Client behavioural feedback for the executive coach

Development of an instrument

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Abstract

While executive coaches routinely give behavioural feedback to their clients, few ask them to reciprocate. Yet, theoretical investigations suggest that client feedback – if defined as the provision of information regarding effective behaviours observed during a coaching session – may improve the coach's performance. However, existing scales may be inadequate to support such a process because they have not been built with clients.

To contribute to knowledge and develop a client behavioural feedback instrument, the study was anchored in a pragmatic epistemology and in a coaching theoretical framework that I described as client-centred integrative. The development of the instrument followed a sequential exploratory design. It involved an international sample of executives. In the first qualitative strand (*N*=24), five focus groups of experienced clients developed a pool of executive coaching behaviours from a compilation of the literature. In the second quantitative strand, 107 executives were surveyed before and after a 3-4-month coaching intervention to develop and validate the instrument.

A principal component analysis led to the Executive Coaching Behaviour Observation Scale. It contained 21 executive coaching behaviours loading on two components, indicative of a professional transformational learning process. Multiple regression analyses indicate that the instrument is significantly related to the strength of the relationship between the client and the coach and to the generation of new insights for the client.

In their selection of behaviours, executives indicated their preference for being consulted about the coaching process rather than for passively accepting the coach's preferred tools and techniques. At the same time, they expected their executive coach to deploy a range of influencing techniques to support the emergence of new insights. These techniques included informing behaviours, thus requiring the executive coach to showcase relevant business and organisational knowledge.

Table of contents

List of tables

List of figures

List of acronyms and abbreviations

EMCC	European Mentoring and Coaching Council
EXCBOS	Executive Coaching Behaviour Observation Scale
GA	Goal attainment measure
ICF	International Coach Federation
MCC	Master Certified Coach
PCA	Principal component analysis
ROI	Return on investment
SBI	Situation Behaviour Impact
SPSS	Statistical Package for Social Science
SQ	Serendipity Quotient
SRIS	Self-reflection and Insight Scale
UK	United Kingdom
WAI	Working Alliance Inventory

CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

1.1. BACKGROUND

Client feedback is an immature concept in executive coaching: it has attracted little interest in research so far and does not appear to be prevalent in practice. This is paradoxical since executive coaches routinely give feedback to their clients as part of the coaching process (McDowall & Smewing, 2009), supported by a rich body of theoretical and empirical knowledge (Maxwell, 2016).

While empirical research about client feedback in coaching is severely limited, it has the merit of introducing a debate about its purpose and format. One study, based on interviews of coaching pairs using client feedback in the United Kingdom (UK), concludes that soliciting summative feedback from the client during a coaching session is more beneficial than asking for formative feedback, if the purpose of client feedback is to strengthen the coach-client relationship (Boston, 2013). In contrast, a phenomenological analysis of the learning experience of North American leadership coaches (Backus, 2018), characterises client feedback as a formative process integral to the coaching session which leads to critical learning events for the coach and ultimately benefits the client.

Most coaching accreditation bodies include the competency of seeking client feedback in their models, but stop short of conceptualising the phenomenon. For example, the Association for Coaching (2012, p. 15) recommends to “regularly seek out client feedback” and the European Community regulators (2015, p. 20) include “giving and receiving feedback” as a skill. Likewise, “Uses a formal feedback process from the client” is listed as one of the practitioner’s competences by the European Mentoring and Coaching Council (EMCC, 2015, p. 11). The International Coach Federation (ICF, 2017, p. 2) introduces client feedback in relation to the client’s needs by prescribing that a Master Certified Coach (MCC) should “check regularly of whether direction of coaching is continuing to serve clients’ needs […], if necessary, based on feedback by the client”. Finally, the World Association of Business Coaches (2007, p. 5) mentions summative feedback in relation to another purpose, that of the growth of the coach’s business, by suggesting that coaches ought to “regularly seek out client feedback on your performance to help you develop your practice”.

On the practitioner’s side, roughly a quarter of external coaches who are members of the ICF list “giving and receiving feedback” as one of their core coaching skills, without specifying its source (DiGirolamo, Rogers & Heink, 2016, p. 13). Within the membership of the EMCC, 40% of coaches indicate that they obtain evaluative feedback from their clients (Passmore, Brown, Wall, Stokes et al., 2018). However, the two same surveys, when reporting about the means by which coaches obtain developmental feedback, do not cite the client as a source. These findings indicate that executive coaches may prefer to use client feedback for the purpose of summative evaluations. This trend is in fact reflected in the limited practitioner's literature, which generally equates client feedback with return on investment (ROI) analyses at the end of large coaching interventions (Boston, 2013). One manual (O'Neill, 2007), even suggests using a simplified approach to ROI analysis during the coaching session so that it can be related to the three most important goals that the client wants to achieve.

Organisations sponsoring executive coaching initiatives generally provide evaluative client feedback to the coaches that they contract at the end of the coaching process (Braddick, 2010). For example, they measure clients' satisfaction, and track goal setting and progress on goal attainment. Results tend to be shared at the end of an engagement, and do not appear to be used for the purpose of managing talent within the pool of executive coaches (Mulvie, 2015).

Finally, while executives themselves have not been studied as feedback providers to their coach, intriguing findings surface during empirical research focused on capturing their experience after a coaching session (De Haan, Duckworth, Birch & Jones, 2013; Myers, 2014). When interviewed about the coaching process, clients typically hold back on giving feedback about their coach unless they are explicitly pushed to do so by the researcher. They then show a clear preference for reporting outcomes rather than the coach's actions that led to such outcomes. At first sight, this is paradoxical since executives who operate within a pragmatic managerialist discourse driven by norms and measurements are used to giving feedback to their colleagues (Wanberg, Kammeyer-Mueller & Marchese, 2006).

In sum, while coaching research correctly defines client feedback as both summative and formative, practitioners, sponsors and executives alike appear to limit themselves to the former. This is highly surprising considering that feedback is more likely to be effective if focused on narrowly defined actions (Kluger & Denisi, 1996).

What prevents executive coaches from leveraging their clients as a source of developmental feedback for themselves, and what are the consequences of not doing it? To introduce these questions and the research problem, I draw on two aspects of my own experience with feedback. On the one hand, I relate my journey as a recipient of client feedback. On the other hand, I consider my learnings as a recipient and provider of peer feedback in coach assessment centres. I then continue with a presentation of the research problem, knowledge gaps that need to be address, main aims and objectives of the study, followed by the definition of key concepts used in the research. Finally, I summarise the methodology used to study the research topic and lay out the thesis plan and outline.

1.2. MY EXPERIENCE WITH FEEDBACK

1.2.1. Client feedback

Looking back at my career as an executive coach, which spans over 20 years, I admit that the relevance of client feedback was not obvious to me when I started coaching. At that time, I was based in the United States and I implicitly adopted an expertise theory of coaching (Kilburg, 2016). I believed that I was largely responsible for the success of the coaching intervention and that my role was to apply tools and models that had a proven track record of achieving the desired outcomes for the client. In retrospect, I realise that my implicit stance was a result of my upbringing. Indeed, born and raised in France, I had been 'formatted' to think as an expert, within a positivist, Cartesian paradigm, which continues to dominate the French education system. After graduation, I became a management consultant in a North American firm, where I was expected to deliver advice based on the principles of scientific management.

Cracks appeared in my positivist stance when I arrived in the United States, and it was initially a painful process. Some of the many customs and behaviours I took for granted in France were now observed with curiosity and sometimes rejection, from how to socialise to how to work in teams. I realised that there were different ways of thinking about what is 'true' and became very interested in intercultural awareness. However, when I became a coach a few years into my stay in the United States, I continued to see myself as an expert, happy to have added intercultural knowledge to my breadth of expertise.

It took me another geographical move to shift away from positivism as a coaching practitioner. After spending 13 years in the United States, I lived in Malaysia for almost seven years. While in South East Asia, I attended two transformative, long-term trainings, where I was able to experiment with post-modernist approaches to coaching. In Australia, the Ontological Institute of Coaching introduced me to hermeneutics and discourse analysis as methods to explore the subjectivity of the client (Sieler, 2003). In Singapore, the Coach Supervision Academy exposed me to systems thinking and self-reflective practice. During this latter training, I learned to use the Seven Eye Model of supervision (Hawkins, 2013) which supports the coach's self-reflection with an exploration of multiple perspectives in relation to the coaching process and outcome.

Using this model led me re-conceptualise my role as a coach, understand what I could influence, accept what I could not control, and more importantly, learn how to lean more on my clients to achieve the coaching outcome. Once I had fully internalised that my client was a learning partner, it allowed me to let go of the assumption that I was solely in charge of the success of the coaching process. Instead I shifted to sharing responsibility with the client. Ultimately, it allowed me to adopt a pragmatic and pluralistic theory of coaching based on what the client needs (Clutterbuck, 2010).

Once I understood that I was co-responsible for the coaching outcome with my clients, I started to think about client feedback differently. So far, I had equated client feedback with the sponsors' satisfaction surveys that I received at the end of each intervention. These satisfaction surveys continue, to this day, to generate a great deal of emotion for me, on which I can arguably lean to discover more about my 'self' as a coach. However, they fall short in providing evidence about what it is exactly that I did to provoke satisfaction (or dissatisfaction) for each of my clients. A few years ago, when I brought up the topic during a supervision session, I was encouraged to experiment with immediate client feedback. I welcomed this suggestion because it was a good fit with my coaching stance, which views client and coach as learning partners.

I adapted my first client feedback template from a supervision tool, the Seven Conversations Model of Supervision, developed by Bachkirova, Jackson and Clutterbuck (2011). My interpretation of the model consisted in two concurrent, self-reflective templates. I used the first one, the coach's template, to self-reflect about my behaviours, motives and results right after a session: it proved quite helpful to organise my notes and I continue to use it, most notably in preparation for supervision. I gave the second template to my clients and invited them to use it before and after the session to reflect on their learnings in relation to my interventions and to envision how this would inform the next steps of the coaching process.

Over time, I noticed that most of my clients could not always spare the time to use it. However, they welcomed the opportunity to mutually self-reflect in real time during the coaching session itself. Because using my two templates took a long time away from other aspects of the coaching process, I started to ask for client feedback using the Situation Behaviour Impact model (SBI) (Riddle, Hoole & Gullette, 2015). This technique, which I teach as an Associate of the Center of Creative Leadership, starts with a contextualisation of feedback by linking it with a specific situation, then reports an observed behaviour and finally discusses its impact. I have noticed that most of my clients are willing and able to give me SBI feedback, and that I get valuable knowledge about the links between some of my behaviours and their impact. That being said, the initial selection of behaviours is up to the subjectivity of my clients, who decide what they want to report back to me.

My response to their selection is also fully subjective. Two examples, which I have reflected on in supervision, can illuminate the phenomenon. When I work with newly promoted strategy consulting partners for the purpose of onboarding them in their new role, this is a territory I know very well. When they give me feedback, it is very difficult for me to let go of an implicit mentoring stance. Therefore, I tend to interpret their feedback as a developmental opportunity for them, rather than for me. At the opposite end of the spectrum, when I started working with Malaysian senior executives in the oil and gas sector, I was largely in unknown territory. Inevitably, I tended to relate their feedback to a developmental opportunity for me, rather than reflecting about what their approach to feedback said about their own professional development needs. Pragmatist philosophers such as Dewey and Peirce have warned that when there is no evidence to anchor a dialogue, both parties should seek commonly agreed sets of rules to pre-emptively address conflicts that may arise between them (Diggins, 1994). Unfortunately, my experience with assessment centres led me to believe that this is very difficult to achieve in the context of the evaluation of the coach.

