to elicit information from interviewees, focusing on leader effectiveness and aspects of the coaching/ICT process. For example, the first category of questions concerned leader-participant perceptions of impacts on their effectiveness. The full list of questions is attached at Appendix F.

Following Creswell and Clark (2007), an interview protocol was developed for the interview process. The protocol includes instructions to the researcher including opening statements and space for recording both the participants' and the researcher's comments. The initial questions are however only a beginning point in the inquiry process. First iterations of questions are tentative and exploratory but give researchers a tool for articulating the primary focus of the study (Creswell, 2007, p433). The guide outlined topics to be covered, however

the order and wording of questions was left to the interviewer's discretion (Kvale, 1996; Bryman, 2001), affording the flexibility to ask probing questions and request elaboration or clarification (Corbin & Strauss, 2008), or to change questions to reflect an increased understanding of the problem (Creswell, 2013). Participants had opportunities to uncover feelings, motivations and expectations (Marshall & Rossman, 2011; Creswell, 2013), and to discuss issues of importance to them, or to describe complex situations and information in context (Marshall & Rossman, 2011). The evolving and ongoing process of questioning is an integral part of understanding the unfolding lives and perspectives of others, with questions changing during the process of research to reflect an increased understanding of the problem, (Creswell, 2007, 43).

Changes in questions also emerged from the researcher's examination of her own role and perspective in the inquiry process, and in particular how she was positioned in relation to participants. The researcher-interviewer remained focused on collecting data to ensure that the research questions could be answered (Minichiello, Aroni & Hays, 2008). The researcher's experience as an executive coach contributed to confidence that questioning techniques to elicit deep insights were skilfully adopted at interview. Leveraging the rapport and trust previously built during the coaching sessions, it was decided not to provide interview questions in advance, to encourage unfiltered "raw" responses. Interviews were approximately 45-60 minutes in duration and conducted face-to-face in syndicate rooms provided by the university the participants were attending. Permission to audio-record each interview was sought from each participant, with each interview independently transcribed by a professional transcriber. Nvivo software v11 for Mac was used to code the data.

3.6.2 Supplementary qualitative data.

Interim participant feedback. Participants were invited to provide interim feedback on their experiences of the ICT coaching after the first and second coaching sessions, and before

the T2 survey and final interview. This technique is also frequently used in coaching as a means of guiding participants to periodically reflect upon their learnings, and in order to facilitate a deeper understanding of participant perspectives (Merriam & Tisdale, 2015).

Researcher memos and reflective journal. The researcher developed memos and maintained a reflective journal that was informed by the study's overarching research question. This included a factual log of events, field notes of observations and a personal reflection of critical incidents from the researcher-coach perspective (Denscombe, 1998), as well as the recording of various memos to chart development of researcher ideas and linkages.

Direct observation. Observation was engaged in as an informal method of data collection for this research. This was afforded by the researcher frequenting the participants' place of study, and "hanging around in the setting", and "getting to know people" (Marshall & Rossman, 2011, p139), in order to understand the social setting and capture the "context within which people interact" (Patton, 2002, p262). As noted by Patton (2002, p262), "understanding context is essential to a holistic perspective".

3.6.3 Qualitative Data Analysis. The qualitative data analysis process offers "a systematic search for meaning" (Hatch, 2002, p. 148). A number of steps were taken in the process of data analysis so that the researcher could gain the greatest insight and make an interpretation of the meaning of the data (Creswell, 2003). The steps taken follow the guidelines set out by Creswell (2003) and are outlined below:

Step One: Organising and preparing data for analysis. This involved the transcription of interviews and typing up field notes and memos. The data was then loaded into NVivo Version 11 (a qualitative analysis software package from QSR International), in preparation for coding. NVivo was chosen to assist thematic analysis as it "enables the researchers to see the data well, as it accurately reflects the data back to the researcher" (Beekhuizen, Nielsen & von Hellens, 2010, p. 1).

Step Two: Immersion/Data familiarisation. All data was read to gain preliminary impressions and look for general ideas and meaning in the information. The researcher initially read through the transcripts while listening to audio to ensure accuracy. This also served to give the researcher a preliminary feel for the data.

Step Three: Thematic analysis of the data. Analysis of the data began with the researcher systematically working through the data line by line (Strauss and Corbin 1990, p74), segmenting and labelling the data (Creswell, 1998). Coding involves “linking, breaking up and disaggregating the data so that once coded, the data look different, as they are seen and heard through the category rather than the research event” (Morse & Richards, 2002, p. 115). A deductive approach to the analysis was used in the first instance because the intent was to align the main themes from the qualitative data with the coaching, ICT and leader development literatures. In the case of this research, the theoretical frameworks underpinning coaching provided broad topics to begin coding, for example ‘coach participant relationship’, “challenging questioning’ etc. These broad categories were applied to the transcripts to begin coding for patterns, with the approach allowing additional major emergent themes to be discovered inductively during the coding process (Creswell, 1998). These patterns were recorded by the researcher in Nvivo 11.0. A coding dictionary was developed with explicit definitions of meanings to facilitate consistency and understanding. Initial coding also revealed in vivo codes emerging from the data. This served to maintain the authenticity of the participant experience.

Categorisation. Clustering (Miles and Huberman, 1994) occurs when certain pieces of data seem to fall together to form a category. Categories facilitate comparison between their various elements, and help the researcher to develop theoretical concepts (Maxwell, 2005). After the initial coding, the aim was to aggregate similar codes and establish categories that would enable the analysis to move beyond sheer description, taking qualitative inquiry

beyond coding and retrieval (Merriam, 1998). Relationships and commonalities were established between the codes, leading to preliminary data clusters and category generation, and thence to connecting and interrelating themes (Creswell, 2002). During categorisation, a codifying process was applied in order to organise and group similarly coded data into ‘families’ of parent nodes and children nodes (Saldana, 2009). Axial coding was performed whereby the researcher attempted to reconstruct the data in new ways by making connections between a category and its subcategories (Strauss and Corbin 1990). Behaviours and actions were coded as illustrating the direct impact of coaching on participants’ effectiveness. Additionally the researcher paid close attention to emotional nuances etc. This was a richness at times discernable by the emphasis or not of certain words on the audio, an emphasis that could not be discerned via the transcript. Sensitising questions posed by the researcher included “what is going on?”, “what is being said?”, and “what are we assuming due to the context?”, “what strikes you?” (Creswell, 2007, p153, cited in Saldana).

Step 4: Generate Themes. The final step in the coding process was analysis of the categories for themes. Coding is a cyclical act (Saldaña, 2013), thus as categories of meaning emerged, themes were developed using the constant comparative method (Lincoln and Guba, 1985; Strauss & Corbin 1990). NVivo aided in exploring the data in more depth to analyse fine details that helped with understanding. The initial coding documents were also manually re-analysed to support interpretation of the themes and identify more specific sub-themes within each major theme, thus sorting bits of information into groupings that had something in common (Merriam, 1998). The NVivo 11.0 software was an aid to the organisation of the material, and helped with the management of emerging themes, but was not used to interpret the data. Miles and Huberman (1994) suggest that manual interpretation should form the basis for study findings. The data was manually interpreted looking for incidences of internal convergence and external divergence. The process continued iteratively with constant

moving back and forward between themes and the entire data set (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p 86) until data saturation, with the themes and linkages “tested” against one another.

3.6.4 Verification procedures for qualitative data. Qualitative research has been criticised for its failure to adhere to traditional validity and reliability criteria. Validation and reliability strategies do exist to ensure the accuracy of qualitative studies (Creswell, 2013), however rather than through traditional validity and reliability measures, these are based around credibility (Merriam, 1988), and trustworthiness (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Creswell (2013) recommends engaging in at least two verification procedures in order to establish the credibility and trustworthiness of a study. A number of strategies were employed in this study to ensure the rigour of this research. They are outlined below.

Triangulation. Good practice in qualitative research requires triangulation of alternative methods or data (Threlfall, 1999). Quantitative data in this study triangulated the qualitative findings, and there was additional triangulation between the transcribed audiotapes that informed the coach and participant reflection logs and observation notes. Meeting with a fellow researcher to analyse collectively, also served to triangulate some of the initial codes and ideas.

Peer review or debriefing. Debriefing acts as an external check of the research, through the challenge of having hard questions asked about methods, meanings, and interpretations (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). A number of debriefing sessions took place over the time of this research with the research supervisors and independent colleagues.

Establishing inter-coder agreement (Miles & Huberman, 1994). The researcher sought to verify the codes through inter-coder checks, one of the main methods of addressing reliability in qualitative research (Creswell, 2012). Inter-rater reliability is dependent upon the ability of two or more individuals to be consistent (Miles & Huberman, 1994), thus it was important that there was uniformity among the raters' approach to, and outcomes from, the

coding process. In this study, two researchers independently coded three of the nineteen transcripts. The independent coder was a PhD candidate focusing on managerial coaching, and was thus very familiar with the underlying theories associated with coaching and leadership development, and experienced at coding. The coder was also an experienced management consultant and coach, with extensive field experience of conducting interviews and identifying categories and themes, and had also recently completed a qualitative research coursework module, further contributing to confidence. In the first instance, prior to coding, discussions were held to align each coder's interpretation of the broad themes. The researcher and independent coder then coded three transcripts independently. Where there were differences, the data were rechecked and in all cases, differences of opinion were resolved. As a result, there was a high degree of consistency among the coders, which provided a substantial degree of confidence in the trustworthiness of the data.

Providing rich, thick descriptions (Creswell & Miller, 2000). A detailed description of the participants and the setting under study enables the reader to make decisions about the conditions in which findings can be transferred to other settings. This study took place in the context of EMBA program, so that while different work contexts were acknowledged, there were elements of similarity to participants' experiences that helped transport the reader to the setting (Creswell, 2003).

Providing disconfirming evidence (Miles & Huberman, 1994; Creswell & Miller, 2000). Once the preliminary themes were established, the text data was searched for evidence that was consistent with or disconfirmed the themes. Discussing contrary information added to the credibility of findings because reality is "multiple and complex" (Creswell & Miller, 2002, p. 127).

Auditing (Creswell & Miller, 2000). The researcher's primary academic supervisor conducted a constant and careful auditing on all research procedures and data analysis in the

study.

Prolonged engagement and persistent observation. This strategy was used to establish credibility of the research (Creswell, 2013). The researcher-coach engaged in two face-to-face one-hour coaching sessions and an hour long interview with each participant, and was also frequently onsite where participants were undertaking their EMBA studies. This assisted with building trust with participants and helped the researcher learn more about some of the contexts within which they were working and studying, thus enabling the better decisions to be made about what was relevant to the purpose of the study.

3.7 Quantitative Data Collection and Analysis

For the quantitative data collection, a Qualtrics web-based survey was administered. Identical surveys were administered at T1 and T2 (two months apart), with data analysis focusing on paired samples. T1 occurred in a 2-week period prior to the first coaching session, and T2 in a two-week period after the completion of the second coaching session. Twenty-two participants completed the first survey and commenced coaching program. Of these, the three participants were excluded from the results who did not complete the T2 survey or the coaching. All survey data was analysed using repeated measures t-tests to test for significant differences over time. Descriptive statistics including the mean, standard deviation, number in sample, and frequency were reported and are discussed in Chapter 4 - Findings.

The findings are a result of the analysis of the data collected via both surveys and interviews with study participants. Whilst the purpose of the quantitative survey was to measure changes in leader effectiveness as a result of the coaching, the purpose of the interviews was to enhance our understanding of how participants experienced enhanced leader effectiveness as a result of the coaching sessions.

3.7.1 Quantitative Measures. The quantitative data for the study consisted of a number of measures of leader effectiveness. The scales adopted for each are discussed below. Quantitative data were measured twice by survey, firstly within 2 weeks preceding the first coaching session, and second within 2 weeks after the end of the second/final coaching session. This short time frame was to minimise external /environmental factors that may also have impacted any change in study measures.

Leader Effectiveness scale. The ultimate goal of most leader development programs is improved leader effectiveness. There are multiple measures and indicators based on myriad conceptual frameworks, with measures varying depending on context and perspective, with the view of effective leadership also differing according to who is being asked (e.g., peers, subordinates, bosses) (Day et al., 2014.). The absence of a universally agreed upon definition of what a good leader is or does means that there is as yet no generic 'leadership' instrument (Day et al., 2014). In practice, leaders themselves (rather than researchers) may best determine the central elements of their particular leadership role, and thus the measures of their effectiveness.

Following research that suggests benefits in including a variety of criteria of leadership effectiveness (Yukl, 2012), this study includes a number of measures, including leader role-efficacy (LRE) and leader trust in subordinates (LTS), two measures of leader effectiveness that are based in both practice and theory (Ladegard & Gjerde. 2014). LRE has links to socio cognitive theory and self-efficacy (Bandura, 1997) and addresses central aspects of a leader's ability to function in his/her role, being related to agency, self-reflectiveness, and confidence in general leadership tasks (Ladegard & Gjerde. 2014, p639). A leader's performance is also highly dependent on his/her abilities to navigate and manage interpersonal relationships (Holmberg et al., 2014), with the leader's own perception of his/her trust in followers indicative of relationship quality with subordinates. The degree to which a leader's ability to

trust has been enhanced as a result of coaching may be a helpful measure of the impact of coaching on the leader's effectiveness. In sum, intrapersonal LSE and interpersonal LTS are complementary indications of an individual's capacity to function in a leadership role in contemporary flexible and fluid organisations, where specific tasks and work contexts might largely vary. The combination of validated LRE and LTS measures resulted in an 11-point scale for leader effectiveness (Ladegard & Gjerde, 2014). The response format was a seven-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). All measurement scales are attached in Appendix E.

Additional justification of the selection of these measures for this study resides in three areas. Firstly, both LRE and LTS represent outcome variables that meet the idiosyncratic nature of leaders' individual coaching goals and are generic enough to be compared before and after coaching, and across leaders. Second, the selection of these measures may also be justified by the convenience of using an existing and empirically validated measure of leader effectiveness. Third, the self-report aspects of the measures align well both with the reflective urge inherent and nurtured by coaching, and to parallel the self-report instruments of PsyCap discussed below.

PsyCap scale. PsyCap was measured using the PsyCap questionnaire (PCQ) (Luthans, Avolio et al., 2007; Luthans, Youssef & Avolio, 2015). Use of the scale was approved by MindGarden Inc., as attached in Appendix E. The PCQ is a 24-item measurement scale with six items representing each of the four components that make up PsyCap (Hope, Efficacy, Resilience, and Optimism). The items used in the PCQ were originally drawn from published validated scales commonly used in positive psychology and have also been empirically validated in the workplace (Peterson & Luthans, 2003; Youssef & Luthans, 2007). The response format was a seven-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). The entire 24-item PCQ is attached at Appendix E.

3.8 Ethical Considerations

The research reported in this thesis was granted ethics approval by the Queensland University of Technology (QUT) Human Ethics Committee (QUT Approval Number 1600000044) in line with standard ethical guidelines and the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research (Australian Government, 2007). A variety of ethical issues were taken into account prior to conducting this study in line with Patton's (2002) comprehensive framework of ethical issues within research projects, including explaining purpose, promises and reciprocity, risk assessment, confidentiality, informed consent, and data access and ownership.

The purpose of the study was explained clearly to the interviewees. This was reinforced in the information on the Participant Information Sheet that was presented in lay language appropriate to the audience. It was clearly outlined in the Participant Information Sheet that benefits may or may not be experienced as a result of the coaching. A risk assessment was conducted prior to commencing the research and this study was considered to be low risk; it was deemed that there was no risk beyond normal day-to-day living associated with participation in the project. Confidentiality of all participants was ensured in this research. All comments and responses were treated confidentially, and the names of individuals were not stored with the transcripts. Participants were also assured that the level of analysis conducted and the reporting of findings would not allow for the identification of individuals. The interviews were recorded using an audio device, later transcribed and then deleted. Transcripts could only be accessed by the research team and were stored in a secure location. Informed consent was sought from all participants. Prior to commencement all participants were provided with an information sheet and consent form (see Appendix D). At all times it was made clear that interviewees were free to withdraw from the study at any stage without penalty. Participants were also offered the opportunity to request a copy of the

final report.

3.9 Chapter Summary

This chapter provides a detailed and comprehensive outline of the mixed methods research approach and research design for this study. An overview of mixed method design is followed by a detailed explanation of the data collection methods, sampling strategy, and data analysis. The ethical considerations of this study are also discussed, as well as issues of validity and reliability in qualitative research. The next chapter will present the findings, followed by a conclusion chapter where the findings are analysed.

Chapter 4: Results

The purpose of this study is to contribute to an enhanced understanding of how executive coaching using Intentional Change Theory (ICT) can enhance leader effectiveness. Chapter Three established and justified the methodological approach, and the data collection and analysis methods used for conducting this research. This chapter presents the findings as they apply to the overarching research question “*How does coaching informed by Intentional Change Theory (ICT) enhance leader effectiveness?*” The following sub questions are also explored:

- What are participant experiences of the process of coaching informed by ICT?
- How do participants experience enhanced leader effectiveness as a result of coaching informed by ICT?
- What other contingent factors influence how an individual experiences coaching informed by ICT?

