Development insights: the learning journeys of highly experienced coach supervisors

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Abstract

Coaching supervision is a developing profession, yet little is known about the development of supervisors after their training. This study aimed to add to the empirical literature on coach supervisor development and contribute to supervision practice by providing insights which may inform other supervisors. A qualitative study was designed using a narrative interpretivist methodology. Seven highly experienced coach supervisors were interviewed and themes emerged on they develop and change. Findings suggest that experiential learning is the main source of development. Practical recommendations for training and accrediting bodies and joint research with the helping professions are proposed.

Keywords: coaching, supervision, development, experiential learning

Introduction

Coaching supervision is a formal process of professional support. It ensures the development of coaches and their practice through reflection and interaction with the supervisor (Bachkirova, 2008). Supervision in coaching is not as developed as other forms of supervision in the helping professions, and work continues to better understand its role and potential. The development of coach supervisors has been suggested as an area for future research (Bachkirova, Jackson and Clutterbuck, 2011).

The role of the supervisor, in a relationship which is often described as complex, has been widely addressed in the coaching literature (Bachkirova, Jackson and Clutterbuck, 2011). However, little is known in relation to the development of supervisors beyond the early years of training. By exploring narratives of development, insight can be gained into learning sources and the way decisions are taken in relation to supervisor development. By better understanding how highly experienced supervisors develop, the study aimed to contribute towards the development of coaching supervisors, and the coaching supervision profession. Additionally, by exploring the developmental journeys of highly experienced supervisors, which start from their stories of becoming and continue through their current practice, it may be possible to identify patterns and themes that might be helpful in supporting the development of supervisors.

In order to position the study within the frame of existing literature, a variety of disciplines had to be explored. A preliminary review of the coaching literature showed relatively limited published research on supervision. Since coaching supervision has emerged from the helping professions, the search was expanded beyond coaching literature to go broader into research from those professions. As the research question was about exploring developmental aspects, adult development theories specifically in the context of coaching and supervision were also considered.

By positioning coaching supervision in the wider context of supervision, it became apparent that most of the supervision literature stems from therapeutic disciplines (Moyes, 2009; Hawkins et al., 2012). This led to consideration of the definition of supervision and its applicability to coaching (Palmer and Whybrow, 2007; Bachkirova, Jackson and Clutterbuck, 2011). The exploration of how supervisors become supervisors was also considered in the context of the helping professions (Hawkins et al., 2012) as, to my knowledge, no research has yet taken place on this subject for coach supervisors. In addition to systematically considering how an individual becomes a supervisor, individual accounts of 'stories of becoming' from the psychotherapy field in order to explore narratives were also considered, as this aspect is relevant to the research approach (Dryden and Spurling, 1989). Themes emerged in relation to the motivation for being a supervisor and sources of development, whilst it was less clear how future development was considered. Supervisor development references were only found in the literature of neighbouring professions (Watkins, 2010; Stoltenberg and McNeill, 2010; Hawkins and Smith, 2013)

In the next section, the methodological approach employed in the research will be presented. This is followed by a presentation of the findings of the research. The discussion section of this paper will expand on the results of the analysis and will focus on two aspects: experiential learning and power. Finally, conclusions and recommendations put forward, where the implications of the research are addressed for different groups of stakeholders. The limitations of this study and recommendations for future research are also explained.

Methodology

The research is concerned with the exploration of the developmental choices made by coach supervisors. Constructivist theories influence the research and are underpinned by a belief that the process of meaning-making requires interaction with experience (Eriksen, 2006). Another aspect influencing the research is a belief that the notion of development is subjective, in other words, different individuals will have a different experience and, therefore, a different interpretation of this phenomenon. This subjective-constructivist orientation informs the choice of a qualitative approach to undertaking this study.

Interviewing, as a data collection method, is suitable for Narrative Analysis (Bryman and Bell, 2015). Creswell (2013) describes the many different ways in which data can be collected in the context of narrative research in addition to interviews, including, for instance, written journals, letters and documents (Creswell, 2013). As an interview approach is, in itself, known to result in high quantities of rich data to analyse (Lieblich, Tuval-Mashiach and Zilber, 1998), I chose to focus the data collection solely on the interview process.