1.2.2. Peer feedback

I will first relate my journey as a recipient of peer feedback. Since my implicit adoption of an expertise theory of coaching had encouraged me to actively seek it, I pursued the three levels of accreditation offered by the International Coach Federation. In addition, I attended assessment centres for the purpose of becoming an adjunct executive coach for international coaching organisations. In all instances, I noticed a lack of transparency about the criteria used to assess me, and a rather unpleasant, unacknowledged power game going on between the subjectivity of the assessor and my own subjectivity. Because, I 'luckily' sailed through these various assessments, my temptation, initially, was not to question their construction. At the same time, some of my peers, who I considered highly qualified, did not obtain the credential. When we talked about it, they expressed bitterness and resentment. In particular, the lack of transparency about the assessment standards led them to believe that the process was flawed. Reflecting on their experience, the trust that I had placed in these assessment standards diminished.

A few years later, I was asked for my interest in becoming an assessor myself. This opportunity revived my interest in the topic and I accepted. During my onboarding process, I made two startling discoveries: on the one hand, the assessment standards were not empirically validated; on the other hand, nobody (including myself!) felt hampered by this. Empirical knowledge easily took second stage behind the prestige of our status. Since we had been 'chosen' as assessors because of our experience, we considered applicants as novice. In the absence of any evidence about effective coaching behaviours, we substituted it with our own espoused models, which we often confronted, discussed and enhanced during assessment debriefs. At first sight, the fact that our decisions were anchored in a consensual dialogue were reminiscent of a pragmatic approach to developing knowledge (Rorty, 2004). But I also realised that the satisfaction arising from obtaining a consensus of opinions led us to experience an even more inflated sense of power. Against our 'powerful' opinion-based standards, neither the self-assessment of the applicant, nor, crucially, the assessment of clients (role-played by other applicants) held much weight.

This dual experience of client and peer feedback helped me take stock of a phenomenon described in the post-positivist literature (Renato Railo, 2015): in the absence of standards to inform a dialogue between parties, power dictates who will have the last word. It led me to reframe my experience of feedback as a power game. This triggered my interest in providing more evidence to the process, in favour of a pragmatic approach, and led to my choice of research topic.

1.3. THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

To receive formative feedback from their clients, executive coaches may need to be more transparent with the coaching processes they adopt. In practice, however, they manifest a lack of interest in doing so (Stokes, 2015). This may have originated from an assumption that it would protect the confidentiality of the coaching process. Indeed, by keeping coaching mechanisms to themselves as much as possible, executive coaches may have felt that they were then setting clear boundaries with the sponsors (Palmer & McDowall, 2010). However, by the same token, coaches prevent clients and sponsors from accessing an important source of knowledge about the coaching process, thus creating a power imbalance with them. This imbalance, according to Stokes (2015), manifests itself as a pervasive and dominant experts' discourse in which the coach is presented as an expert, and the client, conveniently called the 'coachee', becomes the passive recipient of such expertise, during a process which remains shrouded in mystery. Arguably, searching 'mystery of coaching' on the Google search engine in February 2018 led me to 66,800 results, including links to 15,800 websites that contain both the words coach and guru. As elegantly described by Karboul (2014, p. 113) in her phenomenological study of clients who experience coaching for the first time, a large minority of clients go as far as to consider their coach as a "fairy".

The mystery surrounding the expert competencies of the executive coach has multiple adverse consequences which have been discussed in the literature. Most notably, it limits the scope of executive coaching, slows down its professionalisation and adversely impacts the quality of the coaching dialogue.

Louis and Fatien-Diochon (2018) argued that the protective devices employed by coaches are in fact detrimental to all the stakeholders involved in the process. If executive coaches increased and broadened their scope, which arguably would require them to become more transparent about their process, it would allow them to challenge the organisational status quo when needed, thus fulfilling their role as organisational change agents and achieving more sustainable client outcomes. In fact, there are signs that, as a result of the strict boundaries set by executive coaches, the sponsors are not as engaged as they could be in the design and evaluation of coaching interventions. Indeed, less than 9% use ROI studies to measure the results of coaching and the percentage has decreased over the past number of years (Sherpa Coaching, 2018). More insidiously, executive coaching, despite its growth, remains a negligible part of workplace training expenses. Arguably, the worldwide annual spending on executive coaching, estimated at 1.25 billion dollars annually (International Coaching Federation & PricewaterhouseCoopers, 2016) may represent little more than 0.3% of the budget spent on workplace training, estimated at 362 billion dollars in the same year (https://www.statista.com/topics/4281/workplace-learning-and-development/).

Stokes (2015) remarked that the experts' discourse is promoted and amplified by accrediting bodies, who have control over the training, assessment, supervision and accreditation of coaches. This discourse has led to multiple competency models and evaluative tools, which are for the most part a-theoretical (Bachkirova, 2016b) and remain largely unvalidated, despite the availability of scales to measure client outcomes (Grant, 2016). Crucially, they do not rely on client data (Blumberg, 2014). As a result, 53,300 coaches worldwide (ICF & PwC, 2016) operate in a market in which they use their collective subjectivity for the purpose of assessing and developing their skills. Consequently, executive coaches do not know if, and to what extent, what is currently taught to them, and what they are evaluated against during certification, is related to what the client needs. This is concerning in a context where executive coaches enter the profession with vastly different backgrounds, and where anyone can apply to any type of training, or even choose not to be trained at all (Bachkirova, Arthur & Reading, 2015).

The adverse consequences of the lack of transparency also lead to multiple negative effects during the coaching process itself. It keeps the respective roles of the client and the coach obscured which results in giving too much responsibility to the coach in the achievement of coaching outcomes (Welman & Bachkirova, 2010). Moreover, the asymmetry of knowledge between the coach and the client leads to a difference between clients' assessments and coaches' assessments of the coaching process (Myers, 2014; De Haan & Nieß, 2015; Linder-Pelz & Lawley, 2016). The discrepancy feeds the self-deception of the coach (Bachkirova, 2015) and may, in turn, explain why it increases over time (De Haan & Nilsson, 2017). This is not unique to coaching: similar discrepancies have been observed in other helping disciplines where power is overwhelmingly held by the provider of service, such as sports coaching. In this discipline, not only has the increasing discrepancy been observed, but it has also been negatively linked to the effectiveness of the coaching process itself (Fletcher & Roberts, 2013).

In sum, as a result of the lack of transparency, sponsors refrain from getting involved and executives hold back on their observations. In the absence of formative client feedback, coaches perpetuate their current beliefs about the superiority of their models. They continue to base their professional development exclusively on self-reflection and on the formative assessments of peers. It follows that clients' evaluations become increasingly disconnected from coaches' evaluations. Consequently, the coaching process not only becomes less effective, but is also at risk of becoming less credible. As Mulvie (2015) summarised, if no-one is in a position of challenging the coach's position, then the myth and magic of coaching may perpetuate.

1.4. KNOWLEDGE GAPS

Several knowledge gaps must be addressed to develop a client behavioural feedback instrument for the executive coach. Firstly, there is no theory of client feedback in executive coaching. Theoretical investigations of feedback interventions (Kluger & Denisi, 1996) and of feedback seeking behaviours (Anseel, Frederik, Beatty, Shen, Lievens & Sackett, 2015) suggest that feedback is likely to be linked to job performance if focused on behaviours, but that its effectiveness is moderated by the characteristics of both the feedback giver and recipient. Notably, if the feedback giver is perceived to have adequate knowledge about the job of the feedback recipient, the intervention is more likely to trigger change (Jawahar, 2010).

While behavioural feedback has been critiqued as reductionist (Jackson et al., 2012), a mixed-methods approach, based on the Cognitive Affective Personal System Theory (Mischel & Shoda, 1995) which favours the observation of behavioural dimensions while acknowledging that they are situational, is likely to be relevant to structure a client feedback intervention. The process is based on repeated observations over a range of critical situations typically faced by the individual being assessed (Lievens & Christiansen, 2012). Arguably, research in the root disciplines of coaching such as education or sports coaching provides a strong rationale for considering the coaching conversation as a specific situation during which behavioural observations can be fed back by the client to the coach (Gaertner, 2014; Fletcher & Roberts, 2013), thus triggering a feedback loop (Kolb, 1984).

On such basis, the review of the literature suggested that a theoretical framework that I described as client-centred integrative would be suitable to develop a client behavioural feedback instrument. The framework rests on a client-centred theory of coaching (Cox, 2013), which places the coach and client on equal footing and define the coaching conversation as developmental. In addition, it integrates competency models provided by the expertise theory (Kilburg, 2016), coaching effectiveness models provided by the evidence-based theory (Grant, 2016), and cognitive-developmental theory to conceptualise formative client feedback as input to the self-reflective process of the executive coach (Bachkirova & Lawton-Smith, 2015).

Secondly, and despite a general agreement that the client characteristics influence coaching outcomes (McKenna & Davis, 2009b), little is known about the agency of the client or how it can be augmented. Certain contextual factors such as the timeliness of coaching or certain client personality traits such as emotional intelligence have been studied as a mediator of the effectiveness of coaching (Greif, 2016). Empirical research has been more convincing in showing that, regardless of their pre-disposition to coaching, clients possess a unique perspective that ought to be leveraged for the benefits of the coach’s development. Indeed, clients observe coaching behaviours, processes and outcomes differently from external observers or coaches (Myers, 2014; Linder-Pelz & Lawley, 2016; De Haan & Nieß, 2015, De Haan, Bertie, Day & Sills, 2010).

Thirdly, the knowledge about coaching behaviours is highly fragmented (Blumberg, 2014). Multiple competency models exist, most of which are a-theoretical (Bachkirova & Lawton Smith, 2015). Independently of these models, a number of empirical investigations, while they have been conducted using rigorous research methods, have not been embraced by practitioners, leading to increasing complexity (Stein, 2009; De Haan et al., 2010; Greif, 2010; Hall, 2011 Linder-Pelz, 2014; Bachkirova, Sibley & Myers, 2015). In sum, between and within all these competency models, the units of analysis are not consistent: they may include events, processes, outcomes, competencies, capabilities or behaviours, which makes any integration problematic (Blumberg, 2014). To compound the difficulty, only a few models distinguish executive coaching from other types of coaching. This means that some domains of expertise typical of the executive coach, such as management, are understudied in most models. Crucially, very few models include clients as a source of knowledge, thus affecting their suitability for the purpose of building a client feedback instrument.

1.5. MAIN AIM AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

To address the research problem and the knowledge gaps, the aim of the study was to develop a reliable and valid scale of executive coaching behaviours to support the provision of formative client feedback for the executive coach.

To study the research problem, the following objectives were set:

1) To critically review the literature relevant to the development of a formative client feedback instrument for the executive coach.
2) To develop and validate such client feedback instrument.
3) To contribute to the theory and practice of client feedback to executive coaches.