The findings presented are a result of the analysis of the data collected via both quantitative surveys and qualitative interviews. The interview findings contribute to our understanding of ways in which participants experienced enhanced leader effectiveness as a result of the coaching. The survey findings triangulate the interview results and offer measurable data regarding changes in leader effectiveness arising as a result of the coaching. Supplemental qualitative data further triangulate the interview findings, and were collected in the form of interim participant feedback, researcher memos and reflective journals. This enhanced familiarity and understanding for the researcher of the on-going context for participants, and facilitated deeper relationships with participants than would have been afforded by the "formal" sessions.

4.1 Contextual Overview / Demographics.

Data were gathered from executives in a range of different organisations and roles, all of whom volunteered to undertake coaching and participate in the study. Nineteen participants from different sectors, industries and organisations took part, with a myriad of environmental factors affecting context for each individual. Table 4.1 displays some of the attributes of the study participants, with the participant gender ratio broadly reflective of the EMBA cohort from which the sample was drawn.

years	Gender	
	Male	Female
<30	0	0
30-34	4	2
35-39	3	1
40-44	0	2
45-49	2	2
>50	0	0
unknown	2	1
	11	8

Table 4.1. Participant Descriptive Statistics

Participants were all middle managers or more senior, and had been in the workforce for between 9 and 40 years. Tenure in their current roles ranged from 2 months to 23 years, with the majority of participants having been in their current role for less than 4 years. The names of participants have been replaced with an alias to protect their confidentiality.

4.2 Qualitative Findings: Themes Presented by Research Questions

The following presentation of findings uses the theoretical framework developed in Chapter Two as a guide to reconstruct the data and present it in a meaningful way. First, findings associated with participant perceptions of the coaching process generally and the ICT model are discussed. This is followed by a discussion of findings associated with the

enhanced leader effectiveness of participants. Themes arising from participant interviews are presented, along with the quantitative findings. Finally, a number of emerging themes are presented that may help more fully answer the overarching research question. The broad interview themes are summarised in Table 4.2.

Interview Themes			
Coaching Process	Complexity Leadership	Leader Effectiveness	Emerging
<u>Coaching Process</u> Trusting Relationships Structure & Flexibility Powerful Questioning Developmental Goals Space & Time for coaching	<u>VUCA Context</u> Adaptation Emergence	<u>Behavioural Change</u> <u>PsyCap</u> Hope Efficacy Resilience Optimism	Appetite for Reflection Comfort with Ambiguity Willingness to be Vulnerable
<u>ICT Model</u> Visioning, Strengths focus Awareness of gaps *Learning Agenda *Practice, experimentation *Resonant Relationships	-	<u>Leader Identity</u> confidence choice & control agility self awareness	

Note. Inclusion of themes was based on identification by more than one participant

Note. * limited interview data available due to restricted timeframes for study.

Table 4.2. Interview Themes

4.2.1 *The Coaching Process.* This section presents findings in response to Research Question 1: *What are participant experiences of the process of coaching informed by ICT?* A number of participants had not previously been coached, and for these, the coaching process was much different than expected. Some had anticipated a more rigid series of questions and answers, and others expected a motivational session, much like personal training, and were surprised with the ease and flow of the conversation. Despite the briefing provided, and the voluntary nature of the coaching, a number of participants reported apprehension about the process, and/or discomfort, especially at the unknowns involved in the initial session. M34 reported:

I was very uncomfortable in the first coaching session. I had no experience of coaching before. So there was this kind of sense of getting a lot of questions and having to come up with answers. You know, it's not my natural style to have all of the answers at the ready unless I've done all of the thinking beforehand. So the dynamic of the coaching interaction was quite uncomfortable for me to start with.

The coaching process assisted in establishing a balance between structure and flexibility. Perceptions varied between those participants who found the open-ended nature of the coaching questions a little uncomfortable, and those who valued the unexpectedness and open-endedness of some of the questions, and the opportunity to explore avenues of thought as they arose. For example, F40 found the unpredictability refreshing, *“If they were all expected questions...it wouldn't have been as valuable to me”*. On the other hand, the structure was particularly helpful for those participants who valued predictability and clarity, and thus experienced greater psychological safety and focus during the sessions. Some participants saw the structured nature of the sessions as helpful in creating a mutual partnership, one describing it as, *“a nice combination of being directed but ...you have had that flexibility. It has felt like it...has been led by me also”* (F40).

The strong connection formed with the coach during the two coaching sessions, was also cited by participants as an important factor in building an environment of psychological safety, contributing to building a trusting relationship where they felt acknowledged and supported. Being able to discuss work issues with a trusted yet objective sounding board was noted as particularly valuable for some participants, with M31 commenting on: *“the power of sitting down with someone that has got no emotional investment in what you are doing and asking questions”*. A number of participants mentioned that the coach's credentials had contributed to their openness to trust both the coach and the process.

I already had in my mind prejudged you as someone that was already skilled. ... I believed in your skill set, I just said, “She knows what she is doing. I don't need to tell her how to do her job.” So I just kind of came in and it worked. The first session was amazing. So that reinforced that – that you are an expert in your domain, so I don't need to come in with any critical stuff. (M35)

The powerful questioning inherent in the coaching process was seen as valuable, with M48 highlighting the benefits of the “question and dig deeper” approach inherent in coaching, stating “you had very pointed questions and you followed a lead down.” Some participants valued the coach bringing an objective “naïve” viewpoint to act as foil to their habitual perspective:

You know, a lot of things you can answer yourself, but you need somebody to ask the right questions to get that. And the power of that. You know, I have a lot more buy-in, being that I feel that I am giving. You are asking the questions, but I am giving the answers. You walk away and you think, ‘Oh, well, I’ve come up with that myself.’ So it gives you that extra buy-in. (M31)

A distinction was made between challenging work, the bread and butter of these senior leaders daily organisational experience, and the challenge inherent in questions that were more inwardly-focused, and that required reflection and deepening exploration of personal perspectives, habits and limiting beliefs. Some participants saw the inner focus as a mechanism for building self-awareness, acting as catalyst to encourage delving beyond business as usual thinking, and reflecting more deeply upon personal values and purpose.

F42 stated:

I think it’s just the process of being asked these kinds of questions or being asked to think about what it is that you are good at or what it is you want to do. It’s just the whole process, I think. It’s, of course, going to make you more self-aware.

The challenge to thinking or habits implicit in the coaching questions was expressed as a key benefit, with the questions leading to a feeling of empowerment in finding one’s own solutions. The questions often acted as a conduit for participants to access thoughts not at front of mind, and were seen as helpful in accessing an intuitive solution, or as a valuable opportunity to clarify thinking, much like F34 who likened it to a ‘white boarding’ session. M45 observed, “often the solution is intuitive. It’s within you, but it’s just extracting it and having that conversation through coaching that opens up a different pathway to find that answer that often is there but is just not obvious.”

Many participants experienced the targeted coaching questions as challenging on an emotional as well as intellectual level, suggesting both the infrequency of this type of conversation at work, and also the personal nature of some of the thoughts and feelings uncovered. The questions sometimes triggered initial self-doubt and defensiveness, although this was usually followed by a feeling of confidence. Despite the acknowledged discomfort, the challenge was welcomed by most as a valuable part of the development process, "*If it doesn't trigger things, what is the learning?*" (F40).

Coaching is often associated with a goal setting process, with many coaching models adopting a goal-focused approach (e.g. the GROW model). The current study focuses on developmental (long-term) goals, with emphasis given to the quality of the coaching conversations and on participant insights that will impact their long-term effectiveness, rather than on the mechanics of goal setting and goal pursuit. Rather than working on specific goals (the what) that may be continually changing, many participants indicated value in working on the mind-set/attitude/process that would enable them to be more effective over a longer term (the how). This reflected quite a nuanced view of the role and nature of goals, seeing them as evolving and emergent. M34 explained his insight:

'How are the decisions that I'm making today impacting my ability to get there?' So that's my long-term goal, but I can only achieve that by linking a whole series of short-term goals and decisions together. Again, it aids that focus. So it's not just about my purpose at work, but it's about my personal purpose – about 'if I want to be there, how do I get there'?

This study's focus is on inner rather than outer world characteristics for leader effectiveness. Allocating space and time for coaching emerged from the literature as important (Cox et al., 2014), and for some participants who reporting suffering the impact of the demanding business environment and multiple priorities, whose workplace was somewhere to "*survive rather than thrive*" (M33), the coaching offered the time and space to stop 'doing' and focus inward. This opportunity to take time and space away from

operational matters was important in affording leaders another perspective on the issues impacting their effectiveness. F50 saw the coaching as a welcome respite, "*you just get so used to being on that treadmill that it's hard to stop*", while for others this pause allowed them to pull back to consider their higher purpose, with M33 describing it as helping his development towards a more "*conscious leadership*". The opportunity to take time out from the busyness of work was reported as valuable, yet as infrequently experienced by most of the study participants, perhaps reflecting the action-oriented, problem solving, and solutions-focused expectations governing leading today. Additional examples of participant responses regarding the coaching process are included in Appendix G.

4.2.2 Intentional Change Theory. A detailed description of the ICT model and its five discoveries is included in Chapter 2 - Literature Review. Participant observations about each of these discoveries are presented in the section below.

Ideal Self. The initial coaching session for each participant focused on Discovery 1 of Boyatzis' (2006) model, being the participant "vision" of what might be possible in an ideal world without constraints (the Ideal Self). Some participants reported unfamiliarity and discomfort in thinking in this way: "*the ideal self, I don't dwell on that*" (F48), while others reported having difficulty in breaking away from their habitual focus on the here and now of real and current priorities. Most participants however found this an insightful exercise in identifying possibilities not previously considered, or in unblocking barriers, and expressed a palpable sense of excitement at the insights. M34 explained:

That was a really positive experience for me... There was a sequence of questions about, 'What does that look like for you? What does that look like for you? What is the ideal state that we're heading towards here?' And it's uncomfortable because I hadn't thought about that before. But it's actually been quite powerful for me in the long term to go, 'Okay, well, yeah, that is my ideal state and it's a long way away, but how are the decisions that I'm making today impacting my ability to get there?'

Other positive emotions reported by participants as being experienced during the coaching include excitement, curiosity, fun, feeling energised and enjoying the opportunity to

be creative in exploring new possibilities. M35 and M38 reported, “ ‘Hey, let’s talk about an ideal world!’ *Fantatising about something that could be amazing. The positive realisations that you get out of it. They are all positive.*” (M35)

When I was thinking about different ways to do things – ‘maybe I could approach it this way or that way?’ – I guess that creativity was exciting me a little bit, thinking I could do it this way or that way. (M38)

Of note was the enjoyment experienced by many participants in spending time focusing on themselves from a personal or career perspective, as this was not something they tended to prioritise or have time for. Some experienced a sense of respite from the focus on operational matters and the pressure to always have a tangible solution or the right answer, with many seeing the coaching as an exercise they wished to continue beyond the study.

Real Self. Participant experiences of Discovery 2 (the Real Self), suggested that they valued the opportunity to more deeply consider a holistic picture of themselves as they currently are, rather than as they aspire to be or feel they ought to be. The strengths focus inherent in ICT was reported as enhancing confidence for many. For F40 the insight was “mind-blowing”:

That possibilities focus, that appreciative inquiry stuff about being far more positive and the possibilities. It’s kind of mind-blowing to think – it’s almost like, “What have I been doing this whole time?”

The process of exploring weaknesses was also reported as valuable and, perhaps counter intuitively, led to a greater awareness of strengths and underestimated possibilities for development, so that “*through understanding those weaknesses, in actual fact it has also made me think that I do have some strengths*” (M48). M34 described the possibilities that opened up for him through a deeper exploration of perceived weakness:

it has made me feel like I am limiting myself and that I need to explore weaknesses just to test what I am good at....I can actually leverage my strengths to mitigate against the weaknesses as opposed to needing to overcome them and be someone that I’m not...So I think I’m in a much better place now because of the coaching in terms of a more accurate view of my real self and my current state in terms of just shifting that position between positivity and negativity and optimism and pessimism.

Learning Agenda. Coaching approaches frequently distinguish between planning to learn (developmental, long-term focus), and planning to improve (performance improvement, short-term focus). The focus of ICT's Discovery 3 (Learning Agenda) is on the former (Boyatzis, 2006). The long-term nature of their professional and personal development process was acknowledged by many participants. For example M31 and M45 both illustrated this when they acknowledged, *"I really need to keep working on it. For the next stage, the learning is I need to learn"* (M35), and *"it's going to be a slow boiler; it's not going to happen over any quick space of time"* (M45).

For others, the learning experiences extended beyond the purely cognitive, to incorporate moments of insight, such as the power of being able to reframe a situation and use the experience as a learning tool:

It's about the positive reframe. So it's not, 'What did I do poorly and, therefore, would never do again?' It's about, 'What did I do well and what might I do differently next time?' (M34)

Experimentation and Practice. Discovery 4 (Experimentation and Practice) emphasises the importance of experimenting with new behaviours as an aide to developmental shifts (Boyatzis, 2006). Deliberately practicing the new behaviours and refining each time helped embed the learning for participants. Some were eager to experiment between coaching sessions, and use the learning to inform further practice in their work setting: *"I didn't want to come back to the next session and not have thought about it and not have pushed it"* (M33). F40's approach was: *"testing out little steps ...dabbling in stuff that I wouldn't normally dabble in...just to see whether I am just dipping my toes"* into the new behaviours. Others reported experiencing an enhanced sense of control and confidence and felt empowered to jump straight into the new ways of working: *"Bang, I'm just going to go and do them. There's no element that I need to have a little bit of a try or whatever. Bang, I'm going to go and do them"* (M48). Participant M35 experienced the coaching as like being in

a playground, suggesting a place of safety and fun where failing is viewed as part of the natural process towards positive change/ leader development:

I'm using this as a playground. I'm using this as my test or the staging environment. I can do that for the rest of my life. I don't have to say this is the only one, which is another realisation. There's no reason – I have a safe environment, a very safe environment.... So I am using that as a springboard and trying a whole lot of new things as far as leadership abilities go.

Resonant Relationships. Consistent with ICT Discovery 5 (Resonant Relationships), participants identified supporting relationships and building networks as contributing to effectiveness and building resilience. Some participants reported themselves more likely, post-coaching, to intentionally and actively seek out support and leverage expertise from colleagues:

I think I'm seeking out other people that are studying in my workplace or other people that have expertise in certain things and trying to leverage their skills to help a bit more and vice versa. (F40)

Relationships with subordinates, and the ability to lead the team were reported as strengthened, with participants reporting becoming more aware of developing an 'other' focus and demonstrating heightened empathy:

I just find I do a lot more listening. All my questions are probably a little more open or a little more personal so people can have an avenue to express themselves. (M45)

This extended beyond the workplace to personal relationships too.

I've changed the way I talk to my wife about work. So as probably one of my key support structures, you know, I found that I was coming home and just telling her about all the bad stuff that had happened in the day... And the realisation for me was that was not only reinforcing my negativity but was also giving her that negativity as well. So, you know, we don't talk about my work until I've come back from my run and I've actually got some positive things to say about – 'You know, I really enjoyed this today', even to the point of, 'I'm being challenged by this at the moment. How do you think I might overcome that?' So that's been a real positive change for me and for her as well. (M34)

Additional examples of participant responses regarding the coaching informed by ICT process are included in Appendix E.

4.2.3 *Leader Effectiveness.* In response to Research Question 2 “*How does coaching informed by ICT enhance leader effectiveness?*” the next section discusses themes emerging from participant interviews. Literature suggests that what makes a leader effective comprises manifestations that are both external behaviours and internal leader characteristics (Lussier, 2013; Maurer & London, 2015). Changes to both of these aspects emerged as outcomes from the coaching. The focus for this study was primarily on the internal criteria contributing to leader effectiveness, however a brief overview of key findings relating to behavioural changes is included below. This is followed by a discussion of internal leader effectiveness findings.

Behavioural change. Behavioural change is one way of discerning external manifestations of enhanced leader effectiveness. Examples cited by participants of where their leader behaviours had changed to become more effective are wide ranging, from being more assertive to overcoming presentation nerves and to being more open to feedback, from being more strategic, to taking steps toward self-care and sustainability. For M48, his developing effectiveness is illustrated by his observation that he was starting to behave like leaders he admires:

Emulation is probably not the right word, but I can see my behaviour in the behaviour of other leaders, and certainly leaders that I aspire to or admire. That, to me, says, “Okay, I’m starting to get that, at least in the context of where I am and what it is that I need to do to be able to actually be a lot more effective.”

For F40, colleagues were remarking on her changed leadership behaviours as manifesting through a more strategic approach:

I’m just doing things that are probably a bit more strategic. They are like, ‘Who are you? What has happened to the old F40?’ They are really like, ‘Oh my God. That’s really strategic!’

Often, behavioural changes were observed in relation to improved interpersonal relationships and communication. For example, F37 found herself adapting and becoming

more aware of her audience: *“It’s more about just being aware of the language I’m using and try and be...still do it authentically.”*

Many of the externally focused behavioural changes were reported as arising due to a shift in study participants’ mind-sets arising as a result of the coaching. A number of these inwardly focussed and psychological findings are discussed below.