My aim as the interviewer was to elicit the interviewees' accounts of their journeys as supervisors. My interest was not in obtaining a chronology of events or an exact compilation of courses; instead, I was more interested in the research participants' perspectives on how they choose their developmental interventions, what their motivations are and how they consider their development. Narrative interviewing is more than a set of questions and answers as it requires extended narration. Consequently, as the researcher, I had to give up 'control' as the narrator's account evolves and takes different routes (Creswell, 2013). The choice for the style of interview was lightly-structured, in-depth interviews, developed by the biographic-narrative-interpretative method approach, as proposed by Wengraf (2001). The rationale for choosing this approach is based on its alignment with the elicitation of storytelling in a way which allows research participants to elaborate their stories of development with minimalist interventions on the part of the researcher (Wengraf, 2001). I designed the interview model with the research objectives in mind, focusing on eliciting

stories of development. This approach corresponds to what Wengraf (2001) terms 'partial biographical narratives'.

Interview were aimed at eliciting stories about how the research participants became coach supervisors, to explore how they have changed as supervisors as a result of their learning, and to understand how they choose what they may do in relation to their development. Riessman (2008) suggests that questions that open up topics '*allow respondents to construct answers in ways they find meaningful*' (Riessman, 2008, p. 25). I followed such an approach to design the three main questions of the interview:
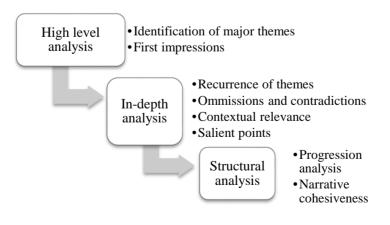
a) How did you become a coach supervisor?
b) How are you changing as a supervisor: what has changed since the beginning of your practice?
c) How do you see your future development as a supervisor?

Interviews of approximately one hour were held with each of the seven participants. One interview per participant took place. Due to availability and geographical constraints, video interview via Skype was chosen as the means for live interaction. Interviews were audio recorded and were transcribed manually. Data was stored on an encrypted memory stick and kept securely.

Narrative data can be analysed from many perspectives. In contrast to other methodologies, Narrative Analysis does not have a uniquely agreed method or process for data analysis. Riessman (2008) distinguishes between thematic analysis, structural analysis and a dialogic or performance analysis which is about focusing on how the story is produced through the interaction of researcher and participant (Riessman, 2008). The data analysis strategy focused primarily on thematic analysis, also known as content analysis, complemented by structural analysis. This approach appeared to suit my research objective best as it was about analysing the themes that emerge in the developmental stories.

Due to the richness and abundance of data found in Narrative Analysis, and particularly as this study involved seven narratives, I designed a structured approach, which has enabled me to achieve two objectives: to maintain the integrity of whole narratives, as this is core to Narrative Analysis, and to give the analysis the rigour and depth that would allow me to consider the themes more thoroughly. The analysis approach is depicted in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Narrative analysis approach

Participants

A Narrative Analysis approach does not limit the number of participants nor does it suggest an ideal sample size. As the research is concerned with highly experienced coach supervisors, I selected seven participants as the group meeting my selection criteria. I considered that a group this size prevents potential attribution of identity through the presentation of aggregated data and supports the anonymity of participants whose professional journeys may be well known.

A purposive, or convenience, sampling method was followed. I selected a group of highly experienced coach supervisors as research participants as I believe that established, well-known supervisors can be inspirational for others in the profession. I did not select or preclude participants on the basis of age, gender, ethnicity, nationality or other socio-economic factors. I focused my research on UK-based coach supervisors. None of the research participants ever coached or supervised me.

Table 1 describes the criteria considered in relation to 'highly experienced' participant selection in more detail:

Table 1: Criteria for research participant selection

Criteria	Description
Highly experienced as a supervisor	Minimum 10 years of experience as a coach supervisor
Scholar-practitioner	This refers to an ideal of professional excellence grounded in theory and research, informed by experiential knowledge
Authors and contributors to the development of the coaching profession	Individuals that have developed the coaching profession through the creation of knowledge, and who have published their work. Published authors of books, peer-reviewed journals, practitioner journals, conference speakers

NB The scholar-practitioner definition used above has been simplified from the original definition (McClintock, 2004).