1.6. DEFINITIONS USED IN THE STUDY

Executive coaching

Not only there is no universal definition of executive coaching, but multiple theories co-exist (Bachkirova, 2016b). As a result of this fragmentation, no less than 60 definitions are in use (Bartlett II, Boylan & Hale, 2014). In line with the epistemology and theoretical framework of the research, I adopted the following definition of the term: a complex adaptive system anchored in a dialogue between a professionally trained coach and a client with managerial authority in an organisation. It supports the client's cognitive-behavioural change through a personalised learning process that activates self-awareness and commitment to achieve vertical and horizontal development goals aligned with the organisation's goals

Other concepts

I chose the term 'client' in lieu of 'coachee' throughout the study, including when I reported findings from other studies. 'Coachee' has a passive connotation that is not well suited to a pragmatic epistemology. This choice is aligned with the terminology in use in recent pragmatic studies (Kauffeld & Gessnitzer, 2015).

I used the term 'coach' or 'coaching' when findings from the literature encompassed not just executive coaching but also other forms of coaching, such as life coaching. Otherwise, I employed 'executive coach' or 'executive coaching'.

The term 'executive' describes a professional with managerial authority in an organisation (Joo, 2005).

The 'gatekeeper' is the organisation's representative who authorised and facilitated access to research participants (Mulvie, 2015).

The 'sponsor' represents the organisation that pays for executive coaching, and by extension, the representative of the organisation who oversees the executive coaching process (De Haan & Nieß, 2015).

1.7. METHODOLOGICAL OVERVIEW

The research paradigm underpinning the study was pragmatism, an epistemology which is well suited to address a practitioner's issue (Fishman, 1999). Feedback was operationalised as a mixed-methods approach grounded the Cognitive Affective Personal System Theory (Mischel & Shoda, 1985) and the development of the instrument was framed in a theory that I described as client-centred integrative (Section 2.4.). To address knowledge gaps about effective executive coaching behaviours, I used a sequential exploratory, mixed-method design (Creswell, 2010).

The design included a qualitative strand followed by a quantitative strand. The qualitative strand took place between March and May 2017. Using a task analysis method, I facilitated the construction of a pool of behavioural items by five focus groups of experienced clients of executive coaching (*N*=24).

The quantitative strand took place between April 2017 and January 2018. I surveyed 107 executives undergoing a short (3-4 months) coaching programme at the start and at the end of the process. The purpose of this investigation was to strengthen the construct validity of the pool of behavioural items developed in the qualitative phase by conducting a principal component analysis (PCA), and to measure its relationships with three coaching outcome scales by conducting multiple regression analyses. I used the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) version 23.0 to conduct the statistical analyses supporting the validation of the instrument. The interpretation of the components was based on the theoretical and empirical literature, and on the focus group discussions.

The research met the standards required by the ethics committee of Oxford Brookes University. As a pragmatic researcher, I fully acknowledge that the research findings were closely related to the context in which they took place. I view the evidence produced as the result of an asynchronous dialogue involving past researchers, clients of executive coaching, and my own interpretations as an experienced practitioner. Such evidence contributes to nurture a feedback dialogue between executive coaches and their clients for the purpose of improving the practice of executive coaching.

1.8. THESIS PLAN AND OUTLINE

This chapter presented the research topic and an outline of the thesis.

Chapter 2 reviews the literature and the current state of knowledge about the research topic. The chapter covers coaching theories in relation to feedback theories, client agency, executive coaching behaviours and their effectiveness. It surfaces the knowledge gaps that must be addressed to build a client feedback instrument for the executive coach.

Chapter 3 introduces the methodology used for this study. It starts with a presentation of the paradigm and theoretical lens of the research. Subsequently, I justify the choice of a sequential exploratory mixed-method design. A description follows of the data collection and analysis methods. Finally, I discuss research ethics and present the steps taken to maximise the quality of the research.

Chapter 4 analyses the qualitative data collected for the purpose of building the feedback instrument. It presents the behavioural items selected by the focus groups, and how these items were related to coaching micro-processes and outcomes during their discussions.

Chapter 5 describes and analyses the quantitative data collected for the purpose of validating the feedback instrument. It presents the results of a PCA of the pool of behavioural items selected by the focus group participants, which led to the feedback instrument, and of multiple regressions of the coaching outcome scales on the feedback instrument.

Chapter 6 discusses the findings of the research in relation to the research aim and objectives.

Chapter 7 concludes the thesis by providing a summary of the main findings and their implications for theory and practice. I review personal learnings and limitations of the study and propose future areas of research on the topic of client feedback for the executive coach.

CHAPTER 2
LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. INTRODUCTION

The first objective of the research was to critically review the literature relevant to the development of a client feedback instrument. To that effect, after describing the literature search process, the first part of the chapter reviews theories of feedback to provide an operational definition of the concept. The second part critically reviews theories of coaching for their suitability to guide the development of a feedback instrument. The third and fourth parts review existing knowledge about client agency and executive coaching behaviours, thus identifying gaps that need to be addressed to build a feedback instrument.

2.2. THE LITERATURE SEARCH PROCESS

The literature search process followed the principles of the STARLITE model, an approach that proposes a standard for literature reviews that both address the needs of quantitative and qualitative methods of research (Booth, 2006).

2.2.1. Literature map

The literature map (Creswell, 2010) is presented in Figure 2.1 below. It shows the four main frames of the literature search at the intersection of which sits the research topic (shadowed):

- Feedback theory and client feedback theory in the root disciplines of executive coaching
- Coaching theories in relation to client feedback
- Client agency, including the literature about the client's characteristics in relation to the coaching outcome and the investigations of the client's experience of coaching
- Coaching behaviours and their relationships with client outcomes.

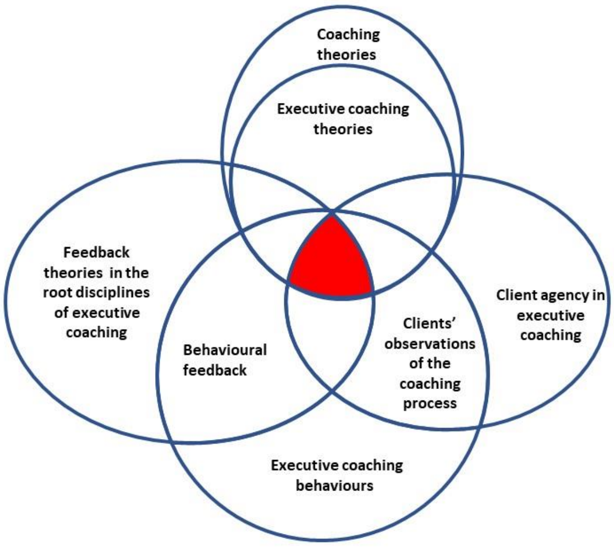

Figure 2.1: Map of concepts reviewed in the literature

2.2.2. Literature sources

To identify the relevant literature, I focused on material that met the quality standards of good qualitative research (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) and quantitative research (Coughlan, Cronin & Ryan, 2007).

The material was sourced from refereed journals, theses from reputable universities and publications written by researchers and a few practitioners. I used search engines such as Google Scholar UK, Discover, PsychINFO, ProQuest, Radar, and the ICF Research Portal to find articles in peer-reviewed journals, peer-reviewed and practitioners' books and theses. In addition, I consulted the website of 12 coaching accrediting bodies to retrieve their most recent coaching competency model when available: Association for Coaching, Association for Professional Executive Coaching and Supervision, Association of Coaching Supervisors, EC Vision, European Association for Supervision and Coaching, European Mentoring and Coaching Council, Graduate School Alliance for Executive Coaching, International Coach Federation, International Association of Coaching, Meta Coaching Foundation Société Française de Coaching, World Association of Business Coaches. In parallel, I identified specialised coaching journals on Oxford Brookes' e-journal database, such as Coaching: An International Journal of Theory, Research and Practice, Coaching and mentoring supervision: Theory and Practice, Consulting Psychology Journal: Practice and Research, International Coaching Psychology Review, International Journal of Coaching in Organizations and International Journal of Evidence Based Coaching & Mentoring, and reviewed their tables of contents of the past two years for additional articles. From this initial set of articles, the strategy to uncover supplemental material became iterative. I conducted backward searches by reviewing their reference sections, which led to identifying frequently cited, older articles which might be considered as landmarks (Torraco, 2016). In addition, I conducted forward searches by identifying articles citing those that had emerged from the previous steps (Webster & Watson, 2002). For the following two years I requested weekly alerts from Google Scholar to stay informed about new literature. Finally, three months before the submission of the thesis until the date of the viva, I scanned the journal databases again for any new relevant piece of literature. At the initial stage, the search included articles published since 2009. Backward searches added articles published before that date (Torraco, 2016). Sources and keywords used in the search are presented in Table 2.1 below.

Table 2.1: Literature search frames and keywords

Main frames	Key words
Feedback theory	Feedback + theory Student + feedback Client feedback + psychotherapy Feedback + management Athletes + feedback Coaching + feedback Assessment Centres
Coaching and executive coaching theories	Executive coaching + theory Coaching + psychotherapy Coaching + management Coaching + sports Coaching + education Coaching + supervision Coaching + philosophy
Client agency	Client + coaching Coachee Client + coaching + experience Coachee + experience
Executive coaching behaviours	Executive coach Executive coach + performance Coaching + competencies Coaching + accreditation Executive coach + evaluation Coach + behaviours Coach + competencies Coach + skills Coach + knowledge Coach + abilities Coach + traits Behavioural analysis Task Analysis Coaching + ROI Coaching + evaluation Coaching + effectiveness Coaching + summative + evaluation Coaching + active ingredients Formative + evaluations + coaching Coach-client relationship

2.3. FEEDBACK THEORIES

As indicated in the introduction chapter, there is no theory of client feedback in executive coaching to support the development of an instrument. This section discusses feedback theories and its applications in the root disciplines of executive coaching, including management, education, sports coaching and psychotherapy.

2.3.1. Scope and purpose of feedback

Feedback is a method of providing information from the environment to a receiver, in relation to how something or someone behaves with others, for the purpose of inducing a change (Maxwell, 2016). The concept was first theorised as a self-regulation process for machines, drawing from findings in cybernetics and engineering. In the cybernetics theory, a behaviour is collected and compared to a norm, triggering an adjustment if there is a gap (Wiener, 1961). By applying it to human self-regulation and change, behaviourist psychologists define feedback as a two-step data-collection process comprising a behavioural observation from the environment and the collection of information about the impact on the environment. Then, the behavioural observation is linked to its consequences and triggers a decision to change (Skinner, 1990). Social theorists introduce an additional element to the process by considering the abilities of humans (and some animals) to change their behaviours not just in response to immediate feedback but also by making predictions about how others may respond to future behaviours (Bandura, 1977). Executive coaches, when they provide feedback to their clients, implicitly rely on the control and goal-setting theories, which have evolved from the behaviourist and social theories aforementioned, to justify that it will trigger change (Millward, Asumeng & McDowall, 2010). Indeed, McDowall & Kurz (2008) had observed that 360-degree feedback rarely triggers follow-on activities unless it is followed up by goal setting, as recipients compare their own standards with those of others and strive to bridge the gap. Constructionists and cognitive-developmental psychologists add yet one more element to the process, which, arguably, is unique to humans: one's own mental model, affects, and comprehension of events (Kegan, 1982). At this level of complexity, feedback integrates behavioural observations, information about one's impact in relation to the social processes at play and one's own self-reflection so that the receiver arrives at a decision to experiment with new behaviours. Arguably, these new behaviours are subjected to further feedback and self-reflection, eventually leading to a higher level of cognition, which will then be challenged again in a series of feedback loops (Kolb, 1984; Nicolaides & McCallum, 2013).