Psychological Capital (PsyCap) was identified in the literature as an important characteristic of leader effectiveness (Luthans, 2004; Luthans, Avey et al., 2010). Qualitative data indicates that many participants experienced aspects of enhanced PsyCap as a result of the coaching, and that this contributed to their effectiveness. Others reported limited change. A distinct third group of participants were less inclined to reflect on their experiences of PsyCap. Experiences may have been impacted in part by each participant’s unique interpretation of the meaning of each of the core constructs of PsyCap, being Hope, Efficacy, Resilience and Optimism (HERO). Interview findings indicated whilst all participants expressed a general belief in the importance of the overarching psychological capital construct in assuring leader effectiveness, some reported a view that dwelling on these inner qualities did not sit comfortably in a work context, with F48 commenting, *“I don’t have that soft exterior when I am at work”*. For F34 the PsyCap constructs were “fluffy” and did not align with her view of leadership, and at an extreme, M37 saw them as an indication of weakness:

You would fail miserably because you’ve just exposed your stress levels and your tolerances to it. So you can’t. Your staff have to crack before you can crack. Even then you can’t crack because you’ve got to be that solid rock in this environment. So you have to have that ability to just suck it up, take it, just get through it.

Most participants however reported experiencing enhanced PsyCap as a result of the coaching. The findings relating to the four core components, namely Hope, Efficacy, Resilience and Optimism (HERO), are discussed individually below.

Hope. Hope was experienced during the coaching by most participants, perhaps

reflecting ICT's focus on participants' vision for the future and image of an ideal self, and also the strengths focus of the model. Hope was associated with the unblocking of constraints and offering possibilities for change. For F37 it was associated with a moment of insight, engendering excitement about the future:

a kind of sudden rush or that realisation. It's excitement probably maybe. I don't know what the right word is, but it's close to hope. It's just like, "Oh, okay. I could just reframe this and I could just start talking differently and things might turn out better."

For some participants, hope was a catalyst in stimulating the ability to reframe the choices available, for others it was associated with increased motivation, having a pathway forward, and drive and energy required to endure challenge. For F40:

I think particularly in that shift at the beginning about thinking, "This doesn't have to be my default habit forever." I think there was real hope of in that of, "Oh, wow, I just thought this would always be the way!" That was helpful, yeah.

For M49 the hope was expressed in the feeling of barriers being removed: *"it is possible, it can be done. My age is not a barrier. My current situations aren't a barrier."*

On the other hand, a number of participants expressed reluctance to see themselves as hopeful, replacing the positive state of mind with the non-emotive language of performance and achievement. For example M37 reported, *"hope is not the right word but more drive and direction. Hope is a wishy-washy type word... Hope is not the word, but clarity and focus or ways to approach different scenarios and learnings."* For F40 this practical view of hope is more like confidence that the established processes are effective: *"We've got rules – not so much rules, but we know what works and what doesn't work. You know, we know how to make it successful"*.

Optimism. Some participants were more comfortable discussing optimism than hope, with M45 expressing its value as *"a bit more concrete. I could see a pathway how we could get there. It wasn't just blind hope"*. For M49, an optimistic perspective acted as a catalyst

and “*triggered some of the changes in myself*”. For F40, the strengths focus contributed to developing enhanced optimism, with the resultant more optimistic perspective impacting on how she leads, and how she is perceived by others:

I think particularly the hope and the optimism, yeah. Having a different lens now, I think, has contributed to me leading in a different way, yeah. I really am noticing from these conversations with people that people are looking at me slightly differently and coming to me about different things. I’m, “Maybe I’ve got something to offer in that space.”

Efficacy. Study findings suggested that the notion of participant efficacy was closely tied to enhanced confidence and belief in their capacity to succeed at tasks. F40 explained:

I think it’s the confidence level, just feeling a bit more able to put up my hands for things. Most things aren’t rocket science and I can muddle through this and work it out, just as I always have done. I can put up my hand more and I can go about it in a more confident way.

Many participants identified experiencing more energy and enhanced confidence post-coaching, F48 commented:

From the first interview to the second interview, it’s more energy or belief in what I’m doing. I believe in myself. There is self-confidence.

For some there was also a greater sense of focus and direction, leading to clarity around the next steps needed. For others the enhanced self-efficacy gave courage, and motivation to take action sooner than they would have, and encouraged them to try out new ways and to reach for more ambitious outcomes. The self-efficacy reported also helped some participants overcome their fear of failure. Feelings of being more self-assured and leader like were reported, with the enhanced self-efficacy experienced by some led not just to a feeling of inner strength, but also acted as a catalyst for action, with many reporting new courage to operate outside their comfort zone and others feeling empowered to “*do brave things for yourself*” (F49). Other participants identified the enhanced self-efficacy as key in helping manage the overwhelm and in navigating the uncertainty of their complex and dynamic environments.

Resilience. Most leaders in the study saw themselves as already resilient and able to bounce back from setbacks, whether personal or professional. The stressful nature of many of their roles was a theme that emerged, with resilience identified as necessary to sustain leader effectiveness over the longer term, "*So marathon resilience. I'm pretty good with the sprint resilience. But potentially the marathon resilience is something that I acknowledge and I am thinking about more*" (F42). General resilience was distinguished from emotional resilience for F42, who highlighted her awareness post-coaching of the need to develop strategies for when she felt pushed to the extreme:

It's being able to have a setback and then step forward and move forward. And that's what resilience is. I feel like I am generally pretty good at that. But maybe - this is one of the things that we talked about - from a reactionary perspective and for me getting to this point where something is not done, something is not done, something is not done, something is not done, and then the outburst. Maybe that will improve my resilience there. Even after the outburst, I am pretty good at bouncing back. But in the past in my career, two and a half, two, three years, at a certain point I go, 'Well, that's enough. I have had enough.' So I guess I am very resilient right up to that point where I go, 'Mm' and walk out. So potentially the overall resilience to come back and go, 'Where is the bigger picture?'

F42s experience was mirrored by many other participants, who found the visioning exercise inherent in Discovery 1 particularly helpful in connecting them to their purpose, and focusing them on a longer-term view thereby enhancing their ability to deal with current stresses. For M49, developing the ability to reframe and change perspective was a key component in building resilience.

Leader identity. Skills and knowledge acquisition is but one part of the leader development process. For leaders to become more effective they must also undergo a transformation in self-concept to becoming more leader like (Maurer & London, 2015). This study identified a number of inner changes arising as a result of the coaching that contributed to participants *feeling* more like a leader. M35 explained:

I didn't really believe I was a leader. I came from a techno background and I got put into this, and that transition was something that ...I feel like I didn't deserve. And just accepting that I'm not an imposter. Those strengths are coming out of that. Okay, I'm

more confident of my decisions... I do feel like I have got to a certain level that I can now mentor other people.

Heightened self-confidence and self-efficacy along with feelings of choice and control over themselves and their environment were key ways that participants reported experiencing enhanced effectiveness and feeling leader-like. Self-awareness was also found to be important. These aspects of a leader identity are discussed below.

Confidence. Findings suggest that feeling like a leader involves feeling confident, autonomous, and competent. Heightened self-confidence was experienced by all participants as a result of the coaching, and contributed to the process of feeling like a leader and developing a leader identity. M35 commented:

I'm more confident. I'm more sure of myself when I make decisions. I'm like, 'yeah, okay. I've done this in the past', or, 'I'm more than capable of doing this', so I take more initiative and more of a lead. I guess I am actually a leader whereas before I would be like, 'I'm kind of just here and hopefully no-one realises that I'm kind of just winging it.'

For some participants, the strengths focus contributed to their perceptions of delivering value for the organisation and thus feeling more effective. Other participants reported starting to feel more like they belonged as a leader, for example F42 who said: *"This is who I am...yep I belong here."*

Enhanced feelings of leader effectiveness were associated with a sense of greater control for many participants. Participants were all senior leaders working in challenging organisational environments. For many, their modus operandi was based upon a desire to seek and maintain control of their environment, decisions, personal outcomes, teams and organisations. A sense of relief was felt by M34 at having an action plan for addressing the issues:

So having those clearer actions that I was going to go away with, that sort of any map will do, kind of feeling about it. It doesn't actually matter what the action is. The fact that I've got some action, it's within my control to do something to make my situation better, is quite inspiring.

For M48, feeling like a leader also involved a sense of heightened control over his emotions:

Certainly that feeling that I can handle things better than what I had before. The other thing I actually recognise is that I am not as emotional. I'm not making rash decisions on how I feel about something. It is being more considered about what I am actually doing.

Enhanced control over their emotional response to the often-overwhelming nature of work manifest for some participants as an ability to take the time to respond rather than react to a stimulus, and to choose an appropriate next step. This was a powerful learning for many participants, empowering them with a sense of having a pathway forward. For M45, *"I've just been a bit more mindful about myself. There have been some pretty testy situations and I've just been quite aware of how I respond and manage my natural reaction to some of the stuff that goes on."* And for M40, *"I can't change that [situation], but I can change how I respond to that. I can change where I go by the decisions I make and how I communicate."*

The habitual desire for a tightening of control was reported by some participants as their intuitive response to risk, and the preferred antidote to ward off chaos and powerlessness. Post-coaching however, many participants reported being open to the possibility that loosening control may not inevitably lead to chaos and loss of power, and that watching, reflecting, reframing and surrendering could be as valid an approach as one that was tightly controlled. M45's comments indicates increasing acceptance, *"Some of it is out of my control. There is no point trying to play in that space"*. There were many examples of participants letting go of control including letting go of the need to be perfect, of the need to act, or to be certain and be right, and letting go of limiting beliefs etc.

Associated with this was another finding that in order to feel like a leader participants did not have to "know" the right answer. This realisation gave some participants the courage to venture outside their comfort zone. F40 explained:

I would normally just avoid all of that stuff and just do the stuff that was in my comfort zone. But actually knowing that I can push myself—and I can actually achieve stuff in that space, even though it's not my, you know, comfort zone, yeah.

This courage extended to a willingness to access uncomfortable emotional territory as well, and will be discussed below in Section 4.3.3 - Willingness to be Vulnerable.

Self-awareness. For leaders to develop a leader identity and feel that they are becoming more leader-like they need to become aware of their strengths and weaknesses. Enhanced self-awareness was the single most frequent benefit from coaching reported by participants in the study, with many suggesting this as a primary mechanism that would enhance and sustain their effectiveness as a leader. M35's insight provides an illustration:

I think the biggest learning that I had was the self-awareness. Obviously I knew about it, but I didn't think it had a big impact on myself as a leader. Answering the questions. There were quite a few that were targeted about, 'Are you just drifting along? Are you just doing things and it is in automatic mode?' And that just kind of really made me stop and think.

M30 also observed with insight, *"I already understand it's the stuff that I don't know about myself that is going to be of the greatest value. So you can be aware of it and then act accordingly."*

Heightened awareness of strengths and weaknesses, and openness in acknowledging these, was also perceived as contributing to effectiveness. The strengths focus underpinning the coaching conversation helped some participants feel more like they 'owned' their leadership successes. On the one hand there was acknowledgement of the challenge and courage required to be honest about facing up to one's weaknesses, including feelings of fear, unworthiness and vulnerability. On the other hand, the increasing self-awareness led to more self-acceptance and acknowledgement that these feelings were common and could be overcome.

Mirror as metaphor was used by a number of participants to describe the challenges of having an unpleasant self-image reflected back to them, with M38 commenting: *"I don't like*

looking in there!” F37 used mirror as a metaphor for being more clearly able to see and acknowledge her unique strengths:

that mirror in terms of why am I not owning and communicating more effectively what I have achieved. And that doesn't mean that I have to be someone that I'm not. ... I need to let that go. That was probably the most valuable thing about it.

Many participants had not been fully aware of habits and thought patterns that might have been impacting their effectiveness as a leader. For example, post-coaching M48 became aware that he had not been actively seeking opportunities or positioning himself for success:

I hadn't been fully aware of that. I think that was just learned behaviour or just a habit that I had fallen into, which is you stay in the background and you don't put yourself out there. Yeah, not having even really realised that I had been doing that for so long.

Enhanced self-awareness also manifested as an ability to adapt to a context, reframe a situation and choose a different or expanded perspective. Some participants reported that the coaching afforded them a changed worldview where they could “*put a different lens over it*”, with an enhanced ability to take a balcony position and see themselves on the dance floor. For example, for M34 the opportunity to move from a tactical to a strategic viewpoint had enhanced his understanding of team alignment and motivation. Among other examples was an enhanced capacity for innovative solutions thinking. In part, this was achieved by simultaneously broadening the scope of the problem and focusing in on spheres of influence. M45 commented, “*I think what it helped me to do is look at the bigger picture but then come down to what really I am able to influence and control. That will hopefully influence the bigger picture.*”

Agility in Perspective taking. From enhanced self-awareness comes the power to choose a response. Study participants reported experiencing an enhanced sense of control over how they viewed the various situations impacting their work life. A particularly powerful insight for many was the enhanced capacity to consciously and intentionally

reframe a situation from a weakness to strength, or from a barrier to an opportunity. The majority of participants described experiencing a shift to a more positive perspective as being crucial to the achievement of successful outcomes. Rather than feeling that they were losing control due to the complexity of the environment or overwhelmed by the range of possibilities, many cited the feeling of enhanced control simply through the opportunity to step back and reframe the situation. M34's insight reflected this awareness:

That it's within my power to choose how I see the world and, therefore, how I choose to react to it. That has probably been the biggest element for me. You know, it's not even a case of choosing your attitude. It's choosing the way you want to view something.... it's a complex world out there. The ability to not only see from a different perspective but to be able to see from multiple perspectives the same problem is hugely important in terms of taking my career forward in whatever that looks like. I think to be successful in such a complex world, you need the ability to do that. And this has been excellent for expanding those perspectives.

Also emerging was a developing leader identity, underpinned by a growth mind set, whereby weaknesses could be reframed as learning opportunities. F40 explained:

I think previously I have always thought, 'Oh, that's just not my thing', but now I think through the coaching I'm thinking, 'I could actually still develop some skills in that. It won't be my natural bent, but I don't have to always think in my head that that is not just me. I can actually develop some skills in that area and it could be me,' yeah.

4.3 Quantitative Findings: Leader Effectiveness

In line with the mixed methods research design, the study also examined several leader effectiveness variables quantitatively. These measures included Leader Role Efficacy, Leader Trust in Subordinates, and PsyCap (hope, efficacy, resilience, optimism). Justification of selection of these measures as outcomes for this study is provided in the Literature Review in Chapter 2. To test the mean difference in the variables among the participants who completed the T2 survey, a paired samples t-test procedure was carried out in SPSS, comparing the means of each leader effectiveness variable for each participant before and after completion of the 2 ICT- based coaching sessions. This test can be justified

on the basis that it is a powerful statistical test that can produce results when there is a small sample size (Clegg 1995).

4.3.1 Preliminary data analyses. Descriptive data (means and standard deviations) and inter-correlations are displayed below in Table 4.3. Most correlations were low to moderate, indicating that multi-collinearity was not a serious threat to the analyses (Tabachnick, Fidell & Osterlind, 2001).

Variables	Mean	SD	Hope	Eff	Res	Optim	LRE	LTS
<u>Pre-coaching</u>								
Hope	5.18	0.59	(.75)					
Efficacy	4.74	0.57	.59**	(.75)				
Resilience	4.96	0.50	.36	.72**	(.68)			
Optimism	4.62	0.63	.32	.61**	.73**	(.79)		
Leader Role Efficacy	4.58	0.82	.35	.43	.47*	.66**	(.85)	
Leader Trust in Subordinates	4.33	1.32	.11	.25	.56*	.68**	.59**	(.96)
<u>Post-coaching</u>								
Hope	5.28	0.42	(.84)					
Efficacy	4.94	0.57	.62**	(.87)				
Resilience	4.98	0.46	.61**	.92**	(.74)			
Optimism	4.62	0.61	.27	.72**	.60**	(.73)		
Leader Role Efficacy	4.64	0.74	.51*	.60**	.50*	.37	(.88)	
Leader Trust in Subordinates	4.55	0.95	.64**	.79**	.69**	.60**	.54*	(.94)

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$

Cronbach's alpha appears on the diagonal

Note: $n = 19$ for both pre and post coaching

Table 4.3. Means, Standard Deviations and Correlations among study variables in each time period

Cronbach's alpha was calculated to gauge coefficients for internal consistency of the scales both pre- and post-coaching. These indicated good reliability for the variables, with all but one above the accepted threshold ($\alpha > .7$, Hair, 2006, p778). Resilience post-coaching was slightly low ($\alpha = .68$), however given that a validated scale was used, this was deemed internally consistent. All variables were positively correlated to other study variables, indicating that higher levels of each leader effectiveness measure are related to higher levels of other measures. The T2 correlation between Resilience and Efficacy was very high ($r =$

.92, $p > .001$), and this was accepted as inconsequential given that measures were from a validated scale.

4.3.2 Paired sample t-test for related samples. Paired samples statistics in relation to the pre-coaching and post-coaching means for 6 leader effectiveness variables (Hope, Efficacy, Resilience, Optimism, Leader Role Efficacy and Leader Trust in Subordinates) were examined. None of the variables in this study indicated a statistically significant change from pre-coaching to post-coaching. However, it is important to note that a comparison of means before and after the coaching shows that all variables increased from T1 to T2. This is illustrated graphically in Figure 4.4 below. Integrated qualitative and quantitative findings are further discussed, along with conclusions arising, in Section 5.2.4.

