

Q Methodology as an evaluation tool: Evaluating coaching and mentoring in the pastoral ministry

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Abstract

It has been said that evaluating coaching/mentoring interventions is notoriously difficult (Klasen & Clutterbuck, 2002). In addition, evaluation in the pastoral ministry is difficult where objective outcomes are problematic to identify. Arguably the desirable outcomes are growth, development and self-efficacy of the pastor. Formative evaluation asks: does the coaching/mentoring environment provide conditions that promote or hinder growth and development? This data is best provided by subjective self-reporting of recipients. A Q-sort was devised to assess subjective experiences and impact of coaching/mentoring environments. The factor analysis identified three coaching/mentoring environments. Q Methodology is demonstrated to be a useful evaluation tool.

Key words: evaluation; coaching; mentoring; pastoral ministry; Q methodology

Introduction

Being able to evaluate coaching and mentoring interventions is useful in order to assess whether what is being delivered is fit for purpose; and offers the opportunity to monitor interventions so that they can either be improved upon or discontinued if necessary. Evaluation of coaching and mentoring within a profession such as the pastoral ministry presents specific challenges where it is difficult to clearly establish what the desired outcomes are. As the purpose and function of the church could be said to be broadly concerned with development of its members (Ephesians 4:13, *NIV*)¹, it follows that the on-going development of the pastor (leader) would be integral to his/her capacity to help others develop. Arguably, the most useful outcomes in the pastoral ministry are not only the minister's own sense of efficacy, arising out of learning, improved performance, increase of resilience and resourcefulness, but also poignantly his/her development and maturity.

Although it may not be possible to directly assess these outcomes, it may be possible to evaluate whether or not the coaching/mentoring environment provides the conditions to facilitate their development. Such an evaluation is necessarily subjective. However, assessing subjectivity is also a challenge. Q Methodology is a research method that set out to provide a 'basis for a science of subjectivity' (Brown, 1993, p. 94).

In this study a Q procedure was designed to evaluate the experience and impact of coaching and/or mentoring interventions in the pastoral ministry and was launched as an online Q-sort procedure. Participants were invited from three settings: Elim Pentecostal Church, London School of Theology, and personal contacts. Forty-five ministers and ministers-in-training responded. The subsequent Q-sorts were subjected to factor analysis. Three factors were identified, which represent different subjective experiences and impact of the coaching/mentoring environments; two of which were bipolar, representing the polar opposites of these environments. These Factors are described as:

¹ until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ (Ephesians 4:13, New International Version)

‘Skilled, Challenging and Transformative’, ‘Directive, Heavy-handed and Educational’, and ‘Supportive and Restorative’, with the two bipolar factors described as: ‘Unskilled and Manipulative’ and ‘Unsupportive, Manipulative yet Educational’.

In this study Q Methodology was employed as a research tool to evaluate coaching/mentoring in the pastoral ministry; in doing so it is demonstrated to be a viable evaluation tool being relatively easy to administer and eliciting subjectively rich and useful data.

Coaching and Mentoring in the Pastoral Ministry

There is some literature given to the empirical evaluation of coaching and/or mentoring for the training and ongoing support of those in pastoral ministry (Coward, 2002; Wiggins, 1994; Godfrey, 2005; Bickers, 2010; Chiroma, 2012; Pyeatt, 2006; Longden, 2013). Largely, the findings of these studies found coaching/mentoring to be valuable, useful and effective, benefiting both the recipients and the organisation; however, one questioned the effectiveness of such interventions, whilst others identified that effectiveness related differently to different characteristics and qualities of the Coach/Mentor.

Coward (2002) in a study of ‘mentoring in the preparation of church planters’ found that mentoring was a key component in their preparation, with 75% saying mentoring was the most ‘valuable component’, and 25% saying it was of ‘equal value’ to other components (Coward, 2002, pp. 132-133). Wiggins (1994) in studying ten mentoring pairs in ministerial training, found that mentoring provided positive benefits for seminaries, affecting reputation, campus unity and connection with graduates, but also benefitted student learning, retention, and professional preparation (Wiggins, 1994, p. 236). A study of fifteen Baptist pastors in Texas found that they valued mentoring more highly and saw it as more effective than other types of professional development experiences (Godfrey, 2005); and in a study of five bi-vocational ministers in the US and Canada, Bickers (2010) found that coaching could be a useful tool in equipping bi-vocational ministers who are particularly time challenged and have many, unique and differing learning needs (Bickers, 2010).

On the other hand, Chiroma (2012) found that although mentoring played an important role in the development of seminary students who identified mentoring as helpful, they still believed that mentoring was not effective. There was a passive rather than a pro-active and intentional approach to mentoring with no mentoring programmes; lack of supervision of mentors, lack of proper administration and documentation, lack of standardized procedures, and lack of training for mentors (Chiroma, 2012).

Interestingly, in an insightful study of how mentor characteristics and mentor functions correlated with minister retention, Pyeatt (2006) found that mentor characteristics (classified according to their educational level, their length of service, ministry rank, size of congregation, and positions of leadership) made no significant difference, whereas mentor functions (classified as relational, informative, facilitative, confronting, mentor model and ministerial vision) did (Pyeatt, 2006). This indicates the coach/mentor’s behaviours are more significant than their status. This finding is corroborated by a survey in which ministers rated what mentor character traits and skills made an effective mentor. The highest ranking items were: being a reflective practitioner, flexibility in approach, empathy and good communication; the lowest ranking items were: demonstrated competence in growing churches, high expectations, good level of theological knowledge and ability to evaluate progress accurately.