Behaviourist, social theorists and cognitive developmental researchers and practitioners continue to debate about the scope and purpose of feedback (Maxwell, 2016) which leads to a multi-faceted definition of the term. Feedback can indeed be considered in relation to where it comes from (internal or external), to when it takes place (deferred, immediate or future), to what its purpose is (developmental or evaluative) and to what is observed (dimensions or tasks).

2.3.2. Moderators of feedback

Kluger and Denisi (1996), in their landmark theoretical investigation, defined feedback as an intervention changing the locus of attention of the receiver for the purpose of triggering a change, thus having a positive impact on performance. They noted that, the more the locus of attention was on the basic elements of the task (such as behaviours), the more a feedback intervention was likely to be effective.

However, they cautioned that the impact of feedback was moderated by a number of factors and called for more research. A meta-analytic review of feedback seeking behaviours (Anseel, Beatty, Shen, Lievens & Sackett, 2015) concluded that the characteristics of the feedback recipient were significant moderators. In particular, the levels of self-esteem and self-efficacy were important predictors of feedback seeking behaviours. In addition, individuals who sought feedback were more likely to engage in building relationships, networking and socialisation behaviours. Even the impact of the sign of feedback was shown to be influenced by the goal-orientation of the recipient. These findings are echoed in education research, in which the feedback receiver characteristics influence the effectiveness of different approaches to feedback (Thurlings, Vermeulen, Bastiaens & Stijnen, 2012). In particular, while focusing on external behavioural feedback might be more effective at the earliest stages of one's learning process, internal feedback might be more successful at later stages.

Concerning the feedback giver, Kluger and Denisi (1996) mentioned that individual response to feedback was likely influenced by the credibility attributed to the feedback giver. Peer feedback provide a useful setting to study the phenomenon since peers typically have less knowledge than supervisors or direct reports about the content of the job of the feedback recipient (Bailey & Fletcher, 2002). Indeed, a study demonstrated that when peers were perceived by the feedback recipient to have more knowledge about their job than the average of all peers, their feedback was then considered as more accurate and more satisfactory, and was then predictive of job performance (Jawahar, 2010).

Put together, these findings suggest that client feedback, to be effective, may need to be based on a pre-defined set of observable behaviours which are commonly agreed to be effective by the client and the coach. At the same time, the effectiveness of client behavioural feedback may depend on the level of professional development of the coach.

2.3.3. Debates in the management literature

In management, the debate centres around what to observe or the respective merits of observing dimensions and tasks. It originated in the assessment centre literature

(Jackson et al., 2012) in relation to the quality of observations by assessors. Proponents of the dimension-based approach assess behavioural manifestations of standardised competencies across a number of situations, then make a judgement about the proficiency of the manager. This approach is typically used for the purpose of the yearly evaluations of managers and is based on competency models. Critics of the dimension-based approach argue that such evaluations do not provide reliable information because behaviours are not constant through situations (Mischel & Shoda, 1995). In addition, dimension-based assessments are prescriptive and result in a top-down approach which is not well adapted to current organisational contexts that require a more distributed leadership and multiple sources of feedback (Laloux, 2014). Finally, competency models rest on a consensus of the opinion of experts which takes time to obtain. As a result, they might no longer be relevant by the time the evaluation takes place, because requirements may have evolved in the fast-paced contexts in which organisations operate (Schippmann, Ash, Battista, Carr, Eyde et al., 2000).

Proponents of the task-based approach assess the quality of unfolding processes and outcomes of the task that was being performed, without making judgements about behaviours. The major critique of task-based evaluations is that they cannot be standardised or objective because every situation is unique (Lievens & Christiansen, 2012). Morozov (2016), reflecting on the evaluation system of Uber drivers which rests entirely on the client's satisfaction ratings after a ride, argued that without a set of objective data to orient the evaluation contract, all that remains in the end is the subjectivity of the most powerful stakeholder, who declares "the truth" about the value of a particular employee or contractor. This brings back an even more insidious form of command and control than in scientific management, because it is based on power rather than on evidence (Renato Railo, 2015).

Proponents of a mixed-methods approach believe that they have resolved the contradiction based on the findings of the Cognitive Affective Personal System Theory (Mischel & Shoda, 1995), which states that individuals activate a stable behavioural scenario based on how they categorise situations. Therefore, it is possible to deliver reliable and valid behavioural feedback if it is properly contextualised. In some companies, dimension-based evaluations based on competency models have completely disappeared in favour of mixed-methods approaches. Yearly evaluations have been replaced by project-by-project, even daily multisource feedback sessions, to allow employees to collect behavioural data about their performance. As more data is collected it is hoped that standards will emerge (Ewenstein, Hancock & Komm, 2016; Cappeli & Tavis, 2018).

2.3.4. Client feedback models developed in helping disciplines

Other helping disciplines such as education, mentoring, sports coaching and psychotherapy have all developed client feedback instruments based on cognitive developmental theories. With the exception of psychotherapy, the preference is to develop feedback models that are behavioural and situational, thus similar to the mixed-methods approach in management.

In North American higher education, student feedback traditionally consisted in satisfaction surveys at the end of a course: it was re-conceptualised to measure students' perceptions of teachers' behaviours related to student learning outcomes (Richardson, 2005). While the use of these instruments has been empirically related to an improvement of students learning outcomes in longitudinal research, behavioural change from teachers has not been conclusively observed (Onwuegbuzie, Witcher, Collins, Filer, Wiedmaier et al., 2007; Stalmeijer, Dolmans, Wolfhagen, Muijtjens & Scherpbier, 2008). Further research in Europe indicates that this might be related to the format of the feedback process. In Germany, a study of over 300 high school teachers who used a validated student-led, web-based feedback system throughout their course, rather than at the end of the course only, reported a change in teaching behaviours under certain conditions such as the motivation and constructiveness of the discussion in supervision (Gaertner, 2014). Likewise, in Australia, action research has validated an instrument by studying the professional development benefits for teachers of a structured approach to student feedback throughout the school year in secondary school settings (Mandouit, 2018).

In educational mentoring, a behaviour scale was developed based on the socio-motivational model and causally linked to mentoring relationship quality and the perceived usefulness of the intervention by the mentee (Brodeur, Larose, Tarabulsy, Feng, Forget-Dubois et al., 2015). Brodeur et al. (2015) observed that, as a result of receiving behavioural feedback from their mentees, mentors adjust their behaviours over time. In particular, behavioural decisions made by mentors become less guided by experts' rules and increasingly tailored to the mentee's needs as the mentoring process unfolds, indicating that the mentor may be responsive to the mentee's feedback interventions.

In sports coaching, practitioners rely on a longitudinally validated 360-degree assessment of coaches which includes students' input (Chelladurai & Saleh, 1980). Empirical research about students' behavioural preferences and coaches' behavioural decisions over the course of a sports season reveals that choices are situational, thus providing a strong rationale for repeated instances of feedback (Høigaard, Jones & Peters, 2008; Fletcher & Roberts, 2013).

In psychotherapy, while client feedback was initially focused on reporting deferred outcomes the process was re-theorised once it had been established that psychotherapists who request immediate client feedback are more likely to obtain results than those who do not (Duncan, Miller, Wampold & Hubble, 2010). As a result, Miller, Hubble, Chow and Seidel (2015) led the design of an immediate client feedback instrument based on a summative standardised scale measuring client progress on the one hand, and a formative scale measuring the strength of the psychotherapeutic alliance, on the other hand. Preliminary findings indicate that it is linked to successful psychotherapeutic outcomes if the results are processed through a structured self-reflection process or peer supervision. However, links between such task-based client feedback tools and psychotherapist's behavioural change have not been made conclusively. It is surprising, in light of the findings in other disciplines, that psychotherapy research has stopped short of developing behavioural client feedback tools. Indeed, a rich body of knowledge linking psychotherapist behaviours and outcomes from the perspective of clients already exists (Norcross, 2010; Levitt, Pomerville & Surace, 2016). A possible explanation may reside in the fact that psychotherapy research is anchored in a long tradition of scientific and authoritative practice (Levinson, 1996) in which the client may not be considered sufficiently resourceful (possibly because of their medical condition) to offer effective behavioural feedback.

2.4. EXECUTIVE COACHING THEORIES AND CLIENT FEEDBACK

The feedback literature reviewed in the previous section suggests that a mixed-methods approach to client feedback might provide useful data to support the professional development of the coach. This section critically reviews four coaching theories in relation to the operational definition of feedback selected for the study.

2.4.1. The expertise theory

The expertise theory has guided the study of effective coaching competencies and behaviours which led to models in use by accrediting bodies (Blumberg, 2014). Expertise theorists, such as Kilburg (2016) support the development of coaching competency scales by obtaining a consensus of experts. In executive coaching, Kilburg includes competencies related to leadership and management, organisational theory and dynamics, economics, politics, group dynamics and human relationships, individual dynamics, managing diversity and learning, markets and ecologies, behaviour change, expertise development, business problem solving and human influence. Additional domains of expertise have been suggested by other theorists, such as ethics (Carroll & Shaw, 2013) and intercultural awareness (Coultas, Bedwell, Burke & Salas, 2011).

While useful, scales anchored in the expertise theory may not be sufficient to develop a client feedback instrument. Most importantly, expertise theorists generally exclude the client as a direct source of knowledge (Stokes, 2015). Moreover, the co-existence of multiple models impacts their credibility and is perceived to have a detrimental effect on the professionalisation of the industry (Linder-Pelz & Lawley, 2016). In fact, attempts to empirically test the reliability and validity of the existing competency models are limited and still inconclusive (Lai & McDowall, 2014; Maltbia, Marsick & Ghosh, 2014).

In addition, research has uncovered that expert knowledge seems to have little impact on a practitioner's performance (Ericsson, 2006). In addition, formative evaluation models based on psychotherapy research demonstrate that the coaches' tools and techniques are not the most important driver of coaching effectiveness (Grover & Furnham, 2016). As a result, it is important to include other factors when considering the skills of the coach, such as developing the relationship between the client and the coach, or adjusting to the client's characteristics.

In fact, critics wonder if there is even a specialised body of coaching competencies, noting that essential coaching skills such as empathy, collaboration and positive regard, for example, also exist in the general population of managers (Grant, 2016). Most notably, the specificity of coaching *versus* psychotherapy is questioned. When Bono, Purvanova, Towler and Peterson (2009) compared the practices of psychologist and non-psychologist coaches, they found that there were as many differences in the use of coaching tools between coach-psychologists of different psychologist traditions as there were differences between coach-psychologists and non-psychologist-coaches. Consequently, they question whether coaches would bring anything that a psychotherapist would not.

2.4.2. The evidence-based theory

The evidence-based theory supports the development of coaching outcome scales, thus insuring that claims about coaching effectiveness are grounded in the evidence of a benefit for the client rather than in the execution of expert coaching skills (Grant & Cavanagh, 2007). As a result, rather than pre-defining dimensions of the coach's expertise, the evidence-based theory supports the standardisation of coaching models, leading to a database of successful approaches for the practitioner (Grant, 2016).