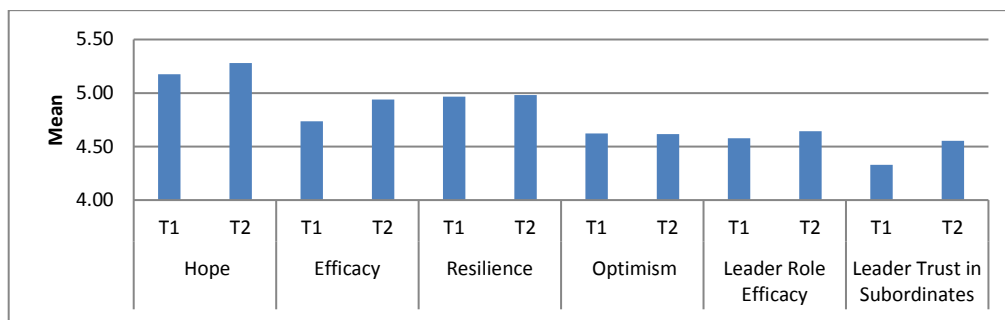


Figure 4.4. Comparison of means pre- and post- coaching

4.4 Emergent Themes

The Literature Review in Chapter 2 provides the theoretical lens from which many of the initial themes discussed thus far emerged. Whilst the theory underpinning leader effectiveness and coaching informed by ICT guided the deductive analysis and initial interpretation of themes, an inductive approach allowed for a deeper exploration of participant experiences whereby additional themes emerged from the data. Among these was a view of leader effectiveness encompassing a developing ability to take an inclusive and nuanced view of leadership characterised by uncertainty and vulnerability as much as by

decisiveness and strength. The next section details three of these emerging findings; Comfort with Ambiguity, Appetite for Reflection, and Willingness to be Vulnerable.

4.4.1 Comfort with Ambiguity. A key research observation was associated with the number of seeming dichotomies emerging during the coaching process, and manifesting as overarching tensions that affect leader (and organisational) effectiveness, highlighting the impacts of a complex environment. Findings indicate an increasing need for leaders to operate within, and make sense of, situations comprising emerging paradoxes of seemingly contradictory but potentially true data, reflecting the emergence and adaptability characteristics of Complexity Leadership Theory (Uhl Bien et al., 2007).

A main finding for many participants related to their enhanced levels of comfort with uncertain and ambiguous situations. Given that participants had already earned their leadership stripes and were already in senior and demanding roles, and familiar with very challenging environments and situations, they were mostly already experienced in navigating unfamiliar and ambiguous territory. Despite this, many participants expressed a preference to feel prepared, and to work in situations that were predictable and certain, and reported varying levels of discomfort when the complexities in the environment made that impossible. For example, M34 commented:

I had not realised how much I was taking on outside of my sphere of influence ... Normally I have thought that I had a pretty good handle on influence and control and where that sat for me. But that was a real eye-opener for me in terms of, 'No, actually this isn't my problem. This isn't something I can control. I can only control my reaction to that particular stimulus,'

summing up his new awareness as “*my circus not my monkeys*”.

Observed was a developing awareness among many participants that certainty was not possible, and that becoming more comfortable in the ambiguous grey areas might not only be possible and offer benefits in opening up as yet unknown possibilities, but that comfort with ambiguity is in fact *required* as part of becoming an effective leader. There was a developing

recognition among some participants of the importance of ambivalence and sense making over certainty and decision making as a means to ensure adaptive and responsive behaviours, and even of becoming a “paradox savvy leader” (Waldman & Bowen, 2016, p316), thus being able to exploit the potential of uncertainty, rather than to be paralysed by it.

For many participants, their tolerance for working in ill-defined and ambiguous spaces had been enhanced by the coaching. Several participants reported feeling more able to intentionally step outside of their comfort zone and push themselves to operate in a place where they did not know all the answers. For F40, the experience involved, *“just putting up my hand for things that would normally be outside my comfort zone, feeling a little bit more comfortable in that uncomfortable stuff, and just acknowledging that it’s okay to sit there.”*

M34 related enhanced tolerance for uncertainty to a developing resilience:

So part of the resilience piece for me is not being able to see the outcome that I create. You know, it’s a complex world with unintended consequences. I had planned for action but would fear implementing it because I couldn’t see all the evidence. I’ve become more comfortable now anchoring my action in purpose and going, ‘Well, there might be unintended consequences, but provided I’m making the best decision at the time, based on what I know and where I want to be, then let the chips fall where they may.’

Participants reported a sense of being able to extend their range of thinking beyond a reductionist “either /or “approach, to a more holistic “and”, suggesting a growing capacity to take an expanded view of the organisational and personal landscape. A feeling of choice and control over perspective was reported, and increased consciousness of the potential for reframing an uncertain situation, ultimately leading participants to feel leader like in their increased comfort with ambiguity. M48 illustrates this by stating, *“Certainly accepting that things are ambiguous, accepting that it’s complex and it’s sometimes volatile. Sometimes I’m not going to get the perfect answer or whatever. Yeah, I’m starting to get to that stage of acceptance.”*

A number of participants reported feelings of enhanced agility, with an ability to swivel on a pivot point and turn obstacles into opportunities. This resulted in an ability to mindfully telescope their focus, and to balance the dichotomies required to effectively lead. Examples cited include simultaneously maintaining continuity and driving change, considering both operational and strategic matters, and delivering on things that are simultaneously urgent and important with actions that need to be accomplished both now and in the future. Whilst acknowledging that relentless and difficult decision-making was an integral, if stressful, part of leadership, participants reported experienced coaching within the ICT framework as playing a role in reducing the stress and enhancing the feeling that they were no longer stuck, *“I can work through the chaos. I can navigate a bit of a pathway now”* (M45).

Other examples cited by participants of how they were developing a tolerance for uncertainty are wide ranging, from overcoming presentation nerves, to instigating a difficult conversation, to accepting feedback. Representative data from participant responses illustrating these findings are included in Appendix G.

4.4.2 Appetite for reflection. The introspective aspects of the coaching process and the opportunity to spend time reflecting on personal leadership styles, strengths and weaknesses was reported as enhancing participants’ self-awareness and helping them more skilfully adapt and respond to the challenging environment. The process was something that did not come naturally for many participants, who reported: *“Sometimes it’s hard to reflect on different situations”* (M31). A number of participants reported particular discomfort when exploring inner psychological states, motivations and feelings. Some also expressed a preference for an action-based, solutions focus. Many preferred to allude to the reflective process through metaphor, with M38 describing his discomfort, *“it was almost like ‘here is a mirror’ and I’m like, ‘I don’t like looking in there’.”*

On the other hand some participants expressed a growing ease with the reflective process. F40 also used the mirror metaphor, seeing the coaching reflections as helpful, “*It’s like talking into the mirror. I’ve become an adherent of that. I never thought I would be. But it is actually really a big deal.*” For M48 too, the coaching opened valuable avenues to be intentionally reflective:

It’s all of those things combined that says, ‘Okay, I actually can handle this and be reflective about the things’ and have that view that says, ‘Okay. I know this is not working out as well as what I wanted it to. Forget about the judgements from other people or anything; it is just what I actually feel about it. What does that actually mean for me? What are the things that I can put in place to be able to actually make it better for me?’

4.4.3 Willingness to be vulnerable. The feelings of enhanced effectiveness experienced by study participants as discussed above, may well reflect the strengths focus of the coaching, and their sense of a developing empowerment, confidence and emerging leader identity. In addition, one of the benefits of coaching is the forum of psychological safety it offers to participants, with opportunities to delve more deeply into the inner world, including feelings of discomfort. Findings from the study indicated that the coaching had provided a safe space to explore vulnerable feelings, including perceived weaknesses, fear of failure and other ambivalent feelings associated with leader identity. In some cases coaching had also provided the catalyst to do so. Some of the findings are discussed below.

The vulnerable feelings and challenging emotions unearthed through reflection during the coaching process were unexpected for many participants, with at times, the strong feelings of vulnerability necessitating a supportive response from the coach. An example of this was F40 who reported:

those first two sessions I wasn’t coming in expecting to be an emotional basket case but I ended up being. And that’s what happens, I think, when you really delve around in that stuff that’s difficult or whatever. But I don’t think that’s a negative thing. I think that’s just part of the journey, yeah....

M33 similarly reported, “*I think vulnerability is a really important thing. ... Great learning can come from that, but you don’t want to open Pandora’s Box for people and have them walk out with too much. It’s finding that sweet spot.*”

Other examples of study participants’ emotional discomfort and of feeling vulnerable include fear of failure, feelings of inadequacy and of self-judgment as somehow lacking essential leadership qualities. Some participants suggested that these doubts had led to a degree of ambivalence in their identity as a leader. For example, M35 described a new awareness of the manner in which his uncertainty about his own leader identity and fear of being discovered as a fraud had been limiting his performance:

I guess the embarrassment of failure maybe even, something along those lines. Okay I know it and then it is easy enough to sit in a room and say, ‘He’s a bad leader. Look at this guy. I can do so much better.’ But for me to do it, I’m like, ‘What happens if I don’t?’ And that failure must have been something that was holding me back.

For M35 the coaching was helpful in overcoming “imposter syndrome” and contributed to his feeling leader-like:

it made me realise that I’m not incompetent. I have this fear, yeah, of just being found out.... And just realising that, hey – not saying that I’m a special snowflake, but there are some qualities that I have that other people don’t have and it takes a little while for them to kind of develop that. Whereas I demonstrate those already. Yeah, I’m not an imposter, which is a big change from the beginning of the coaching....I guess I am actually a leader whereas before I would be like, ‘I’m kind of just here and hopefully no-one realises that I’m kind of just winging it.’

The lack of confidence and fear of being discovered a fraud reflected in M35’s comments, are typical of the uncomfortable feelings reported as frequently experienced by study participants. Most surprising was that often these feelings were unacknowledged. This may parallel the preference reported by a number of participants to portray strength, confidence and decisiveness as leader characteristics, rather than to lean in to emotional discomfort, or access areas involving fears and vulnerabilities. On the other hand, a number of participants demonstrated enhanced willingness to be vulnerable, and courage in seeing

themselves as they really are. M34 reports, “*So, trying to take myself out of first position and maybe into third position and look at myself as an observer. And I wasn’t doing myself justice in terms of doing that, in terms of observing myself without lies.*”

Findings suggest that the strengths focus / positive psychological emphasis implicit in coaching informed by ICT was helpful as a counterbalance to these challenging emotions and feelings of vulnerability, through offering acknowledgement of achievements to date and of strengths from which participants could validate their identity as a leader. For those participants who embraced a willingness to show vulnerability, some reported feeling empowered to change limiting habits and mind-sets as a result of the coaching. Their comments conveyed the sense of an enhanced appetite for risk, and a developing ability to let go. F40’s insight was:

I need to stop doing what I’m doing and start to do things differently and what have I got to lose by throwing my hat? This job that I’ve applied for, I’m not sure whether I’m quite ready for it, but I need to be thinking about where I want to be and taking some steps and some leaps of faith and just testing the water rather than just be so focussed on just staying where I am.

For M49 the willingness to be vulnerable and show emotional courage extended beyond the professional context to also have impacts personally:

It took courage to end my long-term relationship. It was courage to take charge of the money situation on a personal level. It was the courage to get on the phone to someone at head office and say, ‘Things are not right and I’m not happy.’

For F40 the coaching resulted in an enhanced ability to be vulnerable and to be emotionally brave, “*I am getting more comfortable in sitting in that yucky space that I’ve always avoided,*” and was even welcomed as part of her learning: “*I think it creates a lot of good reflection after you walk out the door, when it’s triggered stuff. If it doesn’t trigger things, what is the learning?*”

Additional example narratives relating to qualitative assessment of leader effectiveness are displayed in Appendix G.

4.5 Chapter Summary

This chapter has presented the findings as they relate to the research questions of this study. The chapter began by outlining the contextual overview, including participant demographics for the study. While the quantitative results were not significant, qualitative data indicated a number of themes associated with the coaching process, the ICT model and leader effectiveness. Findings presented have created a comprehensive picture of the component parts and interrelations between coaching as informed by ICT and the effectiveness of the leaders in the sample. Furthermore, an additional three themes – appetite for reflection, comfort with ambiguity and willingness to be vulnerable – were found to emerge from the data. These results as they relate to the relevant literatures and to the practice of leading will be discussed in the next chapter – Chapter 5 - Discussion and Conclusion.

Chapter 5: Discussion and Conclusion

This chapter provides a final discussion and interpretation of the findings in relation to the research questions and the literature presented in Chapter Two - Literature Review. The results from both the qualitative and quantitative phases are combined to examine the overarching research question “*How does Coaching informed by Intentional Change Theory enhance leader effectiveness?*” Contributions of this study to both the literature and to the framework of theories are presented, as well as contributions to practice, study limitations, and suggestions for future research. The chapter then closes with a summary of the findings and final conclusions of the thesis. The chapter structure is outlined below in Figure 5.1.

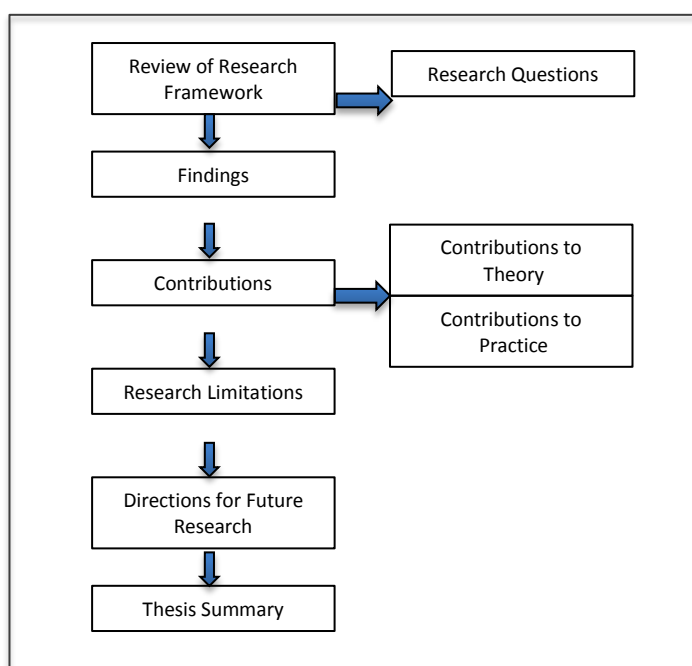


Figure 5.1. Structure of Chapter Five

5.1 Review of Research Framework

This overall purpose of this research was to explore how coaching informed by ICT might enhance leader effectiveness. Nineteen leaders undertaking an Executive MBA

program formed the sample. ICT was introduced as a model that might enhance the coaching experience of participants. The study explored how the various elements of the coaching process and the ICT model may have contributed to these leaders' effectiveness. The research framework developed as a response to the literature review in Chapter Two was used to guide the research. From this research framework the following sub-questions were derived:

- What are participant experiences of the process of coaching informed by ICT?
- How do participants experience enhanced leader effectiveness as a result of coaching informed by ICT?
- What other contingent factors influence how an individual experiences coaching informed by ICT?

The findings corroborating the current literatures in a number of ways as discussed below. Emergent findings are discussed later in this chapter.

5.2 Discussion of Findings

This study's overarching research question asks, "*How does coaching informed by ICT enhance leader effectiveness?*" The findings of this research have made theoretical contributions to the executive coaching and leader development literatures. The focus upon the unique experiences of the leaders in this study, and on how coaching contributes to their effectiveness, extends beyond the more traditional and quantifiable aspects of leader performance to offer insight into how leaders feel. In particular, the focus on the leaders' own experiences of what contributes to their effectiveness adds nuance to our understanding of how coaching can enhance some of the "internal" leader effectiveness characteristics, and might contribute to an emerging leader identity. Insights into the processes associated with

executive coaching using ICT as a framework are also presented, adding to our understanding of it as a mechanism that can contribute to leader effectiveness.

5.2.1 The VUCA environment. Consideration of the external environment in which contemporary leaders operate is important for this study. Complex times demand leaders who are comfortable to lead in the context of hyper-complexity, i.e. “complexity inscribed in complexity” (Qvortrup, 2003, p6). Complexity Leadership Theory explains how, in order to be effective, leaders operating through volatility, uncertainty, complexity and ambiguity must adopt strategies and behaviours with underpinnings in complexity theory, including the characteristics of adaptation and emergence (Schneider & Somers, 2006; Uhl-Bien et al, 2007; Lowell, 2016). Emergence denotes order arising out of chaos, and is associated with nonlinear and volatile changes in complex systems; adaptation indicates leaders’ ability to learn their way out of problems that could not have been predicted (Uhl Bien et al, 2007). Leaders in the study reported developing both of these characteristics; many reported enhanced confidence in their ability to respond to chaotic and ambiguous situations, others demonstrated a growth mindset, moving away from the desire to reach a stable equilibrium, and were prepared to continually develop themselves and their organisations, and adapt in response to the dynamic environment. Complexity Leadership Theory also proposes that the paradoxes inherent in the complex environment can inform the complex-adaptive approaches to problem solving required by effective leaders (Zhang et al, 2015). Leaders in this study reported the ICT-based coaching as enhancing their agility and adaptability, as well as their comfort in ambiguous and evolving situations, where seeing and leveraging paradoxes could allow more effective responses to challenging situations. While not generalizable due to a number of study limitations, the study supports coaching informed by ICT as a development intervention well placed to meet the demands of modern day leaders operating in a VUCA world.

5.2.2 The coaching process. This study is one of few empirical studies exploring the process of coaching and what happens during live coaching sessions (Howard, 2015). The findings contribute to the coaching literature by adding to our understanding of how executive coaching works (Fillery-Travis & Lane, 2006), specifically from the perspective of participants. Adding to the body of knowledge supporting executive coaching generally as a promising leader development intervention (Ladegard & Gjerde, 2014), this study confirms it as an integrative approach and one that is flexible and responsive to individual leader development needs.