These studies largely used qualitative interviews, but some used questionnaires, surveys and focus groups to assess or evaluate the coaching/mentoring. Although they do give interesting data, they do

not offer viable tools or methods of evaluation for monitoring purposes. Apart from the findings of Pyeatt (2006) and Longden (2013) the findings are too broad and do not give enough insight into the facilitative features of coaching/mentoring environments.

Evaluating Coaching and Mentoring

Morzinski & Fisher (1996) stated ‘mentoring programmes are complex and long-term presenting unique challenges to evaluators’ (Morzinski & Fisher, 1996, p. 43). In addition, it is most often provided in the context of a one-on-one relationship which can vary greatly from person to person, and so the many methods of evaluating traditional training interventions may not be as appropriate (Ely, Boyce, Hernez-Broome, & Whyman, 2010, p. 5). Moreover, evaluating this relationship and subjecting it to scrutiny can also threaten the confidentiality and, therefore, the trust and safety that the coaching and mentoring environment uniquely provides and could inadvertently damage it. Furthermore, evaluation of coaching and mentoring within the pastoral ministry presents its own challenges. The pastoral minister could be likened to the executive in that the

‘impact [of their work] is not the result from just their own work, but far more important are relational elements including leadership, power and influence. Performance is often time-lagged and a result of prior decisions and projects. Results are usually through groups and chained processes rather than direct influence’ (Olson, 2008, p. 157)

Added to this it is also difficult to clearly establish what the desired outcomes in this setting are, as they are not as tangible as in the conventional business setting. As stated earlier, arguably, the most useful outcomes in the pastoral ministry are the minister’s own sense of efficacy, arising out of learning, improved performance, increase of resilience and resourcefulness, and most poignantly development and maturity.

Development is not instantaneous and is a process that occurs over time, sometimes taking years or even decades (Berger & Fitzgerald, 2002); Laske (2000) suggests that a developmental change cannot be achieved in less than a year (Laske, 2000). Although assessing for the acquisition of learning, skills and performance may be relatively straight forward, the developmental issues as well as the nature of leadership and the associated ‘long time span associated with strategic activities’ (Ely, Boyce, Hernez-Broome, & Whyman, 2010) make assessment for these more difficult being less tangible. With this dilemma in mind, Ely et al.’s (2010) suggestion that evaluation entail a two-pronged approach focusing on both outcomes (summative evaluation) and processes (formative evaluation) (Ely, Boyce, Hernez-Broome, & Whyman, 2010) might be helpful and appropriate. The former focuses on ‘what’ the intervention achieves and the latter on ‘how’ the intervention achieves it. Evaluating the ‘how’ of what an intervention achieves – might be more achievable and realistic.

Delaying evaluation due to the long time span associated with the desired outcomes means that the quality of delivery of coaching and mentoring cannot be monitored nor improved upon. Rather than waiting for the outcomes, a formative evaluation asks: does the coaching and/or mentoring environment provide learning conditions that promote or hinder growth and development?

We might be able to describe or define the conditions necessary to facilitate development - or transformative learning (Cook-Greuter, 2004; Wilber, 2006; Cox & Jackson, 2010), but it is whether the learner feels empowered, ‘confident, secure, free, equal, and possibly supported by others’ (Cranton, 1994, p. 74) that matters and can only truly be evaluated by the ‘learner’. Evaluating the coaching and/or mentoring environment for its facilitative features of growth and development is therefore necessarily subjective. However, assessing subjectivity is also a challenge.

Methodology

Q Methodology is a research method that set out to provide a ‘basis for a science of subjectivity’ (Brown, 1993, p. 94) created by psychologist/physicist William Stephenson ‘to measure the subjective objectively’ (Ramlo & Newman, 2011, p. 172). In Q, a person is presented with a set of statements about a specific topic and asked to rank-order them, an operation referred to as Q-sorting (Brown, 1993). ‘The statements (known as the Q-set) are matters of opinion only (not fact), and the fact that the Q-sorter is ranking the statements from his or her own point of view is what brings subjectivity into the picture’ (Brown, 1993, pp. 93-94). The participants are required to rank these statements onto a grid (Figure 1) of a ‘prearranged frequency distribution’ (Stephenson W. , 1986b) . The grid created for this study contained nine ranking values from - 4 to + 4 correlating with ‘Most Disagree’ to ‘Most Agree’ accommodating 25 statements.

Sorting Grid for this study

Most Disagree									Most Agree
-4	-3	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	+3	+4	

Figure 1 Rating Grid

The uniqueness in this procedure is that the forced ranking of the statements presents ‘Q-sorts’, configurations of items (the statements), as statements *relative* to one another. These *whole configurations*, patterns of items, reveal viewpoints as a whole, which can then be subjected to factor analysis.

A Q methodological study broadly involves the following steps: (1) definition of the concourse; (2) development of the Q-set; (3) selection of the Participant set; (4) Q-sorting; and (5) analysis and interpretation (van Exel & de Graaf, 2005). These steps will now be described.