Two issues surface when using a database of standardised coaching models as a basis to develop feedback scales. Firstly, standardised coaching models are perceived as prescriptive and rigid for theorist who see the coaching conversation as a complex adaptive system (Passmore & Fillery-Travis, 2011). Secondly, Greif (2016) noted that the benefits of coaching are difficult to standardise for three main reasons: they are sometimes intangible, their production and consumption happen simultaneously during the session, and they are heterogeneous depending of the needs of the client. Arguably, meta-analyses of the effectiveness of coaching have uncovered heterogeneity in effect sizes which is indicative of multiple moderation effects (Theeboom, Beersma & Van Vianen, 2014).

2.4.3. The coach-developmental theory

Coach-developmental theoreticians focus on the coach's self-reflective space, where different sources of information are processed in service of one's professional development (Hawkins, 2013). However, they do not believe that feedback can be standardised because the coaching process is in a constant state of flux and factors influence one another on an on-going basis (Cavanagh & Lane, 2012). Coach-developmental theoreticians also believe that external formative feedback may become less relevant as the coach gains more experience (Clutterbuck, 2010), thus echoing investigations of the feedback receiver characteristics as a moderator mentioned in Section 2.3.2. (Thurlings et al., 2012). Building on the theories of vertical and adult development in leadership (Kegan, 1982), they define coaching mastery as the development of capabilities that allow the coach to make informed decisions about which intervention to use and when by using internal feedback only (Bachkirova & Lawton Smith, 2015). Such capacity is fed by an increasing repertoire of knowledge, skills and behaviours (Lawrence, 2016), and an ability to deploy creative and improvisational skills (Clutterbuck, 2010). In fact, at the highest stage of development of the coach there might no longer a direct causality between the coach's choice of intervention and the success of the coaching (Bachkirova, 2016a).

The major issue with the coach-developmental theory is that, by refusing to use standardised evidence to feed the self-reflective process of the coach, it renders the process fully subjective. Such post-modernist approach creates clear ethical and power-relation issues which have been identified by the theoreticians themselves, such as who is to declare that a coach has achieved mastery and according to what criteria (Bachkirova, 2016a).

2.4.4. The client-centred theory as an integrative framework

The client-centred theory, anchored in a pragmatic epistemology, defines the coaching conversation as a reflexive dialogue between the client and the coach (Cox, 2013) and advocates joined meaning-making and decision-making during the coaching session

(Bachkirova & Lawton Smith, 2015). With roots in two adult learning theories: Knowles's andragogy (Knowles, Holton & Swanson, 2011) and Mezirow's transformative learning (1990), coaching anchors the learning process of the client in their intrinsic motivation and in four conditions: relevance, self-direction, control and use of own experience as a resource. To ensure that such conditions are met, the coach promotes a collaborative space, the coach-client relationship, within which the client's learning needs are identified and addressed jointly (Cox, 2015).

Drake (2011) and Lane (2016) have acknowledged that, in order for the coaches to foster a productive dialogue with their clients, they must discuss the choices they make with them. They further argue that evidence linking what the coach does to what the client experiences is needed in order to support such process. While they don't explicitly mention it, they open the possibility of considering the client-centred theory as an integrative framework, within which the feedback discussion supports a mutually reflexive dialogue, and is based on evidence provided by both expertise and evidence-based empirical research.

2.5. KNOWLEDGE GAPS ABOUT THE CLIENT

The theoretical framework which I described as client-centred integrative requires the client to be willing and able to become an agent of the coaching conversation and to provide meaningful information to the coach. To address these two themes, this section reviews research about client agency and observations of the executive coaching process.

2.5.1. The lack of research about client agency

The role of the client was first theorised by leveraging findings from psychotherapy research. Asay and Lambert's meta-analysis (1999) identified four factors that contribute to the variance of the overall outcome of psychotherapy: the client and extra-psychotherapeutic factors (40% of the variance), the relationship between the psychotherapist and the client (30%), the placebo effect or hope of the client (15%), and finally the theory and technique of the psychotherapist (15%). These factors are believed to be applicable to the coaching process (McKenna & Davis, 2009a): by 2015, several qualitative and quantitative studies had provided empirical evidence that the model is relevant to coaching (Rekalde, Landeta & Albizu, 2015, De Haan & Duckworth, 2013; Smith & Brummel, 2013; Sonesh, Coultas, Marlow, Lacerenza, Reyes et al., 2015b).

It is therefore surprising that so little is known about the role played by clients since they influence three of the four factors identified in psychotherapy research. Arguably, the current knowledge base includes a few clients' characteristics. Blackman, Moscardo and

Gray (2016), in their systematic review of coaching effectiveness studies, concluded that the client's motivation for change and self-efficacy impact the success of a coaching intervention. Furthermore, Grover and Furnham (2016), in a meta-analysis, added that their pre-existing knowledge about coaching, the realism of their expectations, and their level of self-reflection are likely to improve coaching outcomes. In addition, two separate studies (Bozer, Sarros & Santura, 2013; Bozer & Joo, 2015) indicated that the client's learning goal orientation and feedback receptivity are both moderators of the relationship between a coaching intervention and the client's improvement in self-reported job performance.

In light of such fragmented knowledge, coaches who wish to investigate how the client's agency might impact the effectiveness of the coaching process have few empirically validated resources at their disposal; indeed, no instrument exists to assess the 'coachability of the client' (Hogan, Chamorro-Premuzic & Kaiser, 2013). Grant et al. (2002) developed and validated the Self-reflection and Insight Scale which assesses a client's predisposition to purposeful, directed change. This is an intriguing concept to measure a moderating effect on coaching effectiveness since purposeful directed change is one of the key outcomes of coaching (Western, 2012). Grant defines self-reflection as the inspection and evaluation of one's thoughts, feelings and behaviours, and self-insight as the clarity of understanding of these thoughts, feelings and behaviours. In one study, the SRIS has been used as an independent variable to predict purposeful behavioural change after a professional development programme (Roberts & Stark, 2008).

2.5.2. Clients' observations during the coaching process

The development of knowledge is hindered by the clients' attitudes to feedback, which are surfaced in empirical investigations such as De Haan et al. (2010) and Myers (2014). Both studies reported that clients have difficulty pinpointing exactly what the coach has done to give them a sense that the interaction was going well. In both studies, they showed a lack of interest, and even sometimes discomfort to describe which coaching techniques and formal processes had taken place. Clients are more interested in talking about moments when they experienced satisfaction or dissatisfaction, and when some learning moments occurred for them. Because clients markedly hesitate before identifying specific interventions or behaviours of the coach leading up to or during a critical moment, De Haan and his team wondered whether clients hold back because they feel incompetent or because they really do not perceive anything at all. In sum, very few of the clients who describe positive critical incidents refer to anything the coach has done. In addition, the research team noted that clients seem less interested in making sense of what is happening in the building of the relationship than in describing what is happening for them. It feels as if they do not seem to recognise that their coach played a direct role in building the relationship or contributed to the outcome.

On the quantitative side, two recent studies indicate that clients may notice certain coaching behaviours more frequently than others.

- Between 2013 and 2015, the Coaching Research Institute (Tonomura, Raubien & Sato, 2018) measured the prevalence of a list of pre-defined coaching behaviours as observed by executives during their coaching process (*N*=215). Coaching behaviours related to empathy and bonding were more frequently observed than behaviours related to changing the client's perspective.
- De Haan, Grant, Burger and Eriksson (2016) surveyed 537 clients about their perceptions of a pre-defined set of clusters of coaching behaviours. They found that supportive behaviours were more often observed than informing, confronting and prescribing behaviours.

Arguably, the aforementioned studies included some clients who were novice with coaching, and the researchers do not report to what extent this would have influenced their attitude to feedback. However, two studies (Karboul, 2014; Jones, 2015) indicate that the two phenomena might be linked. Indeed, it appears that the client's knowledge about the coaching process increases as it unfolds. Jones noticed a shift in the clients' ability to recognise typical coaching behaviours between the first and the final session. For example, while a novice client will most likely expect and observe consulting behaviours, a more experienced client starts expecting and noticing facilitative behaviours, and in particular those related to promoting the quality of the working alliance.

The problem is that clients may need to be encouraged to give feedback in the early stages of the coaching intervention. Indeed, findings from the psychotherapy research indicate that client feedback is more important at the beginning of the treatment than during later stages: successful psychotherapists are more likely to ask for and receive early negative feedback about the quality of their work than median practitioners (Duncan et al., 2010). This allows them to surface and address potential problems at the start of the relationship, before the motivation of the client declines (Miller et al., 2015).

Arguably, encouraging clients to report their perspective might not only strengthen the working relationship but also help the coach predict whether the intervention will be successful. Indeed, it is the perception of the support received, not reports of the support that was provided, that predict the effectiveness of the helping intervention. This phenomenon has been reported empirically in mentoring (Eby, Allen, Hoffman, Baranik, Sauer et al., 2013), psychotherapy (Bachelor, 2013) and coaching (De Haan et al., 2013; Kauffeld & Gessnitzer, 2015).

On a final note, another unexplored territory is the influence of clients' demographic characteristics, such as gender, age or nationality on what they observe. Research is this domain is extremely scarce, and still largely inconclusive (Greif, 2016).

2.5.3. Asymmetric perceptions during coaching sessions

Despite the lack of knowledge about what clients observe, there clear are indications from empirical research that they observe differently from other stakeholders, be they their coach or external observers.

Reporting on post-coaching interviews, Myers (2014) concluded that coaches tend to pay much more attention to the underlying emotions driving the coaching process, while clients are more focused on explicating outcomes and insights. In addition, he observed that clients always assume that coaches know what they are doing and that, if something does not feel right, it is probably because of them. For example, there are instances when clients assume that the coach understands their concerns when the coach later admits not understanding them. In another instance, the client assumes that their unsettling experience during a coaching session was due to them rather than due to the coach. De Haan and Nilsson (2017), using an instrument measuring the deployment of coaching interventions, concluded that the self-perceptions of executive coaches about the prevalence of their non-directive and client-centred coaching behaviours are significantly higher than the clients' perceptions. Incidentally, such asymmetry has been reported during studies of supervisory coaching behaviours (Ellinger, Ellinger & Keller, 2003) in which supervisors do not perceive the frequency of their more directive behaviours in the same manner as their direct reports do.

The asymmetry is particularly visible concerning the coach-client relationship. In quantitative studies, in line with findings in psychotherapy research (Clemence, Hilsenroth, Ackerman, Strassle & Handler, 2005) and mentoring research (Larose, Bernier & Soucy, 2005), ratings of the coaching relationship by coaches and clients do not correlate (De Haan et al., 2013). Findings arising from two behavioural studies help understand the phenomenon. In the first study, it was found that interactional behaviours are the least likely to be perceived from coaches, yet the most acutely perceived by the client (Linder-Pelz & Lawley, 2016). The second study concluded that the perceptions of empathy between the coach and client differ (Kauffeld & Gessnitzer, 2015). In particular, while coaches perceive that their nurturing empathic behaviours are fundamental to the client's perception of overall empathy, their clients favour cognitive empathic interventions to form their perception of the overall empathy of the coach.