Contributions to coaching's theoretical framework development (Theeboom et al., 2014) are also made, confirming the importance of a number of key factors in facilitating participant insight and development. First, study findings mirror the literature that suggests that that quality of the relationship between coach and participant, including rapport, trust, and commitment, positively predict coaching program outcomes (Boyce, Jackson & Neal, 2010; Passmore et al., 2011; Cox et al., 2014; Sonesh et al., 2015). A frequent observation in this study was that once the conditions of psychological safety had been established, the more challenging the question, the deeper the insight. Literature indicates the importance of solutions focused yet challenging coaching questions (Grant, 2012; Cox et al., 2014; Theeboom et al., 2016). The objective challenge inherent in the coaching questions afforded participants deep insights, with the questions acting as catalyst for them taking a different perspective that positively influenced them in their efforts to deal with the complex issues in their work environment.

Literature suggesting that goal setting is crucial for facilitating durable change (Locke & Latham, 2006) has been challenged in recent times by studies suggesting that specific goals are not necessary for a valuable outcome from the coaching process (Ordonez et al., 2009). This study corroborates this latter view to some extent, finding that setting specific

goals (beyond naming and clarifying intentions) was not required for participants to feel benefit from the process. For some participants, the focus on their ideal future was seen as their goal end state. For others, given the context of them being at the start of a 2-year EMBA program, and the self-selection for the coaching program, a goal of enhanced leader effectiveness might be inferred. Overall, however, the long-term nature of the development process was recognised by participants, with coaching seen as offering benefits beyond goal achievement, to include a framework and process for transformation. This supports the literature suggesting that the key to sustained leader effectiveness demands a view of learning as a lifelong process rather than a once-off achievement of goals (Van Velsor & Daft, 2004). There was a sense for some participants of a journey of discovery – they had no preconceptions about the process and were confident that the overall objective would emerge during the sessions, indicating a developing comfort with ambiguity and with emergence.

The study findings corroborate suggestions in the literature that a key benefit arising from the coaching process arises from the opportunities afforded for structured time away from operational considerations (Cox et al., 2014). This finding is especially important for leaders, like those in the sample, who are juggling multiple priorities representative of the hyper-complex environment.

5.2.3 ICT Coaching. Research question 2 focused on the coaching process and the ICT model and asked ‘*What are participant experiences of the process of coaching informed by ICT?*’ The ICT model was validated in this study in so far as it was experienced by most participants (and by the coach) as a useful and flexible coaching framework. Of particular relevance to the complex organisational environment experienced by participants are the iterative and cyclical aspects of the model, and its capacity for facilitating an adaptive response to leader needs, and allowing for consideration of polarity and paradox. The study

thus corroborates the literature positing ICT as a coaching framework that can flexibly support change at the individual leader level (and by extension, other elements of the system).

The 5 Discoveries within ICT offered participants an evidence-based approach for intentional desired change. The theoretical underpinnings of ICT, specifically the Positive Psychology and Positive Organisational Behaviour literatures, were supported, and ICT-informed coaching emerged from the study as a tool that may help enhance leader effectiveness. Specifically, participants reported experiencing a stronger and more comprehensive personal leadership vision, which was accompanied by a sense of excitement and optimism. Consistent with ICT literature positing that a focus on the ideal leads to positive emotions and enhances behavioural change leading to sustainable learning and development (Boyatzis, 2006, 2008; Boyatzis et al., 2015), participants indicated a developing self-awareness and growing ability to articulate their strengths as well as areas for development. The vision-based catalyst for development inherent in ICT (Discovery 1) was instrumental in helping participants open up to possibilities not yet considered, and in overcoming previous limiting mind-sets (Jack et al., 2013; Passarelli, 2015; Mosteo et al, 2016). The ICT model (Discovery 2) supported study participants to reflect upon strengths, and also upon weaknesses that might derail their effectiveness as a leader. Although it was challenging for a number of participants to overcome the belief that leaders must be strong, an insight for many centred on their power to reframe weaknesses as untapped strengths and growth opportunities. The creation of a learning agenda and participation in active experimentation, posited by ICT (Discoveries 3 and 4) as key elements of intentional change, were corroborated as useful for developing leader effectiveness, with participants reporting feeling supported to learn through taking more risks and to experiment with new behaviours and ways of being. ICT (Discovery 5) recognises that significant behavioural change is difficult, particularly if attempted in isolation, and posits the benefits of resonant relationships

for leaders (Boyatzis, 2006, 2008). Supporting the literature suggesting that relationships are an important part of leader identity development (Ardichvili et al., 2016), and that a focus upon resonant relationships can contribute to leader effectiveness (Boyatzis & McKee, 2005; Boyatzis et al., 2006), participants reported experiencing improved relationships, both professional and personal, as a result of the coaching.

5.2.4 Leader effectiveness outcomes. The focus of this study is on internal characteristics of leader effectiveness that can be enhanced by coaching informed by ICT. The introspective perspective is reflected in the interview findings that corroborate the leader identity and PsyCap literatures, with findings triangulated by survey data.

Leader Identity. A major role for leaders is to facilitate effective change in their organisations. A systems view suggests that this change must be mirrored in leaders themselves. Following research suggesting that the measure of leadership effectiveness may be determined by the leader himself, to the degree to which they have confidence in their leadership abilities (Ladegard & Gjerde, 2014), this study findings support the notion that an emerging leader identity (i.e. *feeling* like a leader) is of key importance (Maurer & London, 2015). Qualitative data in this study suggest that participants' feeling leader-like was characterised in particular through heightened confidence in adapting to rapid change, and in taking swift and decisive action. Coaching was reported as leading to a sense of enhanced agility in choosing the perspective that was most helpful, rather than remaining stuck in beliefs that might limit effectiveness. This developing ability to intentionally shift mindset from one that is fixed, risk averse and fearful of failure, to a growth mindset, characterised by curiosity to learn (Dweck, 2008), mirrors the intentional desired change towards a more conscious and measured style of leadership that underpins ICT (Boyatzis, 2006, 2008).

Participants also reported that post-coaching, leader identity was associated with a feeling of choice and control over themselves and their (often chaotic) environment.

Coaching was reported as contributing to a diminished sense of overwhelm and of being “stuck”, with many participants reporting having a sense of a clearer pathway forward. For some participants the coaching afforded insights regarding the complicated nature of the relationship between control and freedom. For these participants, developing in parallel to the sense of a growing trust and confidence in their own leadership ability, was the awareness that an intentional loosening of control, and the ability to let go, might enhance their effectiveness. Study examples included letting go of the need to be right, or of the need for certainty, as well as enhanced trust in subordinates, including the ability to delegate work more easily.

Leader psychological capital (PsyCap). A developing leader identity assumes an intrapersonal perspective, and is associated with enhanced awareness of oneself as leader, with acknowledgement of one’s strengths and weaknesses. Psychological capital (PsyCap) was deemed by most study participants as a factor that would be important in their effectiveness, thus corroborating the literature that finds significant positive relationships between PsyCap and multiple measures of performance (Luthans & Youssef, 2004; Avey et al., 2011), and with a sense of generating options and possibilities for positive change (Luthans, Avolio, Avey & Norman, 2007).

In this study, experiences of enhanced PsyCap were impacted by participants’ unique interpretations of the meaning of each of the core constructs of Hope, Efficacy, Resilience and Optimism. There was, however, some reluctance among a small number of participants to explore components of PsyCap or to associate improved effectiveness with any of the underlying PsyCap constructs. Some participants viewed these as non-business focused constructs, for others they signified weakness. This view might be attributed to the traditional focus of leaders upon performance metrics and quantifiable measures, rather than upon less tangible feelings and the inner world, and reflect a preference to maintain a focus

upon workplace actions and strategies, rather than upon emotions and feelings (Gillet & Vandenberghe, 2014). Individual personality types and learning preferences may have influenced this, however are outside the scope of this study. The state like characteristics of PsyCap may also be important in interpreting the findings, being situated on the spectrum between the transience of an emotion and the long-term features of personality, indicating perhaps that the 8 week timespan for this study may have been insufficient for the effects on participants perceptions to be fully realised (Lally, van Jaarsveld, Potts & Wardle, 2010).

The quantitative data triangulated the qualitative findings on leader effectiveness. Regarding all quantitative measures of leader effectiveness (PsyCap, LRE and LTS), the paired-sample t-test showed that at T2, after taking part in the two coaching sessions, participant effectiveness was not significantly different from that observed at T1. As with any small samples, the conclusions that can be drawn from this study should be viewed with caution. The quantitative data, whilst not significant, nonetheless indicated an increase in means for all measures of leader effectiveness over the two-month program. It can also be noted that the standard deviations in T2 were generally smaller, indicating less variability around the higher means. It may be that the relatively short time frame of the study (two months), provided insufficient time lapse for any changes to take effect as a result of the coaching, and that coaching over a longer timeframe may have returned significant results. Another possibility is that the selection of different effectiveness scales might have produced different results.

5.2.5 Emergent Findings. This study supports the literature on executive coaching that indicates positive outcomes at both the workplace and at the individual level (Spence and Grant, 2007; Grant et al, 2009; Theeboom et al., 2014; Jones et al., 2015), and extends this to propose positive effects that are well matched for complexity. The study suggests three new leader effectiveness characteristics that might be developed through coaching that are well

suiting to a complex environment; comfort with ambiguity, an appetite for reflection and a willingness to be vulnerable. These findings have received little attention in the coaching literature to date.

Comfort with Ambiguity. Organisational change is the undercurrent in a complex environment, appearing often as unpredictable, non-linear and discontinuous. Contexts marked by unpredictable change, with ambiguous, unknowable, or unstable chains of cause and effect require leaders to function in the spaces characterised by ambiguity and anxiety (Cavanagh & Lane, 2012). This study found that the ability to adopt multiple and opposing perspectives was important for leaders, signalling responsiveness to emergent conditions and increasing comfort with ambiguity. Traditional views of leadership were observed among some participants in this study, in the sometimes-binary nature of their views of what an effective leader is or does. A number of polarities emerged, representing elements of a leader's role that some participants reported as mutually exclusive. These include inner versus outer focus, control versus trust, action versus reflection, being versus doing, continuity versus change etc. These dichotomies are indicative of the number of often-paradoxical challenges facing leaders today, a situation that highlights the "messy" elements inherent in complex environments and the overarching tensions that affect managerial and organisational effectiveness (Manderscheid and Harrower, 2016). Acknowledgement by the study participants of the complexity of the challenges faced, and recognition that a more nuanced response than binary thinking could be more effective, led to a developing awareness for some of the benefit in being able to approach their leadership from a multitude of viewpoints, and to view explanations, options and future actions from a number of perspectives. The development of intentions to shift towards a more inclusive "and" style of thinking, and acknowledgement that multiple viewpoints might be useful or even necessary to lead effectively, may be seen as representative of a move towards an emergent view of

leader identity and transformation (Waldman & Bowen, 2016). Many participants in the study exhibited elements of transformative learning as a result of the coaching, moving from a “polarity thinking” (Manderscheid & Harrower, 2016), black and white, “either/ or” perspective, to one that was “paradox savvy” (Waldman & Bowen, 2016). In other words, they recognised that to be successful they need to develop the ability to embrace both aspects of these paired contradictions. The dichotomies of the coaching process in general supported this, offering both structure and flexibility, challenge and support, an opportunity to be both reflective and take action, to focus on the inner and the outer worlds. This view of the world is representative of the emergence and adaptability aspects of complexity leadership (Uhl-Bien et al., 2007), with the iterative and cyclical nature of ICT similarly well suited to this context.

Appetite for Reflection. For leaders to act effectively in a wide range of contexts, becoming aware of their responses and potential derailers in challenging and ambiguous situations is key. The current study supports Kilburg’s view (2001) of coaching as catalyst for introspection and deeper self-awareness. Self-awareness emerged as of key importance to leader effectiveness, and can be developed via the coaching process’s exploration of participant strengths and weaknesses. Coaching has also been discussed as an empirically-validated mechanism that fosters reflection, critical thinking and transformative learning, and that helps develop the psychological and behavioural skills leaders need to be effective whilst simultaneously dealing with the turbulence associated with organisational change (Grant, 2014). Literature suggests the benefits of reflection as a leadership competency (Avolio & Gardner, 2005) and is associated with superior leader performance (Di Stefano, Gino, Pisano & Staats, 2016). Coaching as informed by ICT encompasses reflection as development, to be accessed via inner focused questions that move beyond enquiry of current leadership characteristics (representing ‘who am I?’), to consider ‘who am I becoming?’ This shift may

be representative of a sense of emergence, transformation and of transition towards a new identity. According to Kegan, (1994, p.17), transformative learning happens when someone changes, “not just the way he behaves, not just the way he feels, but the way he knows—not just what he knows but the way he knows”. Transformation in this study was associated with an emerging leader identity, and with leaders finding a new way to lead, based upon the ability to step back, reflect and make decisions. The long-term nature of the development process beyond a goal setting exercise was also supported, with ICT also offering a framework for continued introspection beyond the study and a process for sustained desired change.

Some participants reported that one of the most valuable outcomes of the process in terms of enhancing their effectiveness was having an opportunity to reflect. An insight for many participants was associated with the benefits arising from intentionally carving out space for an inner rather than an outer focus. This finding was reinforced by those participants who expressed the desire to continue to build a reflective practice post-coaching, in the belief that it would enhance their professional development, learning and leader effectiveness throughout their careers. Despite the acknowledged benefits of reflective time, it was surprising how few of the study participants had previously engaged in an intended formal reflective process. Researcher observations were that some participants appeared less open than others to engaging in deep reflection and purposeful thought, with a number stating a preference for an action based, solutions focus. A number of participants also reported particular discomfort when exploring inner psychological states, motivations and feelings. It was observed that those participant-leaders who embraced the reflective components of the coaching seemed to experience deeper insight. Supporting ICT’s notion of intentional desired change (Boyatzis, 2006, 2008), this study’s findings suggest that the intentionality of reflection exhibited by participants may be a factor in perceived changes arising as a result of

the coaching. One conclusion may be that if leaders are not given an opportunity to engage in and embrace a reflective process, then the self-awareness, insights and leader effectiveness benefits may be less strong.

Willingness to be Vulnerable. A key reason for leaders not embracing change is that it implies accepting risk and relinquishing control (Lowell, 2016). The risks can be both practical and emotional. A number of leaders in this study were in a “transition zone”, on the cusp of career change or more senior leadership opportunities, a zone characterised by uncertainty and ambiguity. Letting go of the old, known and secure ways of doing and being was challenging for some participants. An intentional and desired transformation (change) requires leaders to be comfortable working at the intersection of wicked problems, complex systems and change (Uhl-Bien et al., 2006; Kramer, 2016). Literature suggests that leaders can intentionally develop approaches and mind-sets as strategic resources that support transformation, and equip them to thrive in a hyper-complex world (Kramer, 2016). Facilitated by the executive coaching process, many leaders in the study reported experiencing enhanced self-efficacy and confidence, from which emerged trust in themselves and others, and a greater ability to let go of control and to delegate. Many demonstrated transformative learning, embracing the discomfort required and discarding their old identity to make way for the new. This letting go of control implied a willingness to be vulnerable.

It was surprising the extent to which a lack of confidence in their leadership (imposter syndrome) had been experienced by many participants, yet previously unacknowledged as such. Fear of failure, feelings of inadequacy and ambivalence in regard to their leader identity were other common experiences that participants reported, and that had gone largely unacknowledged prior to coaching. Participant associations of vulnerability with weakness, and the commonly held belief that leaders need to be perceived as being strong, certain and in control, had led to reluctance to access feelings of vulnerability. A number of participants

reported that the coaching helped them find the courage to take emotional risks, and demonstrate personal vulnerability, whether in embarking upon difficult conversations, or making a significant change. There are both practical and psychological/emotional risks to being vulnerable, and some participants expressed the desire to remain in a zone of what was emotionally comfortable. This preference appeared to be associated with a desire to remain in control, and of adhering to the belief that a “right” answer was available. For other participants, there was a growing realisation however, that the ambiguities inherent in a complex world might render this stance ineffective, and that feelings of discomfort are part and parcel of the leadership role, and moreover, that the absence of such feelings of discomfort may in fact indicate stagnation or closed mindedness. Study findings suggest that those participants who demonstrated higher willingness to be vulnerable, with lower levels of reluctance to experience emotional discomfort, experienced greater insight and value from the coaching, with greater flow on effects to their leader effectiveness.

5.3 Contributions to Practice

A key practical contribution of this study is to bottom line debates on the effectiveness of costly leader development interventions. This is of particular relevance, given this study’s findings that positive outcomes for leader effectiveness can arise even after two coaching sessions. By offering a better understanding of how coaching works, and insights from participants as to how this contributed to their feeling leader-like, this study offers insights for improving the processes and structures that underpin leader development programs in general. For example steps may be taken to incorporate strengths based visioning exercises, or tools encouraging leaders to embrace dichotomies, such as structure and flexibility, challenge and support, time for reflection and time for action.