Definition of Concourse

Initially, the process entails creating a ‘concourse’ of subjective statements from which the final Q-set (the set of statements presented to participants) is generated. In Q, the flow of communicability surrounding any topic is referred to as a concourse. The concourse is usually drawn from a wide range of sources, ‘phenomena of the ordinary conversation, commentary, and discourse of everyday life’ (Brown, 1993, p. 94) . Interviews, casual conversations, newspapers, magazines and documents are all possible sources for a concourse. Statements can also be drawn from academic and theoretical literature.

The concourse is the raw material for a Q study. The most typical method of defining a concourse is by interviews. However, as there was insufficient time to create a concourse by collecting all the possible subjective statements the participants might make, one was created using theoretical underpinnings instead. This was very much guided by trying to articulate what conditions and environment would promote or hinder growth and development, which in turn could mediate the minister’s efficacy and resilience; in addition it was also guided by an attempt to evaluate the impact beyond the coaching and/or mentoring environment.

This rendered quite a comprehensive concourse. In trying to evaluate the experience of the coaching/mentoring, statements were drawn from professional competencies as outlined by the International Coach Federation Competencies (International Coach Federation, 2015), theoretical concepts such as Roger's Conditions for growth (Rogers, 1967), Heron's Interventions (Heron, 2001), Heron's Degenerative Interventions (Heron, 2001), Mentoring Functions (Kram, 1985a), and Meta-themes of negative mentoring (Eby, McManus, Simon, & Russell, 2000).

To evaluate the impact of the coaching/mentoring, statements were drawn from the literature concerning the Benefits, Objectives and Outcomes of coaching and/or mentoring (Allen, Eby, Poteet, & Lentz, 2004), the Burnout ↔ Engagement Dimension (Maslach, Schaufeli, & Leiter, 2001), The Areas of Worklife (Maslach, Schaufeli, & Leiter, 2001), and the Resilience CD-RISC Scale (Connor & Davidson, 2003).

The recommendation is to generate an overly large concourse, which can then be refined and reduced through a process of piloting (Watts & Stenner, *Doing Q methodology: theory, method and interpretation*, 2005) to produce a more manageable Q-set.

Development of Q-Set

The final Q-set of statements was a paring down of the concourse defined. Once again due to time constraints I could not develop the Q-set through any more than the most minimal of piloting.

My initial procedure design entailed two Q-sets; one focusing on 'the experience of the coaching/mentoring', the other on 'the impact of the coaching/mentoring', with 36 and 25 statements respectively. Feedback questioned the necessity of the two and the prohibitive completion time needed. Accordingly, I reduced it to a single Q-set with 25 statements covering both 'experience and impact'. The final reduced Q-set returned to a basic interpretation of what the coaching/mentoring environment might look like to provide the necessary conditions to facilitate or hinder growth and development, with the impact being confined to burnout, engagement, resilience, and with some additional generic statements.

This Q-set was launched as part of an online survey, which first collected demographic information, followed by the Q-sorting procedure, and in addition participants were invited to make further comments.

Selection of Participants

The participants were selected on the basis of *typical case sampling* (Bryman, 2012). The research demanded that the sample be restricted to those in the pastoral ministry or training for the pastoral ministry. This was achieved by approaching gatekeepers to participants in two settings: Elim Pentecostal Church and London School of Theology, and inviting personal contacts.

For one setting (Elim Pentecostal Church) an Information Sheet explaining the research was distributed at the Elim Leaders Summit, followed up with an email containing a link to the online research. The remainder got an online link either by email or Facebook Messenger inbox. In all, forty-five ministers and ministers-in-training responded.

Q-Sorting / Data Collection

The intention of creating an online tool was to make the research accessible to as many respondents as possible. Face-to-face sampling would have yielded a smaller result.

Analysis and Interpretation

Factor Analysis

Once all the Q-sorts have been collected they are subjected to factor analysis; factor analysis is a form of data reduction. In Q Methodology, the Q-sorts (representing individual subjective viewpoints)

are correlated with each other to identify the most common subjective viewpoints; those which are highly correlated may be considered to have a family resemblance (Brown, 1993) and are referred to as Factors. In this study this was performed by entering the Q-sorts into the PQMethod 2.35 computer programme created by Peter Schmolck (Schmolck, 2014); a Centroid Analysis was then performed to extract factors. The initial factors extracted are usually of little interest and only provide the raw material for further probing (Brown, 1993). This probing is done by *rotating* the data in order to be able to further reduce the data and sharpen and focus those Factors that can be meaningfully interpreted. The rotation identifies the defining Q-sorts for each Factor; defining Q-sorts are those that significantly load onto a Factor.

Factor Arrays & Characterising Statements

To aid the interpretation of these Factors the data is converted into a prototype *factor array* for each Factor, which is ‘no more or less than a single Q-sort configured to represent the viewpoint of a particular factor’. These are easier to understand and conform to the format in which the data is collected – as whole Q-sorts, which captures the viewpoints as configurations of the statements and their relative position to each other. These factor arrays capture the holistic and subjective essence of Q (Watts & Stenner, *Doing Q Methodological Research: Theory, Method and Interpretation*, 2012). Statements at the extremes of the factor array of a factor are said to be *characterising statements* and are usually used to produce the initial description of a factor (van Exel & de Graaf, 2005).