Ethical issues arose in relation to who the research participants were, and this translated into additional efforts to preserve their confidentiality. As this research involved some well-known supervisors, I considered the possibility of identity attribution despite their anonymised participation due to the well-known trajectories of their professional careers. This eventuality was discussed with the research participants and mitigated in a number of ways: participants' contributions have only been presented in the aggregated themes and using pseudonyms; when using participants' quotes, this has been done with the interviewees' permission; some participants' gender pseudonym has been swapped in order to further anonymise data; reference to other individuals was also anonymised and locations were omitted in the transcribed interviews.

Findings

Four main themes were identified, summarised in Table II. This paper focuses on themes 2 and 3, as these provide interesting discussion threads.
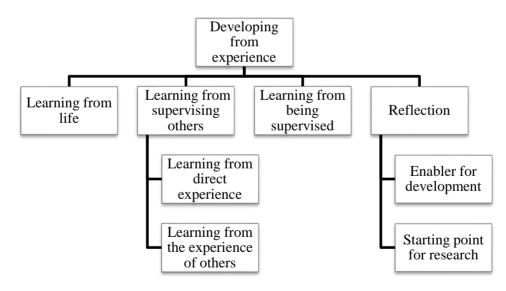
Table 2: Chapter 4 structure: Themes and sub-themes per section

Themes	Sub-themes
Theme 1: Becoming a supervisor	Motivation A different sense of timeline
Theme 2: Developing from experience	Learning from life Learning from supervising others Learning from being supervised Reflection
Theme 3: Drivers for development	Spontaneous decisions Systematic decisions
Theme 4: Changing as a supervisor	Changes in 'doing' Changes in 'being'

The strongest theme in the narratives is that experience appears to be the main source of development. The analysis showed there are multiple ways in which developing from experience happens. The conceptual diagram presented in Figure 2 was developed in order to position all the sub-themes in relation to each other.

Figure 2: Sub-themes within the theme of 'developing from experience'

Learning from life

Learning from life itself appears as a source of development across the narratives which speak about learning from the opportunities and challenges presented by life. Learning from life also appears associated to a way of being in the world. Equally, the pre-disposition to learning emerges as a common characteristic across highly-experienced supervisors as this 'attitude towards learning' has been found across all narratives.

Learning from life as a theme is also present from a meta-perspective. This is evident throughout narratives that speak about learning derived from what is happening in the wider world, as well as in other professions. Interestingly, this brings up the notion of holistic development by referring to the personal and the professional, and by tapping into wider resources.
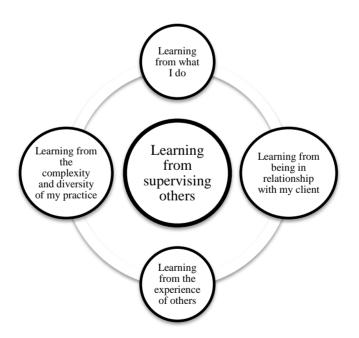
In summary, learning from life has appeared as a main source for development, underpinned by a clear attitude towards learning. In this context, a sense of holistic learning has emerged as characteristic of the way highly experienced supervisors develop. The analysis unveiled stories at a macro-level which relate to the challenges and opportunities life offers in a wider contextual setting, whilst at a micro-level, there is an acknowledgement of the role other people have played in supporting the developmental journeys.

Learning from supervising others

The main source of development in the context of experiential learning appears to be the learning that emerges as a result of the practice of supervision. The analysis suggested that there are two types of narratives about supervising others. There are stories which talk about learning derived from the direct experience of supervising others. Similarly, there are stories which indicate that supervisors also learn and develop through vicarious or indirect experience, referring to the learning that is derived from the experience of others.

In order to examine this dichotomy in which learning takes place from direct and indirect experience, the following conceptual diagram developed to show how the emerging sub-themes are interconnected (Figure 3).

Figure 3: Dimensions in learning from supervising others

Development derived from supervising others is closely associated with the notion of learning by being in a relationship with the supervisee, as it is through that interaction with the client that the two types of sources of development (direct and indirect). There is another

element within the thread of 'working with the experience of others', which is referred to across the narratives: learning associated with the complexity and diversity of one's practice.