Even greater discrepancies are found between clients and external evaluators. In two studies, evaluators who observe coaching sessions rated the coaching sessions lower than clients and coaches did (Myers, 2014, Linder-Pelz & Lawley, 2015). Linder-Pelz and Lawley (2016) showed that the evaluators' and clients' descriptions are most compatible when describing the level of coach presence, acknowledging, listening, questioning and depths of probing. In contrast, they disagreed the most on when assessing the degree of confrontation, challenge, probe, direction and goal orientation given by the coach. Myers (2014) and Linder-Pelz and Lawley (2015) wondered if the level of criticism provided by the evaluator to the coach can be explained by the difference between their respective coaching stances. They both questioned whether these observers are overly influenced by their own coaching models, as they try to make sense of what is going on during the session. Finally, another study that compared critical moments of coaching from the perspective of clients, coaches and sponsors of coaching showed that while clients and coaches agree on most of the critical moments, sponsors select different moments (De Haan & Nieß, 2015).

2.5.4. Benefits of clients' knowledge

As surfaced in the introduction, not educating the client about the coaching process may, overtime, increase differences of perception between the client and the coach (De Haan & Nilsson, 2017). Indeed, in line with findings from feedback research (Jawahar, 2010), clients may need to be perceived as knowledgeable by the coach in order for them to accept and integrate their feedback. Arguably, Backus (2018) anecdotally reported that when the leadership coaches he interviewed actively solicited client feedback and reported impact on their learning, they focused on leadership competencies that their clients possessed and had already mastered themselves such as active listening, presence or direct communication.

In addition to preventing risks such as these, increasing the knowledge of the client about coaching positively impacts the success of the intervention. Indeed, coaching theoreticians predict that increasing the knowledge of the client during the coaching process will be beneficial to the outcome because it increases the strength of the relationship (Gyllensten & Palmer, 2007) and increases the likelihood that the choices made by the coach will be discussed with the client and tailored to their needs (Clutterbuck, 2010; Stokes, 2015).

In addition, transparency about the helping process has been positively linked to success of the intervention in psychotherapy (Miller et al., 2015), education (Mandouit, 2018), and sports coaching (Fletcher & Roberts, 2013). In the only empirical study of client feedback in coaching that I could find (Boston, 2013), the coaching pairs interviewed in her investigation were encouraged to reflect on the impact of increased transparency about the coaching tools and methods used by the coach. Both clients and coaches reported an increase of rapport building, a rebalancing of the coach-client relationship, and an improvement of their respective reflecting skills. Additionally, clients reported that this process gave them an opportunity to improve their delivery of feedback at work.

2.6. KNOWLEDGE GAPS ABOUT EXECUTIVE COACHING BEHAVIOURS

Evidence about effective executive coaching competencies is lacking: despite the vast number of studies, knowledge about executive coaching behaviours is both fragmented and incomplete. This section will review the current body of knowledge and surface its main gaps in relation to client behavioural feedback.

2.6.1. Studies of the coach's perspective

This group of studies suffers from a lack of integration. Blumberg (2014) identified over 250 models published in English by accrediting bodies or other institutions of learning. He remarked that an integration of these models is problematic because they describe heterogeneous units of analysis. In addition, with these models, dimensions such as behaviours, competencies, capabilities, events, processes and outcomes are not organised around taxonomic principles which limits their potential for generalisation (Fleishman, Mumford, Zaccaro, Levin, Korotkin et al., 1991). Hagen and Peterson (2014), in their review of existing coaching scales, concluded that knowledge is particularly limited in executive coaching. They also noted that current scales not only do not possess strong theoretical underpinnings, but that when new scales are developed, they rely on existing scales, thus perpetuating their weak theoretical foundations rather than addressing their shortfalls.

All coaching competency models developed by professional associations, through a consensus-by-expert approach, belong to this category. Examples include the Association for Coaching Competency Framework (2012), the EC Vision European Competence Framework of Supervision and Coaching (2015), the EMCC Competence Framework (2015), the ICF Core Competencies (2017) or the Worldwide Association of Business Coaches Business Coaching Competencies (2007).

Several other models developed by researchers rest on sounder methodological foundations. The first group includes descriptive studies of behaviours that are based on a pre-defined coaching model. For example, Greif (2010) produced a manual of coaching behaviours building on eight pre-determined success factors. Linder-Pelz and Lawley (2015, 2016) used clean language to research, compare and contrast behavioural manifestations of meta-coaching skills as observed by assessors and clients of coaches in training, highlighting key differences. While the second study brings more breadth to the investigation by including client data, neither study convincingly justifies why they have selected a specific coaching model as the foundation of their investigation.

The second group includes studies that rigorously surveyed practitioners about their skills, competencies and area of knowledge by using a variety of methods (Bono et al., 2009; Wang, 2013; Bartlett II et al., 2014; Lai & McDowall, 2014; Maltbia et al., 2014; DiGirolamo et al., 2016; Vandaveer, Lowman, Pearlman & Brannick, 2016). For example, DiGirolamo (p. 13) reported the five most frequently used skills as “listening”, “coaching”, “communication”, “challenging” and “giving and receiving feedback” and the most frequently reported knowledge areas as “emotional intelligence”, “ethics”, “change management”, “positive psychology” and “human and organisational dynamics”. Vandaveer, who conducted one of the most recent investigations concluded that this field of research may have reached saturation.

The third group concerns scales using methods that strengthen construct validity empirically. Newsom and Dent (2011, p. 1) conducted a factor analysis of work behaviours recalled by executive coaches and identified two factors related to the coaching session: “goal setting and attainment” and “relationship activities”. Maxwell (2017, p. 121), using a Delphi approach, identified competencies essential to effective executive coaching based on the rating of a panel of experts. He identified three categories that are related to the behaviours and actions of the coach during the coaching process: “coaching knowledge/skills”, “psychology knowledge”, “business and leadership knowledge” and “personal attributes”. Bachkirova, Sibley and Myers (2015, p. 18), with a constructivist study of the coach’s perspective, produced a Q-set of 80 micro-processes of coaching, within which a number of coaching behaviours surface. The Q-analysis results in one factor, called the “collaborative explorer”. Stein’s (2009) discourse analysis of coaching sessions distinguished 16 conversational identities of the coach, based on language acts such as agenda facilitator, narrative listener, reflector or challenger.

2.6.2. Studies of the client’s perspective

A few studies rely on the client’s perspective to propose coaching behavioural dimensions or items. The strength of these studies is that they possess a clear client-centred theoretical foundation. As a result, they uncover common and credible behavioural dimensions for the purpose of supporting a client feedback instrument, such as empathic behaviours, assessment of strengths and developmental needs, challenge of assumptions, goal setting, giving the lead to the client, or behaving in a professional manner. However, these studies present common limitations. On the one hand, because they did not use taxonomic principles, they have failed to provide detailed information about coaching behaviours in relation to the identified dimensions. On the other hand, they did not consistently report behaviours that are specific to executive coaching and have been regularly surfaced in the study of the executive coach's perspective.

Blackman (2006, p. 101) produced the oldest, yet by far the most comprehensive exploratory study of the effectiveness of executive coaching from the perspective of clients by surveying over 100 industry professionals after they had been coached. One of the sections describes the features of the coach as a factor of success, including such dimensions as "maintains confidentiality", "communicates clearly", "is honest", "is organised" and "displays self-confidence".

Passmore (2010, p. 48), using a grounded theory methodology, identified coaching behavioural dimensions such as "agreeing on confidentiality rules", "holding emotions", "providing both challenge and support", "offering mechanisms for problem solving", "setting take-away tasks", "being non-directive", "using self as a tool", "helping develop alternative perspectives", "questioning", "listening", "reflecting back", "staying focused" and "demonstrating empathy".

De Haan et al. (2010, p. 614), despite the reluctance of their participants, were able to uncover a few critical events that directly relate to coaching behaviours. Unhelpful behaviours include "not being supportive", "leaving me to my own devices", "breaking confidentiality", "being unsure". Helpful behaviours include "offering tools/experience", "pertinent or insightful questions", "sustained listening", "giving personal feedback", "advice", "suspension of judgment", "metaphor", "direct confrontation / challenge", "tangible support", "giving space / freedom".

Gray, Ekinci and Goregaokar (2011, p. 415), using a client survey approach, developed a scale for the purpose of selecting an executive coach. Three factors are related to what the coach does during a coaching session: "ability to develop critical thinking and action", "ability to develop core management skills and directions" and "ability to forge the coaching partnership".

2.6.3. Relationships between coaching behaviours and client outcomes

While little research has studied the links between coaching behaviours and outcomes (Lane, 2016), the evidence-based theory (Grant, 2016) provides the researcher with a number of empirically validated scales. This section reviews existing summative scales as potential measures of the effectiveness of coaching behaviours, and presents the limited findings linking coaching behaviours and clients' outcomes.

2.6.3.1. Summative evaluations of coaching

We have seen in the previous section that in qualitative investigations, clients are more willing to describe the benefits of coaching than to identify which coaching behaviours led to these benefits. This willingness has been leveraged, leading to a thriving strand of summative coaching research (Grant, 2016). Based on these studies, several meta-analyses indicate that coaching is overall effective (Theeboom et al., 2014; Sonesh, Coultas, Lacerenza, Marlow, Benishek et al., 2015a; Jones, Woods & Guillaume, 2016). Most of the scales used in summative research measure the outcome of coaching interventions based on a model adapted from the evaluation of workplace training interventions (Kirkpatrick, 1977; MacKie, 2007; Ely, Boyce, Nelson, Zaccaro, Hernez-Broome et al., 2010). The model includes four categories of measures or levels: reaction or overall satisfaction with the coaching process, learning and cognitive change, behavioural change and organisational change. While attempts have been made to develop alternative models and measures that take into account the complexity and unpredictability of current work contexts in relation to executives' development (King & Nesbit, 2015; Mulvie, 2015), the Kirkpatrick model continues to be widely used (Grant, 2016).

2.6.3.2. Measuring reaction

The reaction level is often used by sponsors to measure the effectiveness of an executive coaching intervention (Mulvie, 2015). However, the concept of satisfaction has been challenged as a valid measure of the effectiveness of coaching behaviours because the process involves, sometimes, uncomfortable moments for the client which may be necessary for changing their frame of reference and help them generate new learnings (King & Nesbit, 2015).

2.6.3.3. Measuring cognitive change

At the second level, measures of cognitive change have been developed in relation to the Self-determination Theory (Deci & Ryan, 1985) which links one's motivation to learn with changes in pre-conditions that are unique to each individual and are related to their cultural and psychological characteristics. Metaphors used by clients to describe the benefits of coaching (De Haan et al., 2010, p. 615), such as "agency", "personal realisation" and "ways of being", indicate that they consider this second level as central to the process of coaching. Multiple scales have been used to measure cognitive change and pre-disposition to learning (Grover & Furnham, 2016). Examples of measures include the Self-reflection and Insight Scale (Grant et al., 2002), self-efficacy (Baron & Morin, 2009), self-compassion (Bachkirova, Arthur & Reading, 2015), or goal directed self-regulation (Bozer et al., 2013). Meta-analyses show that executive coaching is causally related to change in these cognitive change measures (Theeboom et al., 2014; Sonesh et al., 2015a; Jones et al., 2016; Grant, 2016; Greif, 2016) and report effect for the following: self-efficacy, stress levels, the cognitive reframing of work experience, goal-directed self-regulation, anxiety, emotional intelligence and solution-focused thinking. The Serendipity Quotient (SQ) (McCay-Peet & Toms, 2011) is a retrospective measure of cognitive change, an important outcome of coaching which is well suited to cross-sectional methods (Grover & Furnham, 2016). It assesses the generation of new insights by focusing on the occurrence of 'aha' moments in coaching, during which serendipitous connections are made in the brain through an active dialogue with the coach, resulting in novel ideas or perspectives (Kets De Vries, 2013). Arguably, a retrospective measure of cognitive change is more accurate than a pre-post measure of the same cognitive scale to measure cognitive change (Peterson, 1993). Indeed, successful coaching interventions may lead clients to experience transformational learning or gamma change which will shift the conceptualisation of the cognitive scale between the time of the first and second measure (Ely et al., 2010). While the SQ has been mostly used to measure learning in other disciplines than coaching (McCay-Peet & Toms, 2011), it has also been found to be correlated with the achievement of goals in executive coaching (c.f.: Sonesh et al., 2015b). The operational measures for the SQ are presented in Table 2.2 below, showing a high reliability in previous studies.