Bipolar Factors

Bipolar factors are factors that are defined by both positively and negatively loading Q-sorts. The negatively loading Q-sorts capture viewpoints that are the polar opposite of the viewpoints shared by the positively loading Q-sorts (Watts & Stenner, *Doing Q Methodological Research: Theory, Method and Interpretation*, 2012), and need attention when interpreting the factors.

Factor Analysis and Interpretations

In all there were 45 respondents who completed the web-based survey and Q-sorting procedure. The Q-sorts were subjected to factor analysis to produce a factor solution which is presented here along with Factor interpretations and descriptions.

In the final analysis, a three-factor solution seemed a best fit to capture the range of subjective viewpoints without losing defining features by amalgamating the Q-sorts further and reducing the factors; two of the three factors are bipolar. The positively loaded factors are denoted by a + **sign** and the negatively loaded factors by a - **sign**. Factors 1 and 3 are bipolar in that there is one Q-sort that negatively loads onto Factor 1 and two Q-sorts that negatively load onto Factor 3. They can be broadly described as:

Factor 1+	Skilled, Challenging and Transformative
Factor 2	Directive, Heavy-handed and Educational
Factor 3+	Supportive and Restorative
Factor 1–	Unskilled and Manipulative
Factor 3–	Unsupportive, Manipulative yet Educational

The statement positions on the factor arrays of each Factor are displayed in Table 1 followed by descriptive summaries. These will give an impression of the subjective experience and impact of each of the coaching/mentoring environments that each of these Factors represent.

					Bi-polar factors	
No.	Statement	Factor 1+ factor array position	Factor 2 factor array position	Factor 3+ factor array position	Factor 1- factor array position	Factor 3- factor array position
1	I am satisfied with my Coach/Mentor	+4	-1	+3	-4	-3
2	My Coach/Mentor is accepting of me and thinks highly of me	+2	+2	+4	-2	-4
3	My Coach/Mentor can be intrusive	-2	0	-3	+2	+3
4	The coaching/mentoring helped me to see the work I do has meaning and purpose	+1	+2	+2	-1	-2
5	My Coach/Mentor seems to be motivated by self-interest	-4	-1	-4	+4	+4
6	The coaching/mentoring lifted my cynicism	0	-2	-1	0	+1
7	I have 'aha' moments in the coaching/mentoring	+3	+1	0	-3	0
8	My Coach/Mentor lacks professional or interpersonal skills	-3	-3	-2	+3	+2
9	The coaching/mentoring helped me to learn new skills and improve my performance	+2	+1	0	-2	0
10	The coaching/mentoring seems casual and haphazard	-1	+1	-1	+1	+1
11	The coaching/mentoring energized me	+3	0	0	-3	0
12	The coaching/mentoring helped me to feel competent and take pride in what I do	+1	+2	+1	-1	-1
13	My Coach/Mentor talks too much	-2	0	-2	+2	+2
14	My Coach/Mentor helped me to find a healthier personal-professional balance	0	+1	+2	0	-2
15	The coaching/mentoring has left me with a greater sense of control	+1	0	0	-1	0
16	The coaching/mentoring made me feel appreciated for what I do	0	+3	+2	0	-2
17	My Coach/Mentor directives are punishing	-1	-1	-3	+1	+3

18	The coaching/mentoring made me feel part of a community	0	0	+1	0	-1
19	The coaching/mentoring has confirmed that my values are in keeping with the Church's	0	+4	+1	0	-1
20	My Coach/Mentor tells me what I should do	-1	+3	-1	+1	+1
21	The coaching/mentoring helped me to handle unpleasant feelings	-1	-4	+1	+1	-1
22	I feel manipulated by my Coach/Mentor to conform to cultural, value or belief systems	-3	-1	-2	+3	+2
23	The coaching/mentoring has made me more resilient	+2	-2	0	-2	0
24	My Coach/Mentor has helped me to see that God is helping me	+1	-2	+3	-1	-3
25	My Coach/Mentor pays little or no attention to me	-2	-3	-1	+2	+1

Table 1 Statement positions on the factor arrays of each Factor

Below are brief descriptive summaries of each Factor using the characterising statements (the statements at the extremes of the factor arrays); statement number and ranking number are bracketed.

Factor 1+: Skilled, Challenging and Transformative

This Factor has an Eigenvalue of 26.23 and explains of 58% of the study variance. Twenty-three participants significantly loaded onto this Factor; one of which loaded negatively onto this Factor and is described below.

The participants who loaded positively onto this Factor found coaching and mentoring to be a positive experience with the statement “I am satisfied with my coach” (1: +4) ranking as the most agreed with statement in the Factor 1 array, followed by “I have ‘aha’ moments in the coaching/mentoring” (7: +3) and “The coaching/mentoring energized me” (11: +3). These indicate that this coaching and mentoring environment fosters transformative learning (promoting growth and development) and engagement.

At the other end of the factor array “My Coach/Mentor seems to be motivated by self-interest” (5: -4) ranks lowest, followed by “I feel manipulated by my Coach/Mentor to conform to cultural, value or belief systems” (22: -3) and “My Coach/Mentor lacks professional or interpersonal skills” (8: -3), indicating that participants who loaded onto this Factor experienced the Coach/Mentor as skilled and to have benevolent and generous motives.