This study also make a practical contribution to the evolving view of leader effectiveness characteristics. As such it may be of particular relevance both to individual leaders, and also to those providing leader development and executive coaching programs, whether externally or within organisations, as well as to organisations undertaking major change projects or other complex transformations. This might include inputs to development pathways and competency models to ensure that they reflect the skills needed to benefit individual leaders and organisations wanting to keep pace with the adaptive and emergent environment. While not generalizable due to a number of study limitations, leader development programs will be enriched by the incorporation of insights into internal characteristics of leaders who are capable of operating effectively and making meaningful and lasting change. For example, the benefits that may arise from cultivating a willingness to be vulnerable, and of embracing uncertainty and ambiguity as a mind-set might inform development programs better matched to the needs of contemporary leaders. Similarly, study findings that suggest the benefits of reflection to leaders may be of value to organisations wishing to develop an organisational culture where reflection is supported and where leaders are offered scope for time away from operational matters to engage in reflective practices.

Whilst ICT coaching is supported as a mechanism that can facilitate intentional desired change in an individual leader, the “multi-levelled” aspect of ICT makes it well suited for leader development in a complex environment, offering a coaching framework that might flexibly support change at the individual leader, team or organisation level.

5.4 Research Limitations

It is important to acknowledge the number of limitations that may have biased or influenced the results of this study. First, this study is based on interviews with a small number of leaders undertaking EMBA studies at an Australian Business School, and as a

result, the reader should be cautious about inferring general patterns for all leaders. Denzin & Lincoln (2013) explain qualitative research as studying people in their natural setting. This was important for this study findings, as the themes that emerged from interview may have been impacted to some degree by the particular setting in which the executive coaching was conducted, and may therefore differ from other studies of executive coaching conducted in slightly different contexts. All participants were leaders embarking on a period of self and professional development, and many were at transitional points in their career and actively planning more senior work roles, and so the coaching offer was timely. It is to be debated whether a cohort of leaders who were not so open to development or “upwardly looking” would have had similar engagement in the process, or reported similar outcomes. Furthermore, participants self-selected for the study, perhaps indicating an openness to development which again may not be representative in the broader population of leaders, and further limiting generalizability. Self-selection prevented researcher bias (Donaldson & Grant-Vallone, 2002), however, it may be that stronger effects might have been recorded from a cohort of leaders purposefully selected with regards to their identified “gaps” in terms of effectiveness indicators. As with any research which relies on participants’ views of themselves, a self-report bias is possible. Assurance of the confidentiality of participants may have mitigated this risk, since research suggests that socially desirable responses are greatly reduced when surveys are confidential and self-administered (Tourangeau & Yan, 2007). Also to be considered are the number of other variables such as personal affect, mental state, tenure as leader, etc., that were not controlled for in this study and which may affect the findings.

A second limitation is associated with the duration of the study. The real life setting of the research impacted a number of methodological choices that may have limited the strength of the results. The time constraints arising due to study scope of only two coaching sessions,

for example, may explain the weighting of the reported effects from interview data towards ICT Discovery 1 (Ideal Self) and Discovery 2 (Real Self). The early sessions of any coaching program are likely to focus on a vision of what might be achieved as well as grounding in the reality of participant's current state. Opportunity for deeper exploration of participant experiences of Discoveries 3 (Learning Agenda), 4 (Active Experimentation), and 5 (Resonant Relationships) may have required extending the study to 5 or 6 sessions. Furthermore, the time constraints of the 8-week study period may have prevented sufficient time lapse for any effects of the coaching to fully manifest (Lally et al., 2010). This may explain the non-significant quantitative results. It may be that a longitudinal or multiphase study to explore and test the longer terms impacts of the coaching would have yielded significant results.

The non-significant quantitative results might also have been impacted by the general character of the variables studied. Studies focusing on more specific skills have achieved stronger effects from programs targeting those specific skills (Holmberg et al, 2016, p165). A related possibility is that the measures were not sensitive enough to capture the inner changes that can result from the coaching. It was however remarkable that despite the non-significant survey results, the qualitative data indicated that the coaching intervention had benefits for all participants' effectiveness.

Third, the dual researcher-coach role, combined with the study methodology that encompassed two previous coaching conversations with each participant, afforded the researcher a history with each participant and insights beyond the interview. These may have both beneficial and detrimental to the research. An advantage may have been the enhanced relationship, due to established feelings of psychological safety and trust between the pair, possibly facilitating a more open response to interview questions, and also allowing the coach to probe more deeply. On the other hand, the existing relationship may have caused

participants to censor their views of the coaching and report more favourable outcomes. There was also a risk of “allegiance” effects (Holmberg, 2016, p164) that may result from the researcher’s high motivation to achieve a certain type of result, and the cognitive bias of the researcher may also have impacted interpretation of the data, however these risks were mitigated to some extent by inter-coder checks.

Navigating the dual role of coach and researcher also gave rise to certain ethics and confidentiality issues. The study received ethics clearance from QUT Ethics Committee prior to conducting the fieldwork, and participants volunteered to have their responses audio-taped and analysed, with the option to withdraw (although none took this option). It is also of importance to highlight the potential ethical dilemma arising from the competing aims inherent in the dual researcher-coach role. For example, since the coach was also the researcher, with a research aim beyond the coaching sessions, there was a potential for the coaching conversation to be channelled towards the research aims, thus ceasing to be client-centred, and with a resultant compromise to its integrity and effectiveness. This risk was mitigated to some extent by the design of the study, and the fact that the researcher had full access to interview tapes and transcripts for post-hoc analysis. This meant that during the coaching sessions preference could be given to the coach-client relationship over the researcher-participant relationship.

5.5 Future Research

The driver for this study was the coach-researcher’s observation from twenty five years of working closely with leaders in global organisations that some leaders are able to better weather the turbulence associated with complex work challenges and a dynamic environment, and thrive despite these, whilst others are less successful at sustaining effectiveness and developing as leaders. From a curiosity about the psychological elements underpinning

leader effectiveness and a review of the literature, a number of characteristics emerged that seemed appropriate for the workplace. This study aimed to investigate how coaching informed by ICT can enhance leader effectiveness, and to provide insight that may be useful in the development of leaders who are effective both in the world of organisations today and in the world that will exist in 5 or 10 years from now. The broad nature of the term “leader effectiveness” dictates that there is a vast range of potential measurement criteria, many of which were excluded from this study due to scope limitations. Future research avenues might broaden this scope, or indeed probe more deeply into the variables. For example extending the research into exploring the impact of ICT coaching upon the antecedents of leader role efficacy rather than directly on the variable itself.

Leader effectiveness cannot be viewed in a vacuum. This study adopted a view of leaders and their effectiveness that is independent of their followers. Research suggests that leadership effectiveness is just as much a product of good followers as it is of good leaders (Yukl, 1999). A further research avenue therefore, might adopt a more integrative approach to studying the impacts of coaching informed by ICT on leader effectiveness, extending beyond self-report data to examine perceptions from followers. Future research focussing beyond an individual leader could also consider leader effectiveness at the collective and organisational levels, and could further leverage the complexity characteristics of ICT, in particular its multi-levelled and multi-systems focus, to facilitate examination of larger systemic and environmental influences.

Questions associated with emerging findings, such as a willingness to be vulnerable, and that were not resolved in the literature reviewed, may offer a future lens by which to measure the effectiveness of coaching. Future work might also explore the conditions necessary for leaders to feel more comfortable discussing inner world/psychological matters, with a focus on diminishing reluctance (or conversely for enhancing appetite) for personal

reflection among leaders. The growing evidence base supporting emotional intelligence as a key competitive advantage is leading to increased familiarity and acceptance of the importance of a leader's inner world, however organisations might also benefit from devoting more effort to normalising the language of reflection and emotional constructs.

This study presents future opportunities for improvement in study design that might allow longer duration of intervention, and increased lapse time for effects to occur. The challenges and the instability associated with the knowledge economy and the hyper-complex environment are unlikely to diminish, offering future researchers the opportunity to examine longitudinal effects of executive coaching in this complex context. A longitudinal study could enhance the literature, providing deeper insight into the benefits to leader effectiveness of coaching sustained over a longer time frame. It might also consider extending to incorporate alternative effectiveness measures well suited to complexity. The future is likely to increasingly complex environments, with technological advancements bringing expansion of globalisation and leaders operating across diverse geographies and cultures. A future study could broaden the sample to explore the experiences of a more geographically or culturally diverse cohort.

5.6 Summary of Thesis

This thesis has explored how executive coaching as informed by ICT can enhance leader effectiveness. The study found that ICT's underpinnings in complexity theory positioned it as an appropriate model for executive coaching that is well suited to today's hyper complex environment. Theoretically important contributions include an increased understanding of factors contributing to a successful executive coaching process, and of inner characteristics of leader effectiveness. Specifically, ICT is found to contribute to the development of inner resources such as self-efficacy, self-awareness, and psychological

capital, all of which form part of an emerging leader identity. Furthermore, the data indicated that an appetite for reflection, along with willingness to be vulnerable, and comfort with ambiguity were important for leader effectiveness, and could be enhanced through coaching. Practically, the study has highlighted the potential value of an executive coaching intervention informed by ICT as a tool for developing leaders who are facing the complex demands of today's organisations. It has shown that processes enabling a focus on leader inner psychological resources can be beneficial in supporting leader transformation.

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Appendices

Appendix A - Sample of Coaching Definitions in the Literature

Appendix B - Comparison of Theories Underpinning ICT

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Appendix A - Sample of Coaching Definitions in the Literature

Sample of Definitions in the Literature	
Coaching: a one-to-one relationship in which the coach and coachee work together to identify and achieve organisationally, professionally, and personally beneficial developmental goals	Sonesh et al., 2015
Coaching: focus upon improvements in the effectiveness of the organisation as achieved through the coaching process	Cox, Bachkirova & Clutterbuck, 2014
Executive Coaching: flexible and adaptive development tool that can enhance individual, team and organisational performance	Day, 2000; Ely et al., 2010
Executive Coaching is often used in times of organisational change to help executives develop the psychological and behavioural skills needed to focus on reaching their work-related goals whilst simultaneously dealing with the turbulence associated with organisational change	Grant, 2014
Executive Coaching : one of the dominant methodologies for developing leaders	MacKie, 2015
Workplace or Executive Coaching: a one-to-one learning and development intervention that uses a collaborative, reflective, goal-focused relationship to achieve professional outcomes that are valued by the coachee	Jones et al, .2016
Leadership Coaching: a relationship between a client and a coach that facilitates the client becoming a more effective leader	Ely et al., 2010, p587
Leadership Coaching: a promising leadership development practice... a formal one-on-one relationship that involves counselling about work-related issues with the purpose of improving their leadership effectiveness"	Ladegard & Gjerde, 2014, p633
Managerial Coaching: performed by managers who coach their team members in a work context	McCarthy & Milner, 2013
External Coaching: performed by professionals who do not belong to the organisation where the executive works	Schalk & Landeta, 2017
Internal Coaching: one-on-one developmental intervention supported by the organisation and provided by a colleague of those coached who is trusted to shape and deliver a program yielding individual professional growth'	Schalk & Landeta, 2017

continued

Industry Definitions	
Executive coaching is an experiential and individualized leader development process that builds a leader's capability to achieve short- and long-term organizational goals. It is conducted through one-on-one and/or group interactions, driven by data from multiple perspectives, and based on mutual trust and respect. The organization, an executive, and the executive coach work in partnership to achieve maximum impact.	Institute of Coaching, 2017
Organizational coaching aims at fostering positive, systemic transformation within organizations. It is frequently used to help organizations achieve strategic objectives, enhance leadership capability, and create culture change. Broader organizational needs are placed front and centre, and the coaching is used to scale-up change across the enterprise. While there is overlap, this broader focus is in contrast to executive or leadership coaching which targets the individual's development needs and more typically comprises standalone engagements	Institute of Coaching, 2017
Business coaching: the process of engaging in regular, structured conversation with a "client": an individual or team who is within a business, profit or non-profit organization, institution or government and who is the recipient of business coaching. The goal is to enhance the client's awareness and behaviour so as to achieve business objectives for both the client and their organization	Worldwide Association of Business Coaches, 2007 (Revised 2011)

Appendix B - Comparison of Theories Underpinning ICT

	learning	growth/ personal & prof development	organisation	individual	vision/goal	action/ experimentation	monitoring/ reflection	relationships	strength focus	summary
Intentional Change Theory (Boyatzis, 2006, 2008)	y	y	y	y	y	y	y	y	y	5 discoveries underpinning intentional desired change
Self-Directed Learning theory (Kolb & Boyatzis, 1970)	y	y		y	y	y	y	y		process in which individuals take the initiative without the help of others in diagnosing their learning needs, formulating goals, identifying human and material resources, and evaluating learning outcomes
Experiential Learning theory (Kolb, 1984),	y				y	y	y			cyclical model of learning, consisting of four stages; Concrete experience, Reflective observation, Abstract conceptualization, Active experimentation
Transformative Learning theory (Mezirow, 1991)	y	y		y	y	y				process of effecting change in a frame of reference' (Mezirow, 1997, p5). Critical and autonomous thinking must take precedence over the uncritical assimilation of knowledge. Transformative learning is a route to the development of critical thinking. 10 phase transformation process
Self-determination theory (Deci, Connell & Ryan, 1989),	y	y		y	y			y	y	theory of motivation and personality that addresses three universal, innate and psychological needs: competence, autonomy, and psychological relatedness.
Broaden and Build theory (Fredrickson, 2001)	y	y		y					y	theory suggests that positive emotions including joy, interest, contentment and love, broaden an individual's momentary thought-action repertoire, that promote discovery of novel and creative actions, ideas and social bonds, which in turn build individual's personal resources
Positive Psychology (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000)		y		y				y	y	study of human flourishing and of strengths and virtues that enable individuals and communities to thrive
Positive Organisational Scholarship (Cameron, Dutton, & Quinn, 2003).			y						y	the study of that which is positive, flourishing, and life-giving in organizations.
Positive Organisational Behaviour (Wright, 2003).			y						y	positively oriented human resource strengths and psychological capacities that can be measured, developed, and effectively managed for performance improvement in today's workplace, the pursuit of employee happiness and health

Appendix C - Invitation to Participate in Research Project

Dear Student

You are invited to participate in a Research Project into **Coaching: Intentional Change and Leader Psychological Capital**. The study will be conducted by Ms Anne Marie Halton, a Masters student from the School of Management at Queensland University of Technology (QUT). Anne Marie is conducting research into how executive coaching might enhance leader psychological capital. She needs participants on the EMBA program who would be willing to participate in the 3 parts of the study as below:

1. 2 x 1 hour one-on-one **coaching sessions** relating to an issue associated with your work role, the sessions to occur at a convenient mutual time during an 8 week period between March and May 2016.
2. Completion of a short **online survey** of approximately 20 minutes to measure some psychological characteristics. The survey will be completed twice – first, within a week before the first coaching session, and then again within a week of the end of the second coaching session.
3. A 1 hour face-to-face **interview** designed to explore your experiences of the coaching program. The interview will be audio-recorded and will take place within 2 weeks of the second coaching session.

In the interview you will be asked about your perceptions of your experiences of the coaching program. If you feel that questions relating to how you feel after coaching might cause you discomfort, it is recommended that you do not participate in the study.

All comments and responses will be confidential and we will use a unique identifier to match your surveys and interview data. Your participation in this project is voluntary. If you do agree to participate you can withdraw from the project without comment or penalty within 2 weeks of the end of the final interview. Your decision to participate will in no way impact upon your current or future relationship with QUT, GSB, or upon your grades.

Please view the attached Participant Information Sheet for further details on the study.


The Principal researcher, Ms Anne Marie Halton can be contacted by email (anne.halton@qut.edu.au), or you can telephone Dr Geoff Abbott on 3138 6873.

Please note that this study has been approved by the QUT Human Research Ethics Committee (**QUT Ethics Approval Number 1600000044**).

If you would like to participate, please follow the link below that will take you to a consent form, and thereafter to the secure QUT server that hosts the first survey.

https://busqut.au1.qualtrics.com/SE/?SID=SV_0qBEPpt4dvBH0gJ

Appendix D - Participant Information

	PARTICIPANT INFORMATION FOR QUT RESEARCH PROJECT –Project –
Coaching: Intentional Change and Leader Psychological Capital QUT Ethics Approval Number 160000044	

RESEARCH TEAM

Principal Researcher:	Anne Marie Halton, Masters student, QUT Business School
Principal Supervisor:	Prof. Cameron Newton, School of Management, QUT Business School
Associate Supervisor:	Dr. Geoff Abbott, Director of Coaching, QUT Graduate School of Business

DESCRIPTION

This project is being undertaken as part of a Masters research study aimed at exploring how leader psychological capital (PsyCap) is enhanced through coaching using Intentional Change Theory (ICT). The broader context of the study is to explore how ICT coaching might be an applied positive psychology tool that is useful in helping leaders build the psychological resources to deal with the uncertainty and challenges inherent in a complex work environment.

The research results are expected to be of interest to Australian organisations and leaders working in today's highly competitive and extremely complex global economy, offering insight into potential mechanisms for enhancing psychological capital, thereby contributing to sustained leader effectiveness over time.

You are invited to participate in this project due to the relevance of your experiences as a leader dealing with the uncertainty and complexity inherent in a challenging work environment, where you will inevitably be juggling competing priorities, managing stretched resources and working in the current highly competitive and extremely complex global economy. We are interested in how ICT coaching may enhance the psychological resources you draw upon in order to manage the demands placed upon you as a result of combining a senior and often challenging leadership with part time study.