Table 2.2: Operational measures for the SQ

Coaching outcome scale	No of items in the scale	Measure	Example of item	Reliability (Cronbach's Alpha reported in the literature)
Serendipity Quotient	5	5-point Likert scale: 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree)	I obtained unexpected insights	0.80 (McCay-Peet & Toms, 2011) 0.86 (Sonesh et al., 2015b)

2.6.3.4. Measuring behavioural change

The third level, behavioural change, is achieved through the setting and achievement of individual goals within conditions that maximise the motivation of the executive (Clutterbuck & Spence, 2016), based on the findings of the behaviourist goal-setting theory (Locke & Latham, 2002), and the cognitive-behavioural self-determination theory (Deci & Ryan, 1985). Behaviour change is typically measured by self-administered or multisource goal attainment measures (Grant, 2016). The consensus in evidence-based research is to assess behaviour change by linking it to a goal set at the start or during the coaching process and measured retrospectively at the end of a coaching intervention (Ely et al., 2010; Theeboom et al., 2014; Jones et al., 2016). One meta-analysis reports a small effect size of coaching on task performance, a construct related to behaviour change (Sonesh et al., 2015a). However, two other meta-analyses propose more cautious conclusions (Greif, 2016; Grover & Furnham, 2016) because of the methodological limitations of some of the studies they contain. On the one hand, most studies tend to be proximal which indicates that reported effect size needs may or may not have been sustained in the longer term. On the other end, most studies opt for a self-evaluation of goal-attainment, which is difficult to interpret. Indeed, the accuracy of self-evaluations is moderated by many factors including personality traits and the conditions in which they are conducted (Mabe & West, 1982). For example, self-ratings are usually more lenient than external ratings (Yu & Murphy, 1993). Additionally, executive coaching has been shown to positively impact self-efficacy (Baron & Morin, 2009) which may in turn inflate self-scores on goal attainment (Nieminen, Smerek, Kotrba & Denison, 2013). To counter these biases, the best practice is to measure not just proximal but also distal behavioural outcomes and to invite co-workers to rate the level of achievement of goals to counterbalance self-assessments (Ely et al., 2010).

2.6.3.5. Measuring organisational change

The fourth level, organisational change, has been critiqued as impractical to measure the coach's effectiveness because it is very problematic to isolate the role of the coach from other contextual elements (Levenson, 2009; Theeboom et al., 2014; Grant, 2014b).

2.6.3.6. The coach-client relationship

In addition to these four levels, a number of researchers consider that the strength of the coach-client relationship is both a factor and an outcome of the coaching intervention (De Haan & Gannon, 2016). Ely et al. (2010), instead of considering the coach-client relationship as a separate level, have placed it in the reaction level in substitution of the satisfaction scale. Myers (2016) justified the claim on the basis that in psychotherapy, it consistently predicts success, and could, as a result, be considered as an early measure of it. To assess the strength of the coach-client relationship, the Working Alliance Inventory has been developed and validated in psychotherapy research and adapted to coaching (Corbière et al., 2006). The working alliance has been empirically linked to coaching effectiveness in multiple quantitative studies (Grover & Furnham, 2016). The clients' short version of the Working Alliance Inventory (WAI) (Corbières, Bisson, Lauzon & Ricard, 2006) assesses the strength of the coach-client working alliance from the perspective of the client and has been used in multiple studies (De Haan & Gannon, 2016) in which it has shown high reliability, as shown in Table 2.3 below.

Table 2.3: Operational measures for the WAI

Coaching outcome scale	No of items in the scale	Measure	Example of item	Reliability (Cronbach's Alpha reported in the literature)
Working Alliance Inventory – Client version	12	5-point Likert scale: 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree)	My coach and I both felt confident about the usefulness of our coaching activities	0.88 (Corbière et al., 2006) 0.77 (Baron & Morin, 2009) 0.72 (Gessnitzer & Kauffeld, 2015) 0.92 (Sonesh et al., 2015b)

2.6.3.7. Mediation and moderation effects

The evidence-based literature has investigated mediation effects of the coach-client working alliance on the relationship between a coaching intervention and the generation of new insights (MacKie, 2007; Ely et al., 2010; Lawrence & Whyte, 2014; De Haan & Gannon, 2016). Likewise, empirical research in training has studied the mediation effects of the generation of new insights on the relationship between a learning intervention and goal attainment (Kolb, 1984; Baldwin & Ford, 1988).

While results of these studies are still inconsistent, investigations of the creativity process indicate that collaboration, a concept related to the working alliance, enhances insight (Sternberg & Lubart, 1995). In addition, there is empirical evidence that the strength of the coach-client working alliance mediates the impact of coaching tools and techniques on client learning outcomes (Baron & Morin, 2009; O'Broin & Palmer, 2010; De Haan et al., 2013). On the other end, while strong correlations between the WAI and goal attainment ($r>.50$) are observed in psychotherapy (McKenna & Davis, 2009a), they have been replicated only in one study in coaching (De Haan et al., 2016). In addition, two other studies (Sonesh et al., 2015b; Kauffeld & Gessnitzer, 2015) did not find a significant correlation between the WAI and the goal attainment measure. Likewise, the study of the relationships between cognitive change and behaviour change in coaching settings is still inconclusive for lack of a sufficient number of studies (Grover & Furnham, 2016).

The Self Reflection and Insight Scale (SRIS) measured before the start of the coaching process was selected as a scale to assess the client's preparedness for coaching (Section 2.5.1). Table 2.4 below presents the operational measures of the scale, showing high reliability.

Table 2.4: Operational measures for the SRIS

Sub-scales of the SRIS	No of items in the scale	Measure	Example of item	Reliability (Cronbach's Alpha reported in the literature)
Engagement in and need for Self-reflection	12	6-point Likert scale (1= strongly disagree to 6=strongly agree)	I frequently take time to reflect on my thoughts	0.91 (Grant et al., 2002) Engagement: 0.83 and Need: 0.87 (Roberts & Stark, 2008)
Self-insight	8	6-point Likert scale (1= strongly disagree to 6=strongly agree)	I am usually aware of my thoughts	0.87 (Grant et al., 2002) 0.85 (Roberts & Stark, 2008) 0.76 (Grant, 2014a) 0.84 (Bozer et al., 2014) 0.80 (Bozer et al., 2015)

2.6.3.8. Summative evaluations of coaching behaviours

A review of the literature (Blackman et al., 2016, p. 471) concluded that a few coaching behavioural dimensions are demonstratively effective. They include "displaying integrity through trustworthiness and maintenance of confidentiality", "empathy and a non-judgemental stance", "communication skills such as the management of expectations and feedback" and "credibility in relation the knowledge and experience of the coach". Grover and Furnham (2016) are more circumspect: their meta-analysis did not find a significant relationship between the coach's tools and techniques and coaching effectiveness.

A possible explanation for these inconclusive results, which Grover and Furnham (2016) considered, is that studies are too few and too discrepant to offer a suitable base for a meta-analytic approach. In contrast, psychotherapy research, which relies of a rich body of empirical knowledge linking psychotherapists' behaviours with client outcomes has uncovered significant positive effects size for behaviours which are common between psychotherapy and coaching (Norcross, 2010; Levitt, Pomerville & Surace, 2016, p. 131). These include "empathy", "alliance building", "identification and understanding of personal patterns", "professional structure provided during the session", "clear discussion of the respective roles and constant invitation to the client to take the lead". In fact, most of these dimensions appear in clients' investigations reviewed in Section 2.5.2.

Findings are more robust concerning the links between coaching behaviours and the strength of the coach-client relationship (Bartlett II et al., 2014). As a result, researchers conclude that the coaching relationship is the most important factor that the coach can influence (Ianiro, Schermuly & Kauffeld, 2013; Kauffeld & Gessnitzer, 2015, De Haan &

Gannon, 2016). However, in relation to the effectiveness of coaching, only coaching behaviours that impact the coaching relationship as perceived by the client, are important to consider, since it is only the client's perception that predicts the overall coaching outcome (O'Broin & Palmer, 2010; De Haan et al., 2013; De Haan et al., 2016).

Empirical research about such links started with a cross-sectional study conducted by Baron and Morin (2009, p. 99), in which some of the coach's actions, including "ability to establish a development plan", "track learning progress", "use a structured approach", "help make connections" and "identify obstacles" were significant to predict the variance of the working alliance for both clients and coaches. More recently, a within-subject study (Ianiro & Kauffeld, 2014) that combined measures of the working alliance with behavioural observations at different stages of the coaching process supported a causal link between certain coaching behaviours and the strength of the working alliance from the perspective of the client. It concludes that the coach's positive affect and calmness before a session is positively correlated to a dominant-friendly behaviour. In turn, the dominant-friendly behaviour is positively correlated to the perception of the strength of the working alliance of the client when measured after the first and after the last coaching sessions. Finally, a meta-analysis showed that the degree of facilitative behaviour of the coach positively affects the client's efficacy and trust in the coach (Grant, 2016).

2.7. CONCLUSION

The research aim was to develop an instrument to support the provision of formative client feedback to executive coaches. The review of the feedback literature supported an operational definition of client feedback that is behavioural and happens during a coaching session. Building on a critical review of four coaching theories, I derived a pragmatic coaching theoretical framework that I described as client-centred integrative to support the development of such an instrument. The framework recognises the client as a credible source of behavioural feedback for the executive coach during the coaching session, it is expertise and evidence-based and designed to enrich the self-reflective process of the executive coach.

The review of the literature suggests that current executive coaching scales are not adequate to support the provision of formative client feedback because they have not included clients as sources of knowledge. Therefore, to obtain a suitable scale, a preliminary exploratory analysis of behavioural items generated by clients is needed. In addition, the literature review surfaced that the relationships between executive coaching behaviours and client outcomes have not been studied sufficiently. However, it allowed to develop a coaching effectiveness model summarised in Figure 2.2 below, supporting a set of hypotheses to investigate these relationships in the context of the study.