Summary of Factor 1+: Skilled, Challenging & Transformative

This is a positive and satisfactory environment, fostering transformative learning, energising and promoting engagement. The Coach/Mentor is experienced as skilled, non-manipulative, benevolent and generous, providing a stretching and challenging environment. It may not necessarily be a ‘touchy-feely’ or ‘mollycoddling’ environment, focused on-task, providing challenging opportunities.

Factor 1–: Unskilled and Manipulative

This is the polar opposite viewpoint of the positively loaded Factor 1: ‘Skilled, Challenging and Transformative’, identified as ‘Unskilled and Manipulative’; one participant negatively loaded onto this Factor.

This Coach/Mentor is experienced as self-centred, unkind and unskilled, resorting to manipulative tactics reflected in “My Coach/Mentor seems to be motivated by self-interest” (5:+4) ranking highest followed by “I feel manipulated by my Coach/Mentor to conform to cultural, value, or belief systems” (22: +3) and “My Coach/Mentor lacks professional or interpersonal skills” (8: +3).

It is clearly an unsatisfactory environment, possibly draining and unfruitful in terms of growth and development with “I am satisfied with my Coach/Mentor” (5:-4) ranking lowest, followed by “The coaching/mentoring energized me” (11:-3) and “I have ‘aha’ moments in the coaching/mentoring” (7:-3).

Summary of Factor 1-: Unskilled & Manipulative

This is an unsatisfactory environment where the Coach/Mentor is experienced as self-centred, unkind and unskilled, resorting to manipulative tactics. This environment appears draining and unfruitful.

Factor 2: Directive, Heavy-handed and Educational

This Factor has an Eigenvalue of 2.18 and accounts for 5% of the study variance. Two participants significantly loaded onto this Factor.

This experience of coaching and mentoring takes a more directive form seen in “The Coach/Mentor tells me what to do” (20: +3) ranking highly. Even with this, participants found affirmation in this coaching and mentoring environment with “The coaching/mentoring has confirmed that my values are in keeping with the Church’s” (19: +4) ranking highest, followed by “The coaching/mentoring made me feel appreciated for what I do” (16: +3), suggesting they may have felt valued by mere dint of receiving coaching/mentoring and thus ameliorating stress.

At the other end of this factor array, “The coaching/mentoring helped me to handle unpleasant feelings” (21: -4) ranks lowest, possibly suggesting that this is not an environment in which ‘negativity is discharged’ and so not an ‘emotional’ environment; possibly a very ‘matter-of-fact’ environment. However, with “My Coach/Mentor pays little or no attention to me” (25: -3) and “My Coach/Mentor lacks professional or interpersonal skills” (8: -3) ranking so low, this is not to suggest that this is an inattentive or seen as unskilled environment.

However, with “The coaching/mentoring seems casual and haphazard” (10: +1), “My Coach/Mentor talks too much” (13: 0), “My Coach/Mentor can be intrusive” (3: 0), “I feel manipulated by my Coach/Mentor to conform to cultural, value or belief systems” (22: -1), “My Coach/Mentor seems to be motivated by self-interest” (5: -1) all ranking higher in this factor than in the other factor arrays (although not the negatively loaded version of the Factors), and with “My Coach/Mentor directives are punishing” (17: -1) ranking higher than in Factor 3 and as highly as in Factor 1, we get a sense that this Coach/Mentor strays over into somewhat heavy handed tactics – talkative, intrusive, directives are punishing, and somewhat manipulative.

Ranking lower in this factor array than in the other factor arrays is “I am satisfied with my Coach/Mentor” (1: -1), meaning the participants loading onto this factor do not find this necessarily a satisfactory environment. Ranking equally as low as in Factor 1 is “My Coach/Mentor is accepting of

me and thinks highly of me” (2: +2); being equal with Factor 1 where it is interpreted as not being ‘touchy-feely’, here we might see this as the non-emotional environment emphasised.

Summary of Factor 2: Directive, Heavy-handed and Educational

This environment is primarily directive, yet affirming and does give a sense of being appreciated, possibly due to the mere dint of receiving the coaching/mentoring and, therefore, somewhat stress-ameliorating. It is not necessarily experienced as an emotionally holding environment, possibly due to being very matter-of-fact, but not malevolent, inattentive or seen as unskilled per se.

Although this environment does build in some resilience, this coach/mentor’s interventions stray over into being heavy-handed, being talkative, intrusive, giving punishing directives (the same ranking of this statement in Factor +1 is interpreted as being challenging) and somewhat manipulative. It is not experienced as satisfactory and recipients do not feel that the coach/mentor accepts or values them.

There is a conflicted sense about this coaching/mentoring environment; it is good but not necessarily outright satisfactory; it brings some benefits if not a wholesale building in of resilience or stress amelioration.

Factor 3+: Supportive and Restorative

This Factor has an Eigenvalue of 1.50 and accounts for 3% of variance. Twelve participants significantly loaded onto this Factor; two of which loaded negatively onto this Factor and is described below.

The top ranking statement in this factor array is “My coach is accepting and thinks highly of me” (2: +4) suggesting this experience is of a very caring and supportive Coach/Mentor, providing one of the basic Rogerian conditions for growth (Rogers, 1967). This being followed by “I am satisfied with my Coach/Mentor” (1: +3) and “My Coach/Mentor has helped me to see that God is helping me” (24: +3), we can sense that this viewpoint of coaching and/or mentoring is one that is experienced as a positive and affirming one.