PARTICIPATION

Your participation in the research project will involve 3 components as detailed below:

1. 2 x 1 hour one-on-one coaching sessions relating to an issue associated with your work role, the sessions to occur at a convenient mutual time during an 8-week period between March and May 2016. The coaching sessions will use Boyatzis' Intentional Change Theory as a framework, and will be based upon the 5 discoveries of ICT:
 - i. The Ideal Self or shared vision;
 - ii. The Real Self or shared norms and values in relationships;
 - iii. A Learning Agenda and plan to move closer to your vision—but is something you are excited about trying;
 - iv. Experimentation and practice with new thoughts, feelings, or behaviours; and
 - v. Resonant relationships—supportive relationships that make the rest of the discoveries possible.

The ICT model is cyclical and iterative, so that it might be possible to cycle through a full cycle in a single session, or alternatively spend several sessions in a single "discovery".

2. Completion of a short online survey of approximately 20 minutes to measure some psychological characteristics. The survey will be completed twice – firstly, within a week before the first coaching session, and then again within a week of the end of the second coaching session. In the survey we will ask you to indicate your level of agreement or disagreement with a number of statements ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). Examples of survey questions include:
 - I feel confident analysing a long-term problem to find a solution
 - Right now, I see myself as pretty successful at work
 - I can get through difficult times at work because I've experienced difficulty before.

-
3. A 1 hour face to face interview designed to explore your experiences of the coaching program. The interview be audio-recorded and will take place within 2 weeks of the second coaching session. Sample questions from the interview include:
- What were your experiences of hope during the coaching sessions?
 - Tell me about a time when you felt like you were having fun during the coaching sessions?
 - In what way did I show myself patience and forgiveness during the coaching program?

The findings of the study will be published in a Masters thesis with de-identified participants.

Participant numbers will be capped at 30, on a first come basis.

Your participation in this project is entirely voluntary. If you do agree to participate you can withdraw from the project without comment or penalty within 2 weeks of the end of the interview. You may also decline to answer any questions. Your decision to participate or not participate will in no way impact upon your current or future relationship with QUT.

EXPECTED BENEFITS

It is expected that the results of this study will directly benefit participants through providing them with insights into mechanisms for enhancing their PsyCap, and this insight may be used to inform changes to individual thoughts, behaviours and attitudes that could foster increased resilience and sustainability.

It is also expected that this project will provide information that will benefit firms in Australia. The knowledge acquired will be disseminated widely through various channels, and so other anticipated beneficiaries include

1. Organisations seeking to support leaders in the development and sustaining of resilience
2. Any individual leader experiencing the challenges of the VUCA (volatile, uncertain, complex, ambiguous) environment, and looking for tools that may enhance resilience
3. Emerging Leaders who are looking for strategies & tools that will support their career development
4. HR and L&D departments who are looking for professional development interventions and resilience-enhancing HRM practices, or professional development interventions beyond formal resilience training programs
5. Executive Coaches seeking evidence based tools that can support their clients' professional development and performance improvement

The study data will form part of a Research Masters thesis, and this will be made available to you upon completion, upon request. You may request a copy by contacting Anne Marie Halton via email: anne.halton@qut.edu.au , or alternatively by telephoning Dr Geoff Abbott on 3138 6873.

RISKS

The research team believes that risks associated with participation in the project are minimal.

The only potential risk may be some minor emotional discomfort arising from certain questions in the interviews that individuals may be sensitive to answering. In this case, you may choose not to answer the question and move onto the next question.

QUT provides for limited free psychology, family therapy or counselling services for research participants of QUT projects who may experience discomfort or distress as a result of their participation in research. Should you wish to access this service please contact the Clinic Receptionist of the QUT Psychology and Counselling Clinic on 07 3138 0999. Please indicate to the receptionist that you are a research participant. Additionally, Lifeline Australia offers a 24-hour telephone counselling service for anyone experiencing a personal crisis. Lifeline counsellors can be contacted on 13 11 24.

All study information will be treated confidentially; and the raw data will be coded for research purposes, and only available to researchers and an external transcriber who is subject to a confidentiality agreement.

It should be noted that if you do agree to participate, you may withdraw from participation without comment or penalty within 2 weeks of the end of the interview.

PRIVACY AND CONFIDENTIALITY

All comments and responses will be treated confidentially unless required by law. The names of individual persons are not required in any of the responses. Your recorded voice will be destroyed after the end of research and only non-identifiable data will be used/reported. Please note that non-identifiable data collected in this project may be used as comparative data in future projects.

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE

We would like you to sign a written consent form (LINK to online form) to confirm your agreement to participate.

QUESTIONS / FURTHER INFORMATION ABOUT THE PROJECT

If you have any questions or require further information please contact one of the research team members below.
Anne Marie Halton - Anne.halton@qut.edu.au, or alternatively by telephoning Dr Geoff Abbott on 3138 6873.

CONCERNS / COMPLAINTS REGARDING THE CONDUCT OF THE PROJECT

QUT is committed to research integrity and the ethical conduct of research projects. However, if you do have any concerns or complaints about the ethical conduct of the project you may contact the QUT Research Ethics Unit on 07 3138 5123 or email ethicscontact@qut.edu.au. The QUT Research Ethics Unit is not connected with the research project and can facilitate a resolution to your concern in an impartial manner.

Thank you for helping with this research project. Please keep this sheet for your information.



Coaching: Intentional Change and Leader Psychological Capital

QUT Ethics Approval Number 1600000044

RESEARCH TEAM CONTACTS

Principal Researcher: Anne Marie Halton, Masters student, QUT Business School
Principal Supervisor: Prof. Cameron Newton, School of Management, QUT Business School
Associate Supervisor: Dr Geoff Abbott, Director of Coaching, QUT Graduate School of Business

STATEMENT OF CONSENT

By signing below, you are indicating that you:

- Have read and understood the information document regarding this project.
- Have had any questions answered to your satisfaction.
- Understand that if you have any additional questions you can contact the research team.
- Understand that you are free to withdraw from the study within two weeks of the interview without comment or penalty.
- Understand that you can contact the Research Ethics Unit on 07 3138 5123 or email ethicscontact@qut.edu.au if you have concerns about the ethical conduct of the project.
- Understand that the interview will include an audio recording.
- Understand that non-identifiable data collected in this project may be used as comparative data in future projects.
- Agree to assign a unique identifier to your data that will disguise your identity.
- Agree to participate in the project.

Name

.....

Signature

.....

Date

.....

Please return this sheet to the investigator

Appendix E - Participant Survey

DEMOGRAPHICS

What is your sex? <input type="checkbox"/> Male <input type="checkbox"/> Female		
What is your age? Years _____		
On what basis are you employed?		
<input type="checkbox"/> Permanent Full Time	<input type="checkbox"/> Temporary	
<input type="checkbox"/> Permanent Part Time	<input type="checkbox"/> Volunteer	
<input type="checkbox"/> Casual	<input type="checkbox"/> Other.....	
<input type="checkbox"/> Contract		
How long have you been in the workforce? Years _____		
How long have you been working for your current employer? Years _____		
How long have you been working in your current role? Years _____		
Please indicate the <u>highest</u> level of education you have completed. Tick one only.		
<input type="checkbox"/> Up to Year 10	<input type="checkbox"/> Associate Diploma	<input type="checkbox"/> Masters Degree
<input type="checkbox"/> Year 12	<input type="checkbox"/> Diploma	<input type="checkbox"/> PhD
<input type="checkbox"/> Trade Qualification	<input type="checkbox"/> Degree	<input type="checkbox"/> Other:
<input type="checkbox"/> Certificate	<input type="checkbox"/> Grad Certificate/ Diploma	Please specify _____
Annual gross salary excluding allowances and performance pay per annum: (\$)		
What organisation do you work for? (this question is not compulsory)		
Which of these best describes your position in your organisation's hierarchy?		
<input type="checkbox"/> Administration/Clerical		
<input type="checkbox"/> Technical		
<input type="checkbox"/> Professional		
<input type="checkbox"/> Middle Management eg <input type="checkbox"/> Project Manager, Supervisor		
<input type="checkbox"/> General /Senior Management		
<input type="checkbox"/> Executive/ Board Member		
<input type="checkbox"/> Other: Please specify _____		

Which activity does your current organisation primarily conduct?

- Agriculture, forestry & fishing
 - Construction
 - Transport, postal and warehousing
 - Professional, scientific & technical services
 - Mining
 - Wholesale trade
 - Information media & telecommunications
 - Administrative & support services
 - Manufacturing
 - Retail trade
 - Financial & insurance services
 - Public administration & safety
 - Electricity, gas, water & waste services
 - Accommodation & food services
 - Rental, hiring & real estate services
 - Education & training
 - Health care & social assistance
 - Arts & recreation services
 - Other
-
-

PSYCHOLOGICAL CAPITAL

Below are statements that describe how you may think about yourself right now. Use the following scales to indicate your level of agreement or disagreement with each statement. (1 = Strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = somewhat disagree, 4 = somewhat agree, 5 = agree, 6 = strongly agree).

	6 Strongly Agree	5 Agree	4 Somewhat Agree	3 Somewhat Disagree	2 Disagree	1 Strongly Disagree
1. I feel confident analysing a long-term problem to find a solution.	6	5	4	3	2	1
2. I feel confident in representing my work area in meetings with management.	6	5	4	3	2	1
3. I feel confident contributing to discussions about the company's strategy.	6	5	4	3	2	1
4. I feel confident helping to set targets/goals in my work area.	6	5	4	3	2	1
5. I feel confident contacting people outside the company (e.g., suppliers, customers) to discuss problems.	6	5	4	3	2	1
6. I feel confident presenting information to a group of colleagues.	6	5	4	3	2	1
7. If I should find myself in a jam at work, I could think of many ways to get out of it.	6	5	4	3	2	1
8. At the present time, I am energetically pursuing my work goals.	6	5	4	3	2	1
9. There are lots of ways around any problem.	6	5	4	3	2	1
10. Right now I see myself as being pretty successful at work.	6	5	4	3	2	1
11. I can think of many ways to reach my current work goals.	6	5	4	3	2	1
12. At this time, I am meeting the work goals that I have set for myself.	6	5	4	3	2	1
13. When I have a setback at work, I have trouble recovering from it, moving on.(R)	6	5	4	3	2	1
14. I usually manage difficulties one way or another at work.	6	5	4	3	2	1
15. I can be "on my own," so to speak, at work if I have to.	6	5	4	3	2	1
16. I usually take stressful things at work in stride.	6	5	4	3	2	1
17. I can get through difficult times at work because I've experienced difficulty before.	6	5	4	3	2	1
18. I feel I can handle many things at a time at this job.	6	5	4	3	2	1
19. When things are uncertain for me at work, I usually expect the best.	6	5	4	3	2	1
20. If something can go wrong for me work-wise, it will.(R) (R)	6	5	4	3	2	1
21. I always look on the bright side of things regarding my job.	6	5	4	3	2	1
22. I'm optimistic about what will happen to me in the future as it pertains to work.	6	5	4	3	2	1
23. In this job, things never work out the way I want them to.(R) (R)	6	5	4	3	2	1

Source; Luthans, Avolio, Avey & Norman (2007)



To whom it may concern,

This letter is to grant permission for anne halton to use the following copyright material:

Instrument: *Psychological Capital (PsyCap) Questionnaire (PCQ)*

Authors: *Fred Luthans, Bruce J. Avolio & James B. Avey.*

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for his/her thesis/dissertation research.

Three sample items from this instrument may be reproduced for inclusion in a proposal, thesis, or dissertation.

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Sincerely,

Mind Garden, Inc.
www.mindgarden.com

LEADER EFFECTIVENESS

Below are statements that describe how you may think about yourself right now. Use the following scales to indicate your level of agreement or disagreement with each statement. (1 = Strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = somewhat disagree, 4 = Neither agree nor disagree, 5 = somewhat agree, 6 = agree, 7 = strongly agree)

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1. I feel I master every aspect of my job as a leader in an excellent manner	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2. I am well aware of the strengths I have in my job	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3. I am very goal oriented in my job as a leader	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4. I take action to handle a problem as soon as it is brought to my attention	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5. I feel confident when I make decisions.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6. My subordinates will always act responsibly to solve problems occurring in their job	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
7. My subordinates would always take responsibility if I were not able to attend to a situation	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8. If I were absent for a period of time, I would not hesitate to leave the responsibility to some of my subordinates	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
9. I often entrust tasks to my subordinates without involving myself.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
10. I feel I master every aspect of my job as a leader in an excellent manner	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
11. I am well aware of the strengths I have in my job	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
12. I am very goal oriented in my job as a leader	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Source: Ladegard & Gjerde (2014)

CONFIDENTIALITY

The researchers wish to investigate how your responses change over time.
By filling in this code your confidential responses can be matched with a future survey. Using a code like this maintains your anonymity, as only you know the code.

Filling out this code is voluntary and your participation is greatly appreciated. This information is not provided to your organisation. Only the QUT researcher will have access to this code.

LAST two letters of your surname: eg. Smith T H		
---	--	--

FIRST two numbers of your birth date: eg. 4 th October 0 4		
---	--	--

Please use the space below to write any other comments you wish relating to this study.

Thank you for completing the survey

Appendix F - Semi-structured interview questions

Warm up

1. We are looking at intentional change theory and seeing how that might impact your leader effectiveness.
 - What was your most exciting insight/or the key learning as a result of the coaching sessions?
 - how might that be applicable to your leader effectiveness
 - on your work effectiveness?
 - on your personal effectiveness?
 - on anything else that comes to mind?
 - Could you expand on that?

Coaching process & ICT Model

2. How did you experience the coaching process?
3. We used the ICT model. To what extent was (Discovery 1 - Discovery 5) helpful in the coaching?
 - What was the impact of that on your effectiveness?
4. To what extent are you more aware of your strengths? Your weaknesses?
 - What was the impact of that on your effectiveness?
 - Tell me about a time when you felt like you were having fun/experiencing humour during the coaching sessions? What was the effect of that?

Leader Effectiveness

5. What were the impacts behaviorally as a result of the coaching sessions?
 - what are the key things that you need to keep doing that you learned as a result of the coaching?
 - how will you apply lessons learned, practice in order to sustain your learnings in your leadership role?
6. If you were to name a change in how you perceive yourself as a leader, what would that be?
 - What other internal changes?
 - To what extent did you experience self-awareness during the coaching? What was the effect of that?
7. We are also looking at psychological capital. How would you describe your experience of ...
 - Hope (H)
 - Efficacy (E)
 - Resilience (R) and
 - Optimism (O) during the ICT coaching sessions?Tell me more ...
8. Is there anything else you would like to say about your experience of the coaching that you haven't said already? Is there a question that you wish that I had asked you that I didn't?

Appendix G - Example Narratives

List of Tables in Appendix G

Table G.1. Example narratives relating to the coaching process

Table G.2. Example narratives relating to Intentional Change Theory

Table G.3. Example narratives relating to leader effectiveness

Table G.4. Example narratives for emerging theme

Table G.1. Example narratives relating to descriptions of coaching process

Theme	Narrative (interviewee gender and age)
<i>trusting relationship</i>	<p>I already had in my mind prejudged you as someone that was already skilled. ... I believed in your skill set, I just said, "She knows what she is doing. I don't need to tell her how to do her job." So I just kind of came in and it worked. The first session was amazing. So that reinforced that – that you are an expert in your domain, so I don't need to come in with any critical stuff. (M35)</p>
	<p>knowing that you are going to be a lot more honest and direct with me than my boss (M38)</p>
	<p>I am trusting what you are saying to me is considered, is backed up by research et cetera. So I am taking those. I have processed them and transformed them for use for me. And, bang, I'm just going to go and do them. (M48)</p>
<i>structure & flexibility</i>	<p>a nice combination of being directed but also there's been – you know, you have had that flexibility – it's felt like it hasn't been – that it has been led by me also. There's been a mutual partnership in that regard. (F40)</p>
	<p>the structure of the questions and the way the conversation eventually tailored itself formed. It was sort of going through the pattern, yeah. (M35)</p>
	<p>I liked that. I couldn't pre-empt where you were going, which is really good. So that made me stop focussing on that and more focussing on the questions.</p>
	<p>I like those kind of conversations, but they are always a little bit – you know, you are more vulnerable than you maybe, I suppose more open than I thought I would be because the questions were so open Nat</p>
	<p>I didn't think it would be quite so open-ended. I don't know. Maybe it's the need to be prepared thing. I like those kind of conversations, but they are always a little bit – you know, you are more vulnerable than you maybe, I suppose more open than I thought I would be because the questions were so open. So I wasn't sure whether it would be something quite structured in terms of going through a certain list of things. And it was structured. So you allowed it to go in the direction that obviously I was talking it through.</p>
<i>powerful questioning</i>	<p>the power of sitting down with someone that has got no emotional investment in what you are doing and asking questions. You know, a lot of things you can answer yourself, but you need somebody to ask the right questions to get that. And the power of that. You know, I have a lot more buy-in, being that I feel that I am giving. You are asking the questions, but I am giving the answers. You walk away and you think, "Oh, well, I've come up with that myself", sort of thing, you know. So it gives you that extra buy-in. But if I sat down and said, "Oh, these are my problems", and then you just said, "Well, do this, this and this", I don't think I would have that. I tried and if it didn't work, then you'd brush it aside. (M31)</p>
	<p>the question often that made me stop and think is, "Taking all the constraints away, what would it look like?" It unblocks those constraints. It just takes those constraints away. There's no reason why you can't look at that as the end point for the vision and then go, "How do we take those constraints away to get there?" So that's probably a pretty powerful question. M45</p>