Supervision of Supervision

Supervision of Supervision emerges as another prominent sub-theme in the wider context of learning from the supervision practice. The following reflection is from one of the research participants, anonymised as Andrew:

Andrew: *[…] on Supervision of Supervision, I sit on the definite and you should be doing it, like if you really believe what you are doing is helping other people, why don't you want it to yourself? […] because if you are helping other people to look at their world differently and understand it more, how could you not realise that would be useful for you too? And there is so much that goes on with transference and countertransference and so on and I just think it's like when I first had to record myself, I am thinking, wow, did I really say that? We just don't know what we are doing most of the time unless we actually make ourselves examine it in supervision.*

There is a common message across the narratives: if one is a supervisor, one should be able to recognise the value of supervision and want it for oneself. It is interesting to note how the value of being supervised has now come repeatedly in different contexts and across various themes.

Drivers for development

This section considers how the research participants take decisions about their development. The analysis suggests that the drive for learning comes from two places: from a spontaneous intention by the supervisor, and from other sources which seek to respond to other needs, including the needs of the field and the profession.

In order to illustrate the role that spontaneous decisions, let us consider the following reflection by one of the research participants which illustrates the extent to which curiosity appears as the loudest voice to guide his developmental intentions. Interestingly, Steve's account not only features curiosity, but he also links curiosity to facing a challenge, and this appears connected to his development.

Steve: *[…] I think it is what strikes my curiosity, I am curious about something, I want to know more about it and that could be anything. This is why I set myself the challenge to learn a new sport or some other major learning challenge of the year […]. This year I have got a coach who is a professional (Ed: in some unusual type of art) and I am going to start (Ed: an unusual type of art) because I don't know how it is going to inform supervision, but I have no doubt that there are also linkages with the art of (Ed: an unusual type of art) and the coaching or mentoring dialogue […]. This process of deliberately seeking out new perspectives, new disciplines if you like, it just helps me to link, to extrapolate, so there is a link between the person that I am or the person I am becoming and the learning that is a very strong link.*

It is apparent that development takes place primarily through a process of reflection derived from some form of experiential learning. I was expecting to see a clearer integration between the drivers for development and the sources of development and this has so far not been

evident. However, there have been instances where a more systematic way of thinking, moving away from just following curiosity, has surfaced.

Sarah: *I decide what to do from a number of angles, one is what is my motive, why am I doing it, is it to keep up with? […] when I am motivated that this will be expanding me, that this will be stretching me, that could enrich me, that is the underpinning informant for doing, so for instance if I see that there is a programme being marketed and everybody I come across as says oh I'm doing that programme I think Oh! Oh! Should I? my keeping up with this … should I? and then I think nah nah nah - how does this complement, how does it broaden the base that I grow, so there is growing wider and growing deeper and it's about both ends […]*

It is interesting to note that this systematic approach and the phenomenon which was described in the previous section involving a spontaneous response, are not mutually exclusive.

Discussion

Three main sources of learning emerged from the study:

1. Learning from supervising others
Experiential learning has emerged as a main source of development for the research participants. This result is consistent with the literature reviewed which has highlighted adult development theories underpinning coaching (Cox, Bachkirova and Clutterbuck, 2014; Hawkins and Smith, 2013). Further to this, considering how Experiential Learning Theory defines learning as 'the process whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of experience' (Kolb, 1984, p. 41), a parallel can be established with coaching and supervision, also concerned with processes. I have considered the notion of the experiential learning spiral, proposed by Kolb and Kolb (2009), which has supported my interpretation of how learning is derived from supervising others. Kolb and Kolb (2009) propose a learning spiral happens 'when a concrete experience is enriched by reflection, given meaning by thinking, and transformed by action, the new experience created becomes richer, broader and deeper' (Kolb and Kolb, 2009, p. 309). The findings have extensively shown the role of reflection as an enabler for learning, which is also echoed in the coaching supervision literature (Hay, 2007; Hodge, 2014; Bachkirova, Jackson and Clutterbuck, 2011; Bachkirova, 2008; Cox, 2006). There are, however, additional aspects this research has found associated with experiential learning in relation to supervising others. The findings show that the research participants:

a) have differentiated between direct and indirect experience, also referred to as vicarious experience; and
b) have linked their learning to the complexity and diversity of their practice.