At the other end of this factor array, the lowest ranking statement is “My Coach/Mentor seems to be motivated by self-interest” (5: -4), points to this practitioner being experienced as benevolent and generous; emphasised by the next two-to-last ranking statements in “My Coach/Mentor directives are punishing” (17: -3) and “My Coach/Mentor can be intrusive” (3: -3).

Ranking higher in this factor array than in the other factor arrays is “My Coach/Mentor helped me to find a healthier personal-professional balance” (14: +2) and “The coaching/mentoring made me feel part of a community” (18: +1), both emphasising the stress ameliorating effect of this coaching/mentoring environment (Pines & Aronson, 1988). Then somewhat surprisingly we find “My Coach/Mentor pays little or no attention to me” (25: -1), and “My Coach/Mentor lacks professional or interpersonal skills” (8: -2) ranking higher in this factor array than in the other factor arrays.

Summary of Factor 3+: Supportive & Restorative

This environment is positive, satisfactory and affirming. The coach/mentor is experienced as caring, supportive, accepting, validating, benevolent and generous; this is the ideal environment for ameliorating stress and building in resilience (Pines & Aronson, 1988). Although there is a hint of the coach/mentor being unskilled and inattentive, the coaching/mentoring is taken seriously and prioritised.

Factor 3—: Unsupportive, Manipulative yet Educational

This is the polar opposite viewpoint of the positively loaded Factor 3 – ‘Supportive and Restorative’. Two participants negatively load onto Factor 3, defined here as ‘Unsupportive, Manipulative yet Educational’.

Similar to the bipolar version of Factor 1 this coach/mentor also seems to be motivated by self-interest and is intrusive and punishing reflected in the top three ranking statements of “My Coach/Mentor seems to be motivated by self-interest” (5:+4), “My Coach/Mentor can be intrusive” (3:+3), and “My Coach/Mentor directives are punishing” (17:+3).

Furthermore, this is experienced as an unsupportive coaching and mentoring environment with “My Coach/Mentor is accepting of me and thinks highly of me” (2:-4) ranking lowest. Maybe not surprisingly, this is followed by “I am satisfied with my Coach/Mentor” (1:-3) and “My Coach/Mentor has helped me to see that God is helping me” (24:-3), suggesting that not only is it unsatisfactory, but it certainly does not build in any sense of spiritual affirmation and so can be deemed to not be building in resilience either.

However, unlike the bipolar version of Factor 1, this environment does seem to deliver some learning with “I have ‘aha’ moments in the coaching/mentoring” (7: 0) and “The coaching/mentoring helped me to learn new skills and improve my performance” (9: 0) both ranking significantly higher than in Factor 1-. According to the factor arrays this environment is marginally more skilled shown in the statement “My Coach/Mentor lacks professional and interpersonal skills” (8:+2), which ranks at +3 in Factor 1-; this may account for this surprising benefit of this environment. It is possible that the lack of skill here revolves around the coaching and mentoring skills rather than say expertise in profession, hence the title ‘Unsupportive’ as opposed to ‘Unskilled’ used for Factor 1-. It is possible that the Q-set did not offer the statements to further discriminate this distinction.

Summary of Factor 3-: Unsupportive, Manipulative yet Educational

This Coach/Mentor is seen as being self-focused, intrusive and punishing in directives; it is an unsatisfactory and unsupportive environment. It does not build in resilience or any sense of spiritual affirmation. It does, however, build in some learning, and seems to be marginally more skilled than the Factor 1- environment. This may be due to lack of skill around coaching/mentoring as opposed to profession skill.

Discussion

Qualitative approaches such as interviewing are inherently subject to the interpretation of the interviewer. In qualitative analysis

‘the task becomes one of organization, analysis, and presentation, and in most instances the observer is forced to fall back on categories which are superimposed on the data (Brown, 1993, p. 97).

Although qualitative approaches do produce rich data, the data is organized according to the researcher’s/observer’s categorizations.

‘Q methodology likewise involves the artificial categorizing of statements, but ultimately this artificiality is replaced by categories that are operant, i.e. that represent functional as opposed to merely logical distinctions’ (Brown, 1993, p. 97).

The factors identified in Q are arrived at via the factor analysis of individuals' Q-sorts which can be described as operant due to capturing the participants' subjectivity by 'the act' of performing the Q-sort.

Quantitative approaches as in surveys and questionnaires might also capture some of the elements of the subjective experiences of the coaching and/or mentoring, but they do so at the cost and loss of the individual's subjective holistic viewpoint. Quantitative approaches measure variables

'relative to a population', and can tell us how they vary proportionally to a population of persons. But it can tell us little or nothing about . . . any individual person. It supplies information of a general kind (Stephenson, 1936b, p. 201)

In Q the people and not the individual items (the statements) are the variables; 'whole configurations' which represent subjective viewpoints are correlated with one another in the factor analysis maintaining the integrity of the viewpoints of individual people.

Thus Q methodology avoids the pitfalls of both qualitative and quantitative approaches and is considered to be a combined research method (not a mixed method) - coined a qualiquantological approach (Stenner & Stainton, 2004). Q methodology seeks to quantify subjective viewpoints (Shemmings, 2006)

'Q Methodology provides insight into . . . subjectivities in a much richer way than that provided by conventional surveys, while providing more structure and better replicability than purely qualitative approaches such as focus groups or ethnographic observation' (Davis & Michelle, 2011).