<i>Theme</i>	<i>Narrative (interviewee gender and age)</i>
<i>powerful questioning</i>	<p>often the solution is intuitive. It's within you, but it's just extracting it and having that conversation through coaching that opens up a different pathway to find that answer that often is there but is just not obvious Essentially, some of it you know. It's just a matter of going through that conversation to put the bits and pieces together (M45)</p>
	<p>I think it's just the process of being asked these kinds of questions or being asked to think about what it is that you are good at or what it is you want to do. It's just the whole process, I think. It's, of course, going to make you more self-aware. (F42)</p>
	<p>You go forward with a bit more confidence and a bit more certainty. Like, this is a strategy to execute. That was really just through the questioning that made me put the elements of that strategy together. (M45)</p>
	<p>I've been far more mindful and reflective. And I think it's just started a thought process that I hadn't kind of had before. F40 K</p>
	<p>If they were all expected questions, you wouldn't have been able to do that so it wouldn't have been as valuable to me.</p>
<i>Space & time for coaching</i>	<p>I think the big thing for me is I need to keep taking that step back and not rushing in and being too hands-on. Hands-on is what I'm really good at, but hands-on is not, from my point of view, sustainable. Hands-on is where all my time goes. It will just sap away my time. M38</p>
	<p>Coaching has actually identified let's look at some goals and let's see what we need to develop to get ourselves there. Actually stopping and doing that process is something new and something very useful that you need to do to help identify those areas. (M36)</p>

Table G.2. Example narratives relating to descriptions of ICT

<i>Theme</i>	<i>Narrative (interviewee gender and age)</i>
<i>Ideal Self</i>	<p>the question often that made me stop and think is, “Taking all the constraints away, what would it look like?” It unblocks those constraints. It just takes those constraints away. There’s no reason why you can’t look at that as the end point for the vision and then go, “How do we take those constraints away to get there?” So that’s probably a pretty powerful question. M45</p> <p>it gives you that – it takes your mind there, you know, of where you want to be. Is it a reality that something could work? F49</p> <p>you need the vision for the direction and the commitment and the drive. So having that process at the start really gave me the vision of where you could end up. That was really useful to start with, to see yourself in that perspective. (M36)</p> <p>Well, you know, the things that we do about, “Hey, let’s talk about an ideal world. Fantasising about something that could be amazing.” The positive realisations that you get out of it. I’ve kind of been stuck in so many years. Having that metaphor of the jigsaw and everything along those lines, they are all positive. M35</p> <p>But it’s actually been quite powerful for me in the long term to go, “Okay, well, yeah, that is my ideal state and it’s a long way away, but how are the decisions that I’m making today impacting my ability to get there?” So that’s my long-term goal, but I can only achieve that by linking a whole series of short-term goals and decisions together. M34</p>
<i>Real Self</i>	<p>I kind of just did an SWOT analysis. You talk about your strengths and weaknesses. It’s really fragmented. Just putting it on one piece of paper and where your opportunities lie. That’s where I know where my strengths are. I know where my weaknesses are. F49</p> <p>I think where I have seen my weaknesses in the past as being stuff to avoid, I’m now seeing weaknesses as potential opportunities. That’s a big shift, yeah. I don’t have to just avoid that stuff forever. I can actually think about what steps can I take to be more confident in that space. F40</p> <p>If you focus on the times that you get it right rather than just on the times that you get it wrong, that creates a lot of possibility. F40</p> <p>Possibility asking that open-ended question about how I would go about that. And that kind of reframed everything for me as a world of possibility as opposed to, “Well, this is your job. Just go away and do your job.” M34</p> <p>My weakness may not be my weakness. It might just be the fact that I’ve neglected it (M31)</p> <p>So I kind of have this sense of, “Yeah, I’ve got lots of weaknesses that I need to overcome in order to be able to move forward without considering I can actually leverage my strengths to mitigate against the weaknesses as and opposed to needing to overcome them and be someone that I’m not.” So I think I’m in a much better place now because of the coaching in terms of a more accurate view of my real self and my current state in terms of just shifting that position between positivity and negativity and optimism and pessimism. M34</p>

<i>Theme</i>	<i>Narrative (interviewee gender and age)</i>
<i>Learning Agenda</i>	<p>So every three months, just re-analyse where you are, where you need to be and what your current strengths are and your position and how they are affecting where you are and, conversely, your weaknesses and how they affect what you do and how you do it. (M36)</p> <p>I suppose really wanting to test how I can influence that situation and those people that we are involved with and have a relationship with, to influence it to the positive. So it's going to be a slow boiler; it's not going to happen over any quick space of time. M45</p> <p>what are the real drivers for some people. What is their experience that they bring to it to shape their view? If anything, that has been a powerful learning for me. Spend a bit more time doing that. M45</p> <p>it's quite enlightening and you feel quite empowered with it. So I am sure I will find the time. M45</p> <p>So I guess reading, watching, learning and then being able to say, "Okay. That's what I do. Now I need to be able to communicate that effectively to people I want to communicate it to." Andrew C</p> <p>It made me feel that we came out with clear objectives of what we were going to try and implement and give it a go and see how they went. (M36)</p> <p>So by trialling them, and they are not always comfortable, so getting out of your comfort zone a little bit but realising that after a short period of time it's not actually that uncomfortable. You get into a routine and pattern and it just becomes second nature M36</p> <p>Really good and really useful to actually highlight what internally you see as things you need to focus on and then actually going and doing it for a month to see the impact as well. M36</p> <p>I feel – I know it's a clichéd word – empowered to be able to do things. So I can go away and experiment on some of the ideas and some of the strategies that I want to implement in an environment that I know M48</p> <p>The biggest thing for me was the showing vulnerability... So I think it has been more showing vulnerability and including people a bit more in my thought process, which I don't do much of either.</p> <p>he difference from where I was before, I was just blindly working. And then those questions were so real in the fact, "Why am I working so hard? Where is your life? What is your balance?" So I'm still working hard, but from my behavioural side I'm finding more time for me. F48</p>
<i>Resonant Relationships</i>	<p>resilience is about making sure that you surround yourself with the right people, that you are doing the kinds of things that help move you in that direction. It's that buffering, isn't it, that helps you get back on the track when you've kind of fallen off? So I think the tools of coaching really helps you. I think in the first session you talked a lot about making sure that you align yourself with people who will support you and encourage you. Each though I do have a great support network, I had not probably used them in a way that I am trying to use them more now, yeah. F40</p> <p>I guess I'm less resource focussed and more focussed on the cohesion within the team, yeah. I think that's probably the main thing M38</p>

<i>Theme</i>	<i>Narrative (interviewee gender and age)</i>
<i>Resonant Relationships</i>	<p>my boss yesterday has told me over the last couple of months he has seen a massive improvement in my work productivity and happiness and overall my peers have kind of also mentioned that. So that was weird, in a sense, but it was like, "Okay." He's like, "I don't know what's going on, but just keep on doing what you've been doing in the last couple of months." So that was a comment that was made yesterday by my boss to myself, so that was pretty good and exciting.</p> <p>So it's important to have other people that you can talk to and ask advice from in relation to manoeuvring through companies like ours, which are big and political. F37</p> <p>Probably an ability to build a bit more of a personal relationship and the value in that. Recognising some of these people in this organisation are pretty isolated themselves even in their own organisation. So if you build that rapport with them, it's good for everyone to be valued and heard,</p> <p>But then having somebody like that who I can trust and rely on who is always going to get me the feedback when I need it is good (M38)</p> <p>I guess I'm less resource focussed and more focussed on the cohesion within the team M38</p> <p>it changes your relationships with people too and how people see you</p>

Table G.3. Example narratives relating to descriptions of leader effectiveness

Theme	Narrative (interviewee gender and age)
<i>Leader Identity</i>	<p>I feel now actually makes me feel like I'm delivering the value that I'm meant to be delivering for the organisation. I'm actually living up to our bargain. And that makes me feel more effective. It makes me feel like I'm actually targeting my time and my resources in the right ways to be able to achieve the right outcomes because I know what they are. M34</p> <p>I think the reinforcing nature of the coaching, where it has actually been about leveraging my strengths has probably led to me feeling more effective within myself. So I don't know whether my team would necessarily see me as having been more effective through this, but I've certainly felt more effective through it. M34</p> <p>But it just made me realise that, "Oh, wow. Okay." I don't need to finish it. I don't have to finish it and say, "Okay. Tick. I'm a leader and then I can act." I can actively do it and progressively grow the puzzle because I am a leader. M35</p> <p>I've been doing some of these public presentations. Usually I kind of send an email and I let someone else do it. I just let it fizzle out. Now I'm just getting in front of people and organising presentations and stuff, and that's kind of been – the first one was quite challenging. My voice cracks up sometimes, but the second one went really well. And I've got a third and a fourth and I'm not even nervous any more. M35 R</p> <p>This is who I am, yep. , ...I belong here. F49</p> <p>But it just made me realise that, "Oh, wow. Okay." I don't need to finish it. I don't have to finish it and say, "Okay. Tick. I'm a leader and then I can act." I can actively do it and progressively grow the puzzle because I am a leader. M35</p>
<i>Confidence & Self efficacy</i>	<p>I kind of haven't really been confident in my own abilities. But to have had those couple of conversations with you has helped to go, "Okay. I can see how we need to work through this. M45</p> <p>my uncovered strengths were things that I was either too scared to operate in, but when I did, I did it well, or ones that I was operating with without even knowing, and doing fairly well at as well. So understanding that, I think, really highlighted the change in my pivot point, yeah. F34</p>
<i>Self awareness</i>	<p>I think the biggest learning that I had was the self-awareness, I guess, was the main thing that came out of it. Obviously I knew about it, but I didn't think it had a big impact on myself as a leader. Answering the questions. There were quite a few</p> <p>That's been really valuable for me to have that reminder to say, "No. Stop. Think. What are we actually trying to achieve here?"(M34)</p> <p>think it's just the self-awareness as a whole. Like, you talk about yourself, so you're more aware of what you do as a self. If you looked at yourself without having coaching, you wouldn't understand what you are saying. So if you have guiding questions, it guides. Okay, well that thought relates to that pattern of doing. It is changing that. Daryl H</p> <p>So whilst we didn't delve into that during the actual coaching, it's something that tends to stay with you when you walk out the door. You think, "Okay, I wonder where that does come from and why I have that reaction to hearing that." F37</p>

Agility in perspective taking

it just reinforced that if I keep going down this path, I'm not really going to get what I want. M38

That it's within my power to choose how I see the world and, therefore, how I choose to react to it. That has probably been the biggest element for me. You know, it's not even a case of choosing your attitude. It's choosing the way you want to view something. M34

But by reframing my response to the environment, it turns out that I can leverage it M34

I think the biggest shift has probably been the frame in which I've seen myself. So switching that to be a more positive frame than a negative frame. M34

It's been valuable to make me flex into a new kind of style of operating, I think. Anything that can change your world view, change the way that you see yourself and your position in the world and all of that stuff is inherently valuable in itself

But just changing that I could actually create a new story, yeah. That was really powerful. F40 K

"Oh, you could actually create a different habit. That doesn't have to be your default forever", I was, "Oh, right. Okay." Yeah, that was really helpful.

it's kind of mind-blowing to think I have just kind of blinkered myself for so long thinking, "I can't, I can't, I can't" but other people can see things that I can't see, yeah. F40 k

So it's like, "Okay. Thanks for your feedback. I'm not going to use it as a negative. I'm going to use it as a positive." M35

I think the benefit for me has been to actually switch out of, "This is the tactical thing we are working on this week" to, "So this is the big picture... and so actually having that better pathway to them to actually have a big picture, to be building them towards that and to be able to anchor all the things that we are doing within that big picture, has made it much easier to get them on board because they are not seeing it as disparate messages. They are not seeing it as six different things. They are just seeing it as six different elements of one thing.

PsyCap - Hope

I think that hope and knowledge that things will be better is actually the biggest part of it. The smallest part really in the end is doing it. Andrew C

The coaching just reinforced that – I'm not really where I need to be with my job. But then it also gave me hope that, hey, maybe I can do something about this. Maybe I can change this Andrew

I have moved beyond hope because I know it's going to work out. I am going to make it work out. F48

<i>PsyCap - Optimism</i>	<p>I think after both of the coaching sessions I probably felt more hopeful about the work circumstance. It strikes me that it's one of those things that I would hit a peak after the coaching and that it would kind of tail off. The next coaching session I would get more hope and it would kind of tail off again. So for me one of the questions going forward that I will answer for myself is, "Okay, how do I continue to get that hope? Is it within myself that I find that hope? Is it an external stimulus that will give me that?" And possibly, beyond that, "How do I stop the tail-off? How do I keep hope at a higher level?" M34</p>
<i>PsyCap - Efficacy</i>	<p>That actually it was within me and the resources around me to change the situation to a more positive outcome</p> <p>I'm sort of confident I can achieve. I am fairly confident that I can achieve big goals. I'm not so set on what those goals exactly are because I think as time moves on that that will shift and change and my desires will change and what I want will change. And I'm not very inflexible that I think I've got to set my goals on a certain thing and that I will be very disappointed if I don't reach that, because actually what I want today might be very different to what I want six months from now. So I'm confident that, whatever happens, it will be okay and I will achieve. I set myself goals. With the goals, I don't make them too hard and fast. I think I just set sort of broad objectives – personal objectives, which then I think will support a happy, healthy and hopefully successful in terms of career future F33</p> <p>Probably the main one would be if I set my mind correctly to it, I can do what I want to do. It doesn't matter what it is. It's just having that belief and understanding that that is possible. That would be the main thing. And obviously coupled with, that's good, but to do something about it.</p> <p>I think it's just knowing that what you sort of verbalise here with yourself – I've done it in the past. I'll do it again in the future. It's just retaping that same trust in yourself and going, "Yep. You can do it. You're not overwhelmed by it. It's not that big a situation in the context of life." Daryl K</p> <p>And now I'm like, "I can just tackle things head-on and I can just work it out, yeah." F40</p> <p>I kind of haven't really been confident in my own abilities. But to have had those couple of conversations with you has helped to go, "Okay. I can see how we need to work through this. M45</p> <p>my uncovered strengths were things that I was either too scared to operate in, but when I did, I did it well, or ones that I was operating with without even knowing, and doing fairly well at as well. So understanding that, I think, really highlighted the change in my pivot point, yeah. F34</p>
<i>PsyCap - Resilience</i>	<p>from a personal perspective as well, I feel that if I can master this now, it's going to assist me, you know, throughout my working life..... If I can overcome it, if there are any other environments that I am in in a work scenario where I am not comfortable, I can reflect back on how I got through it in this place. I will make more effective decisions and add more value to the team. M31</p> <p>You've got to have resilience. On top of that, you have to have the courage to make those changes. It took me a long time to build up that courage. I think all the things culminating once – doing the EMBA, doing the coaching, doing many things – you build that back up. That was lying dormant to even make changes around my personal life</p> <p>So it's like, "Okay. Thanks for your feedback. I'm not going to use it as a negative. I'm going to use it as a positive."</p>

Table G.4. Example narratives relating to descriptions of emerging themes

Theme	Narrative (interviewee gender and age)
<i>Comfort with Ambiguity</i>	Some of it is out of my control. There is no point trying to play in that space (M45)
	Absolutely 100 per cent more confident that I can deal with what he is giving to me, even if I don't really understand at the time (M48)
<i>Willingness to be Vulnerable</i>	It is not necessarily the how, but it's certainly just being more aware of how I am perceived. And, therefore, when you are aware of it, the next step is obviously being able to manage it. F37
	Challenging just to sort of go, "Well, okay, well, this is what I've got to do or when you've already got a bunch of other problems to deal with and it's just easier to deal with those problems than to kind of stop and think about how that fits into the bigger picture for yourself." I think that's probably what I have to learn or am learning. F42
	From the control side or the difference from where I was before, I was just blindly working. And then those questions were so real in the fact, "Why am I working so hard? Where is your life? What is your balance?" So I'm still working hard, but from my behavioural side I'm finding more time for me. F48
<i>Appetite for reflection</i>	You go, "Yeah, I challenge myself", but people have different ideas of what challenging is. I challenge myself to work regularly. I will stretch myself. I will achieve more. I will look at the clinical indicators and go, "No. We're driving this down." That's challenging myself. But challenging myself for myself. That's what it is. F49
	I was very uncomfortable in the first coaching session. I had no experience coaching before. So there was this kind of sense of getting a lot of questions and having to come up with answers. You know, it's not my natural style have all of the answers at the ready unless I've done all of the thinking beforehand. So the dynamic of the coaching interaction was quite uncomfortable for me to start with. I felt more comfortable through the second session as well, I think partly because I knew what was coming and I was able to prepare for it. Yeah, I became more comfortable with that. But certainly that first session was quite uncomfortable for me. (M34)
	I've been safe, yeah. So pushing myself outside that safety zone is – and there's adrenaline that comes with that, actually, as terrifying as it is, yeah. To be able to push yourself outside that and to have some small successes is just like, "Oh, wow." F40
<i>Appetite for reflection</i>	That's probably one of the biggest things that I have got out of this. I need to have a bit of time to think and explore not just about myself but my team. You can't be working away all day and then find time to think as well. You just have to set aside some time. F50
	able to reflect, .. not giving a direct answer straight away, so I can coach myself into a point where I actually process what people are asking on the spot and can give the right answer. And how it's delivered as well. M31
	I always enjoy sort of plumbing new depths, so to speak, in terms of being challenged. I quite enjoy being challenged and I enjoy difficult movies. I like being uncomfortable. It's not a bad thing. F37