By the actual nature of supervision, many opportunities for vicarious learning present themselves. Becoming a supervisor is developmental because of vicarious experience. Considering how coaches work vs. how supervisors work: coaches have their own experience and their own mistakes to learn from; however, as the work of supervisors involves working with the experience of others, typically within a system, this makes their experience more expansive thus offering more opportunities to develop.

As the main objective of this research was to help other supervisors in the future, the notion of learning from vicarious experience becomes part of a template for how one can develop further. Working with vicarious experience is a complex process as working with someone

else's experience can lead to instances where certain psychological processes manifest themselves, such as collusion, projection, transference etc. (Peltier, 2009). These processes are known to occur in coaching and supervision (Sandler, 2011). Working with these processes, being psychologically aware can enhance one's learning. Being able to adopt a meta-perspective over your own work when working with the experience of others has emerged as one of the outcomes of working with vicarious experience.

The second aspect emerging from the exploration of experiential learning further builds on the notion of vicarious experience by referring to the learning associated to the complexity and diversity of the supervisor's practice. A correlation appears to emerge suggesting that the more complex and diverse one's practice is, the more the supervisor can develop. To my knowledge, no published research exists on the impact of the coach on the supervisor's development. The literature tends to consider on one hand, the role of the supervisor from the skills, responsibility and process angle (Hawkins et al., 2012; Hawkins and Smith, 2013), and on the other hand, the needs of the supervisee (Sheppard, 2016; de Haan and Regouin, 2017; Clutterbuck, Whitaker and Lucas, 2016; Carroll and Gilbert, 2011). Further, I was expecting to see some of these considerations addressed by supervision developmental models (Drake, 2011; Cavanagh, Stern and Lane, 2016); however, in addition to being theoretically based, these appear to have concentrated on the developmental stage of the coach, and the focus has not been on the supervisor.

The findings in this study have shown a relationship between the development of the supervisor and the supervisee. The more experienced the supervisors are, the more opportunities exist for them to work with diverse coaches and thus learn. As supervision makes the experience of supervisors more expansive, it offers opportunities to learn, not only as supervisors, but also as coaches. This makes supervision a significant aid for enhancing one's coaching career in addition to learning a new one, a conclusion also reached by Sheppard (2016).

2. Learning from being supervised: supervision of supervision

Supervision of supervision has emerged in this study as a key source of learning for highly experienced supervisors, both at the very start of their supervisory careers and, interestingly, as an established practice at present. This appears aligned to Hawkins and Smith (2006), who suggest that supervision of supervision is for new supervisors to integrate the learning from the supervision training. They also propose that supervision of supervision '*can also be beneficial to experienced supervisors*' (Hawkins and Smith, 2006, p. 184). The findings of this study have provided additional data. It has become apparent that supervision during the early stages of the research participants' careers was compulsory, as some of those careers started in the helping professions, where supervision is mandatory. The narratives have provided rich accounts which refer to that early exposure to being supervised as beneficial and influential in shaping their journeys of becoming supervisors, showing a connection between the themes of 'becoming a supervisor' and 'experiential learning'.

This brings an interesting angle to on-going debates in relation to the compulsory vs. voluntary nature of supervision in coaching, in comparison to the stricter rules which are in place in the helping professions. There are arguments in favour of supervision as a voluntary intervention in the coaching profession (de Haan, 2017), with calls for supervision to become the conscience of the profession (Bachkirova, 2011). However, those procuring coaching services are making being supervised a requirement. Additionally, organisations are seeking assurances in relation to external coaches receiving supervision (Hawkins and Turner, 2017; de Haan, 2012; Hawkins and Schwenk, 2006). Haskins (2012) goes further to propose that supervision should be mandatory and made a condition of employment (Haskins, 2012). The coaching accrediting bodies are requesting supervision as a pre-requisite to accreditation;

however, they do not appear unified in their position or in the way they regard the on-going requirements for supervision (AC and EMCC, 2017; APECS, 2017; ICF, 2015).

The findings of this research have drawn attention to the perceived benefits of that early exposure to supervision. Hodge (2014) acknowledges that many coaches are unlikely to appreciate its value until they experience it (Hodge, 2014). If supervision continues to be left as a discretionary activity, it is possible that novice practitioners may not be exposed to it, thus missing out on the opportunity to recognise its benefits, and perhaps neglecting this aspect of their development. Early exposure to supervision could support the bedding in of a culture in the profession which values it.