It is the forced ranking in Q-sorts producing the configurations of statements relative to one another as whole viewpoints which demonstrate the nuanced and subtle differences between the Factors that represent different subjective experiences. It is this detail that makes this data particularly useful that other approaches may not surface. For example, in this study, all three Factors may have been shown to be beneficial and/or satisfactory using either a qualitative or quantitative methods. However, using Q, subtleties such as the more skilled and challenging experience of Factor 1, the more directive and heavy-handed experience of Factor 2, and the more supportive and restorative experience of Factor 3 may not have been demonstrated in such a clear fashion.

Although the data in Q-sorts can and does stand alone, as they represent holistic viewpoints in of themselves, they can further be interpreted in conjunction with other information. In the original design of this research demographic information was collected prior to the Q-sort procedure and participants were also invited to make any further comments after performing the Q-sort and proved useful in interpretation.

Follow up interviews which can be informed by a Q-sort can also be useful to inform further interpretation. However time constraints of this research did not allow for follow up interviews and this could be an area for future research, particularly in evaluating coaching and/or mentoring in the pastoral ministry.

The encouraging finding of this particular study is that for the majority, those loading onto Factors 1+ and 3+, coaching/mentoring was a positive and satisfactory experience (75% of participants). For some, for those loading onto Factors 2 and 3-, coaching/mentoring delivered some benefits, but was not necessarily satisfactory (8% of participants). However, there was one participant who loaded onto

Factor 1-, which delivered no benefits and was unsatisfactory (2% of participants). This broadly agrees with the previously mentioned studies found in the literature (Coward, 2002; Wiggins, 1994; Godfrey, 2005; Bickers, 2010) where coaching/mentoring was largely found to be valuable, useful and effective, benefiting both the recipients and organisation; however, one study did question the effectiveness of such interventions (Chiroma, 2012). The findings of this research however, do give more insight into what might make coaching/mentoring interventions valuable and useful and what may affect the effectiveness of such interventions.

In addition, using the demographic information collected prior to the Q-sort in the online survey, further observations were made in how these Factors might relate to coaching/mentoring design features, such as context and purpose, skill and training of coach/mentor, ownership of learning, and continuum of learning needs (from instrumental to transformative learning) (Hammond, 2015). This provides rich and useful material to inform evaluation of coaching and/or mentoring interventions, which in turn offers the opportunity to monitor interventions so that they can either be improved upon or discontinued if necessary.

Q Methodology as Evaluation Tool

Q Methodology was developed by William Stephenson in 1935 as a research tool; however, it is beginning to be used as an evaluative and assessment tool (Chinnis, Summers, Carolyn, Paulson, & Davis, 2001; Ramlo & Newman, 2011).

One of the reasons put forward for this recent development is the access to computer software, such as PQ Method, giving the opportunity to perform the complex calculations associated with factor analysis (Chinnis, Summers, Carolyn, Paulson, & Davis, 2001, p. 258). These calculations take moments as opposed to what would have taken hours and days when performed manually. I found using a Q-sort to evaluate the coaching and mentoring simple and easy to administer.

On average it took participants 12.08 minutes to perform the Q-sort (see Figure 2 below) – even including participant no. 17, who took 161 minutes to perform the Q-sort (maybe they took a lunch-break in the middle of doing the procedure). Excluding this participant due to the time anomaly, the average time taken to perform the Q-sort was 8.7 minutes.

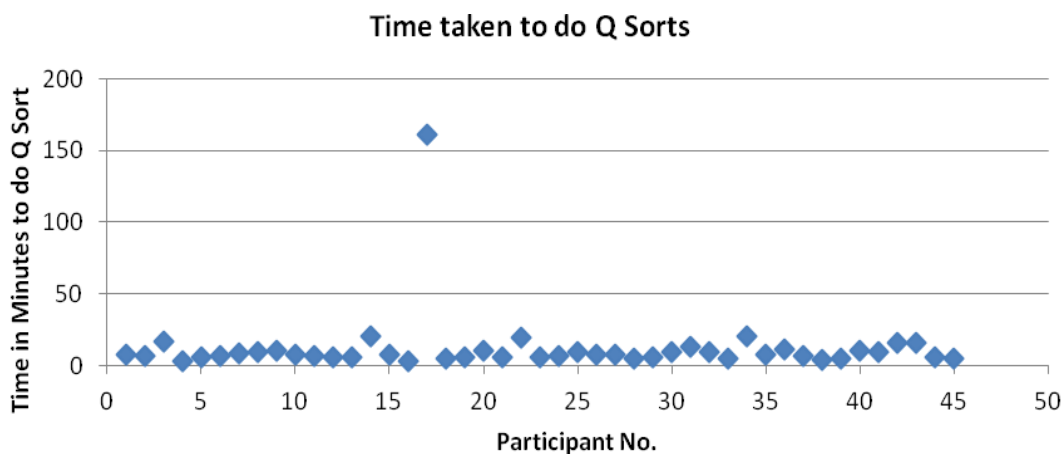


Figure 2 Time taken to undertake Q Sorts

The Q-sort procedure can elicit qualitative, but specific, rich and informative data within minutes, as opposed to the hours that it may take to conduct an interview. The detailed and nuanced data produced by Q methodology 'reveals the multiple unique views as well as consensus within the group of participants' (Ramlo, n.d., p. 207) and make Q useful as an evaluative and assessment tool (Ramlo, n.d.; Chinnis, Summers, Carolyn, Paulson, & Davis, 2001)