The argument that a mandatory stance over supervision removes the self-directed and voluntary conditions that characterise adult learning (Cox, 2006; Hodge, 2014) appears well-suited if we were to consider supervision just as development. However, supervision is more than a developmental activity. Paradoxically, strong endorsements for supervision, such as Bachkirova's (2008) argument that supervision is more important for coaches than therapists as '*coaches are less equipped to identify mental health issues impinging on the boundaries of coaching*' (Bachkirova, 2008, p. 16) come together with a steer towards discretionary supervision (Bachkirova, Jackson and Clutterbuck, 2011; Hodge, 2014; Hodge, 2016). For a profession which is developing, the absence of a position on supervision appears confusing, especially for those new to the profession. In suggesting compulsory supervision be further explored, I am cognisant of the fact that no robust studies exist which identify the efficacy of coaching supervision (Tkach and DiGirolamo, 2017) and which are needed to further advance the debate.

Considering the challenges on the uptake of supervision by coaches, additional complexity is added when we consider Supervision of Supervision. A gap in knowledge has become apparent as no research has been found to address Supervision of Supervision in coaching. However, it would be expected that supervisors lead by example, which is evidenced in the findings of this research.

At the time of submission of this study, the Global Supervisors' Network (Turner, 2017) was considering some ideas on Supervision of Supervision and planning some research, which has not yet materialised.

3. Power from the supervisor's perspective
Power emerged as a theme in the findings in two distinct ways in this study: it emerged in reflections on the unhelpfulness of being regarded as an expert, and it has also appeared as a motivator for being a supervisor.

Power affects relationships and thus it also affects coaching and supervisory relationships (Wellman and Bachkirova, 2010). There are many ways in which power can be manifested in supervision. Kadushin and Harkness (2002) refer to psychological games between supervisor and supervisee, and the power differentials that exist in the supervisory relationship (Kadushin and Harkness, 2002). Some power imbalance is to be expected during the early development of the supervisee (Stoltenberg and McNeill, 2010). Similarly, Sheppard (2016) suggests that new supervisees put their supervisors on pedestals and see them as experts and gurus, whilst experienced supervisees regard supervision as a partnership (Sheppard, 2016). This power relation corresponds to expert power type which exists in interpersonal relations (French and Raven, 1959). In this study, that expert stance is appearing differently: it is the supervisor who is acknowledging the power perception, which exists as a consequence of his/her perceived 'status' in the profession; through reputation, published work, research and their leadership role. This appears to be an additional dimension, not considered in Sheppard's (2016) research, whereby the power

imbalance exists before the relationship is formed. From this study, it appears that supervisors cannot avoid being perceived as experts or gurus. This was particularly evident with this group of supervisors because each had reached a prominent place in the public eye of the profession.

The issue of power is very complex. Power differentials may also be affecting the development of the supervisor, specially, as it is the case in this research, if supervisors are aware of the issues associated to power and try to mitigate them. An interesting question arises in relation to how others may be under-playing the role of power. Turning attention to the positive aspects of acknowledging power, Clarkson pointed out that:

> *'It is crucial that the supervisor not disown her power because of her personal discomfort with acknowledging it. The supervisor who does so puts her supervisee at risk, blinding herself to the real possibility of silencing, wounding, intimidating, coercing, or controlling him'. (Clarkson, 2000, p. 90)*

Understanding the importance of power and acknowledging the power differentials in the supervisory relationship is a learning process for supervisors, who should not underplay power, but instead give it more attention in order to ensure that supervisory relationship can work effectively.

This study has also highlighted a salient narrative where power has appeared as a motivation to be a supervisor. Whilst this was a dissonant voice amongst stories characterised by a desire to help others as a motivation to be a supervisor, it caught my attention. Socio-cognitive research has demonstrated that power affects how people feel, think and act, and how it also may have detrimental effects on perspective-taking and social attention   (Guinote, 2017). Power can also be associated with positive affect and reward seeking. However, Guinote (2017) suggests that people in power have strong agendas and tend to act more readily on their goals. Equally, it could also be interpreted that power as a motivator may act as a driver for one's development. However, that aspect of power as a motivator for being a supervisor has not been evident in the findings of this study.

Conclusion

This study contributes insights into the development of highly experienced coaching supervisors in response to the lack of such understanding in the literature. To date, most of the literature addressing the development of supervisors has come from the neighbouring professions of psychotherapy, psychology, counselling. Existing supervision research has tended to focus on the role and responsibilities of the supervisors and the needs of the supervisee. The developmental literature appears to have addressed novice supervisors and no research has been found on the development of more experienced supervisors. This study has contributed to an understanding of the development trajectories of those more experienced.

The research has echoed the adult learning literature and has attempted to go further to identify that the learning derived from supervising others is drawn not only from direct experience, but also from vicarious experience. Whilst the notion of learning from vicarious experience is not new, this study has drawn attention to the expansive nature of supervision as a developmental activity.

In this study, I was not able to distinguish what is particular to the coaching supervision profession in relation to the development of coaching supervisors because the research participants had been supervisors in other professions before. A question, therefore,

remains open as to whether there is something characteristic of the development of those coach supervisors who have not been supervisors in the helping professions.

This study has also attempted to draw attention to the fact that highly experienced supervisors appear to appreciate the benefits of being supervised, both early in their careers and as a current activity. Whilst most literature speaks about the compulsory nature of being supervised in the neighbouring professions of psychotherapy and counselling, this study drew attention to the supervision of supervision as a voluntary developmental intervention chosen by highly experienced coach supervisors.

The main beneficiaries of this study are supervisors as they are provided with a template on how those more experienced have developed. For novice supervisors and supervisors in training, this study endeavours to provide an insight into the developmental journeys of highly developed practitioners. This study can better equip supervisors to consider other sources of development beyond CPD. I have found these to be more diverse than I expected. This study has gone some way towards addressing the prominent place that supervision of supervision has for highly experienced supervisors, and this insight can encourage other supervisors into supervision.

For teaching institutions and training bodies, this study increases awareness of supervisor training. I recommend that the findings of this research are considered to offer supervision of supervision specific training, which currently appears as a gap in the market. However, I appreciate that further evidence may be needed in order to influence these stakeholders.

Researchers in both the coaching and in the helping professions could contemplate undertaking some joint research to address the concerns over the mandatory stance of supervision by focusing on its benefits, as sharing this with the coaching community may support a wider uptake of supervision. Accrediting bodies which currently do not appear unified in their supervision requirements could work towards a more unified approach in the adoption of common standards and develop specific guidelines to include the supervisor.

It is plausible that a number of limitations could have influenced the results obtained in this study. I have considered the limitations in the choice of methodology in so far as this may have contributed to some difficulty being experienced in collecting data on specific elements. The limitations of the data collection process may have also influenced the research. There have been times in the stories of the supervisors when it was evident that the research participants were referring to supervision indifferently; in other words, it hasn't been always clear when they were talking about coach supervision or any other supervision in their stories, as most had earlier been supervisors within other disciplines. Therefore, I have had to make assumptions, and infer by the contextual stories and other timeline data, what part of their supervisory careers they were referring to.

Our knowledge about how supervisors develop could be expanded by further research. The coaching profession would benefit from additional research:

a) Future research could perhaps employ different methodological approaches to consider the themes explored in this study in more detail. For instance, the use of Grounded Theory to further work on the developmental models of coach supervisors;
b) More research on the development of coach supervisors, who may not have had a clinical supervision background before becoming coach supervisors. This may provide more coaching-specific data in support for a better understanding of the developmental needs of coach supervisors;
c) Research on 'Supervision of Supervision' could provide empirical data in relation to its benefits, which currently appear unexplored in literature. What is different between

coaching supervisors and supervisors of coaching supervisors? How do coach supervisors become supervisors of supervisors? What is involved in the transition in terms of training and development?

d) Empirical research on the relationship between the development of supervisors and the developmental needs of their supervisees. Whilst I have sought to show that the diversity and complexity of one's practice appears to be a source of development, more research in this area would help in understanding the implications of such findings; and

e) Research to explore the critical moments in coaching supervision from a supervisor's perspective, which may contribute to the exploration of the developmental aspects of coaching supervisors, amongst other aspects.

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