Ramlo et al. (2010) suggest that Q Methodology and Q factor analysis could also be used for program evaluation by 'grouping people into similar profiles or views'. They purport that 'such profiles may be more stable than individual variables and may be more helpful' (Ramlo & Newman, 2010, p. 26); in other words, 'in accenting the group and their shared viewpoints, provides a more noticeably macroscopic' analysis (Watts & Stenner, 2005, p. 71). Otherwise, a singular Q-sort can be undertaken and evaluated on its own merit, without comparison to other experiences. As mentioned earlier, this approach could be used in conjunction with and to guide an evaluative interview and may be more useful to surface pertinent issues that may not come up in solely an evaluative interview or conversation, especially if ministers are reticent to own negative emotions.

In this study three factors were identified correlating with three coaching and mentoring environments; monitoring or assessing an intervention could be carried out using a similar Q-set as in this study and comparing with these three factors. Assessing the comparison will help to clarify whether the intervention is suited to the context, purpose and objectives as they relate to the individual's needs. This is possible due to the fact that although we do not necessarily know the exact prevalence of these Factors in a larger population size, we do know that these factors are relatively stable in that they 'really do exist (demonstrably so)' (Brown, 1993, p. 120) and we can use these findings to inform evaluation.

Beyond the subject of this study in evaluating the experience and impact of the coaching and mentoring by the mentees, it would be possible to design Q investigations with different foci and for different purposes. For example, a Q Methodological investigation could be designed for coaches and mentors to evaluate their experiences and identify their needs, for example their developmental and training needs. Q Methodology is adaptable and can be tailored to assess interventions for different and specific purposes.

Limitations & Further Research

Due to time constraints of this research project the concourse was produced theoretically rather than sourcing statements of subjective experiences from interviews; this means that the Q-set was necessarily a reflection of my own personal experience and theorizing. Another researcher may have produced a different Q set. However, Brown states that ultimately 'it is the subject that gives meaning to the statements by sorting them (Brown, 1993); this implies that it is the participants' subjectivity that is projected either onto or 'through' the Q set regardless of the exact statements available to them. That said the final Q set may have determined the clarity or 'sharpness' of those subjective viewpoints. To further develop Q Methodology as an evaluation tool within this field, it would be useful to create a concourse that is qualitatively sourced as opposed to theoretically created; other possible factors may be identified. This would broaden the evaluative scope of a Q-sort than demonstrated in this study.

This study did not include those who delivered the coaching and/or mentoring and how they viewed the efficacy of the coaching and mentoring. Nor did it include evaluations of the organisations, whether seminaries, churches or denominations according to organizational objectives. To build on this study, a longitudinal study could be undertaken to appreciate how these subjective coaching/mentoring environments might correlate with objective outcomes.

We cannot necessarily say that the findings of a Q study are generalizable as we cannot necessarily know the exact prevalence of factors found in a larger population size, but we do know that these factors are relatively stable in that they ‘really do exist (demonstrably so)’ (Brown, 1993, p. 120). However, there may be other factors, or points of view, and further research may surface them.

Different Q-sets could also be generated to evaluate different aspects i.e. coach/mentor behaviours, or Q-sets created from coaches’/mentors’ perspective to evaluate their experiences and identify their needs i.e. developmental and training needs.

Although many found doing a Q-sort enjoyable, others found the forced ranking frustrating, as was reflected in some of the comments made at the end of the procedure. This may have put some participants off, particularly those who may have had conflicted experiences and whose experiences might have produced some rich material in a more traditional qualitative approach i.e. an interview.

Summary

Evaluation of coaching and/or mentoring programmes presents unique challenges and is complex. In addition, evaluation of coaching and mentoring within a profession such as the pastoral ministry presents specific challenges where it is difficult to clearly establish what the desired outcomes are.

As mentioned earlier, arguably the most useful outcomes in the pastoral ministry are the minister’s own sense of efficacy, arising out of learning, improved performance, increase of resilience and resourcefulness, and most poignantly development and maturity. Although it may not be possible to directly assess these outcomes, it may be possible to evaluate whether or not the coaching/mentoring environment provides the conditions to facilitate their development. Such an evaluation is necessarily subjective. However, assessing subjectivity is also a challenge. Q Methodology is a research method that set out to provide a ‘basis for a science of subjectivity’ (Brown, 1993).

An online Q-sort procedure was designed to evaluate the experience and impact of coaching and/or mentoring interventions in the pastoral ministry. Participants from three settings were invited and the results subjected to factor analysis.

The encouraging finding of this particular study is that for the majority, those loading onto Factors 1+ and 3+, coaching/mentoring was a positive and satisfactory experience (75% of participants). For some, for those loading onto Factors 2 and 3-, coaching/mentoring delivered some benefits, but was not necessarily satisfactory (8% of participants). However, there was one participant who loaded onto Factor 1-, which delivered no benefits and was unsatisfactory (2% of participants).

As an assessment tool, using a Q-sort to evaluate the coaching and mentoring was simple and easy to administer. The Q-sort procedure proved to elicit subjective, but specific, rich and informative data within minutes and demonstrates Q Methodology to be a viable and useful evaluation tool.

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