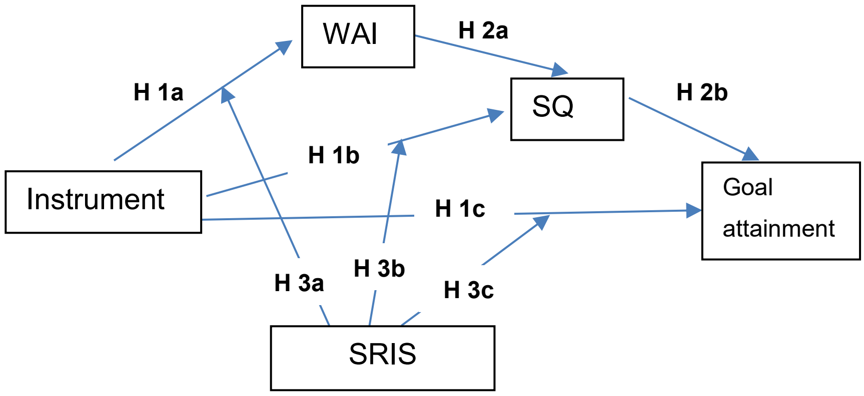

Figure 2.2: Coaching effectiveness model

- First set of hypotheses: the instrument is positively associated to three outcome measures: the Working Alliance Inventory (hypothesis 1a), the Serendipity Quotient (hypothesis 1b) and the goal attainment measure (hypothesis 1c)
- Second set of hypotheses: the Working Alliance Inventory mediates the relationship between the instrument and the Serendipity Quotient (hypothesis 2a) and the Serendipity Quotient mediates the relationship between the Working Alliance Inventory and the goal attainment measure (hypothesis 2b)
- Third set of hypotheses: the Self-reflection and Insight Scale moderates the relationship between the instrument and each coaching outcome measure (hypotheses 3a, 3b and 3c)

CHAPTER 3
METHODOLOGY

3.1. INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the methodology selected to build the feedback instrument. It starts with the paradigm and theoretical lens of the research. Thereafter, I justify the choice of a mixed-methods approach to produce knowledge. A description of the sampling and data collection methods follows, leading to the presentation of the sample and of the methods used to analyse and interpret the data. Finally, I discuss research ethics and steps taken to maximise the quality of the research.

3.2. PARADIGM

My intention as a researcher was to respond to a practice problem – the lack of formative client feedback for executive coaches – which is typically a pragmatist endeavour (Fishman, 1999). Feedback is itself a pragmatic process since it aims at producing interactive knowledge based on shared information (Bem, 2013). In addition, feedback rests on the assessment that the foundations of knowledge are linguistic and states that a conversation is the context in which knowledge is to be produced and mutually understood (Rorty, Putnam, Conant & Helfrich, 2004).

The coaching theoretical framework that I described as client-centred integrative is inherently pragmatic (Cox, 2013). While it builds on the expertise (Kilburg, 2016) and evidence-based theories (Grant, 2016), which are positivist, this does not contradict the principles of pragmatism as laid out by its founders. Indeed, Diggins (1994), who published a history of pragmatism, noted that Dewey and Peirce, considered that a dialogue represents more than the encounter of the partners' subjectivity. While they believed that scientific knowledge had limitations, they advocated that it be included in the dialogue. In addition, Diggins remarked that more recent pragmatist philosophers such as Rorty (2004), while they are more sceptical about the relevance of scientific evidence, believe that a foundation is necessary, beyond the partners' subjectivity, to ensure that the dialogue is beneficial for those who engage in it. As Fishman (1999, p. 8) summarised, pragmatist researchers admit that they don't know whether a truth is out there or not. As a result, positivist methods may be used to produce knowledge, as long as this is done in service of a *"democratically derived program goal of a particular, historically situated group, with no objective to uncover general laws".* Fishman added that science, instead of establishing the truth, offers a platform to compare and contrast evidence in order to debate interpretations of a phenomenon.

Overall, the choice of a pragmatic epistemology supports the definition of the instrument as a discussion device between the client and the executive coach to achieve a common goal: the success of the coaching intervention. To support such discussion, the pragmatic epistemology promotes the sharing of evidence, without stating that it needs to be "true" in absolute terms, as long as it is agreed upon between the parties involved in the discussion. Arguably, this indicates that the instrument does not need to represent a standardised description of the coach's performance as long as it based on shared evidence to support the discussion.

3.3. THEORETICAL LENS

As presented in the literature review chapter (Section 2.3.), the mixed-methods approach to feedback anchored in the Cognitive Affective Personal System Theory (Mischel & Shoda, 1995) operationalised the process as behavioural and situational. The theoretical framework which I described as client-centred integrative (Section 2.4.) considers clients as agents of the coaching process and as equal partners in the coaching dialogue, thereby able and willing to deliver behavioural feedback to their coach (Cox, 2013). The expertise theory provides methods to define overt behaviours manifesting the coach's competencies (Kilburg, 2016). The evidence-based theory provides summative scales that measure relationships between coaching behaviours and client outcomes (Grant & Cavanagh, 2007). Finally, the cognitive-developmental theory framework defines client feedback as input to the coach's self-reflexive process for the purpose of improving performance (Bachkirova, 2016a).

3.4. OVERALL DESIGN OF THE RESEARCH

The literature review identified that current scales of executive coaching behaviours were not suitable to support the development of a client feedback instrument, most notably because they do not include the client perspective and because they have not been empirically related to client outcomes. When a preliminary exploration is needed in order to develop additional knowledge about the variable prior to studying it quantitatively, a sequential exploratory design is recommended (Twycross, 2004; Teddlie, 2008). In the sequential exploratory design, a group of attributes, or item pool, is produced through a qualitative analysis. It is followed by an exploratory quantitative analysis to construct, reduce and further validate the instrument resulting from the item pool. Figure 3.1 below summarises how the sequential exploratory design was implemented in the context of the development of the behavioural client feedback instrument. Each phase is subsequently detailed.

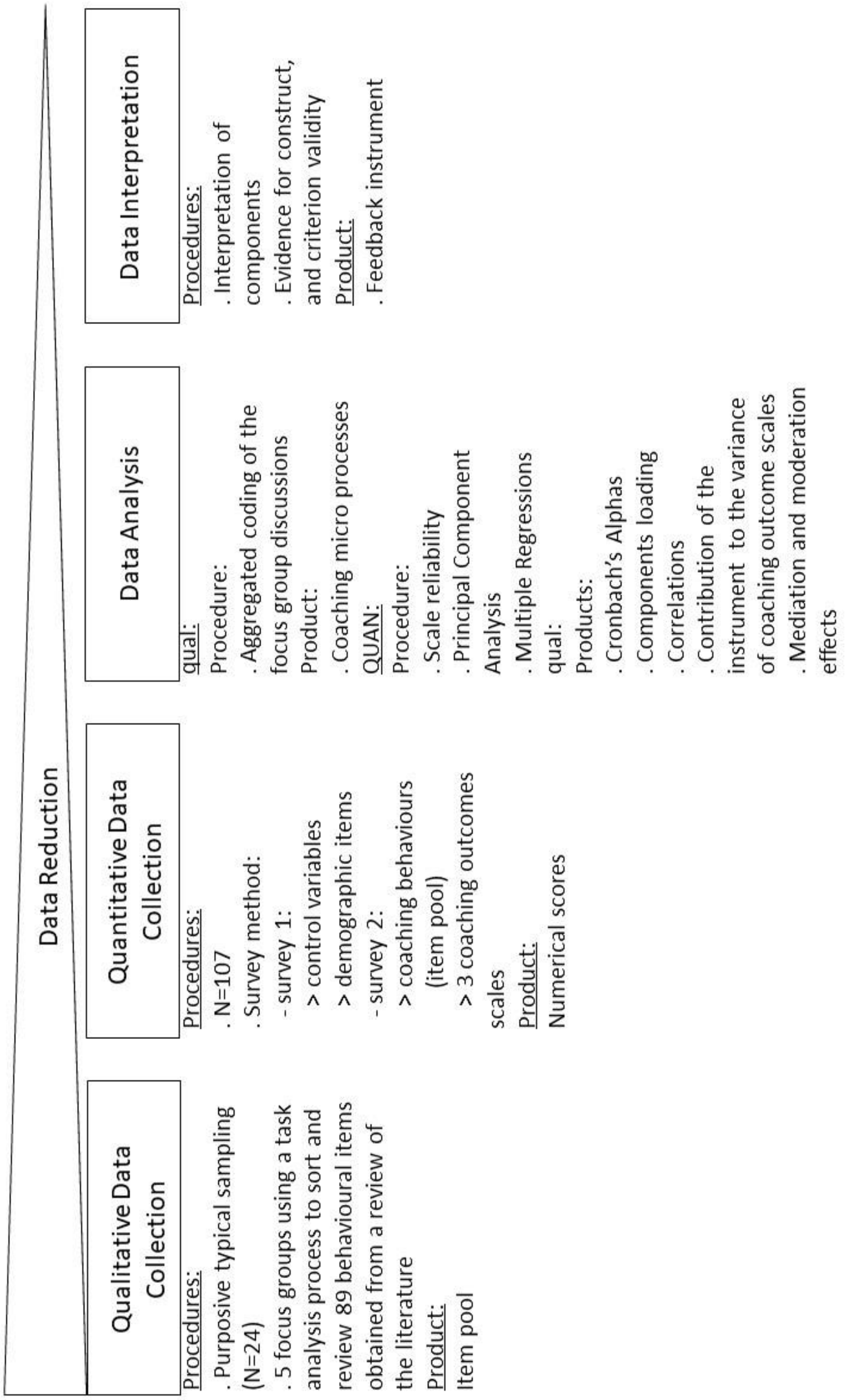

Figure 3.1: Diagram of the research

3.5. QUALITATIVE DATA COLLECTION

Since the literature review chapter surfaced that clients had not been consulted in the development of existing coaching scales, the purpose of the qualitative data collection was to address the resulting knowledge gaps by asking clients to develop an item pool. The method chosen for such purpose was task analysis, a systematic approach that aims to list all possible behavioural interactions between an individual and a system (Van Cott & Paramore, 1988). Task analysis is a collaborative process well aligned with the epistemology of the research since it is anchored in the American pragmatist philosophy of scientific management (Diggins, 1994). This section describes the task analysis process that was implemented in the context of the research.

3.5.1. The choice of focus groups

Focus groups are routinely used for the purpose of conducting task evaluations (Cadle, 2012). Indeed, group interviews have the advantage of efficiency and place the burden of integration on the participants rather on the job analyst, thus providing a more accurate representation of the perspective of the interviewees (Brannick, Levine & Morgeson, 2007). In addition, focus groups are well suited to discuss a client experience such as an executive coaching process, as they allow the researcher to gather qualitative data from a group of individuals who have experienced a particular concrete situation (Merton & Kendall, 1946). Finally, focus groups are based on dialogue and consensus, a typical feature of pragmatic research (Fishman, 1999). Their facilitation is primarily used to develop group cohesiveness as it is positively related to group productivity (Stewart, 2007). In sum, focus groups are well suited to explore clients' opinions and in particular to uncover differences with the opinions of the providers of the products or services that they use (Morgan, 1998).

3.5.2. Sampling methods

The target population in the qualitative strand consisted in executives who had experienced at least three executive coaching sessions in English in the last two years. There is no conclusive research linking the number of sessions to the coaching outcome or linking the duration elapsed between an event and its recollection, to the characteristics of the recollection. As a result, I made this decision based on my own experience and conversations with other researchers.

For non-probability sampling, decisions on the sample size are driven by the research question, and by the methods suitable to achieve the research objective (Patton, 1990). Since it is recommended to undertake several focus groups until no new information is produced and saturation is reached (Krueger, 2015), the number of focus groups needed to answer the research question was difficult to predict. In addition, the recommended size for a focus group varies widely from three to 12 participants (Morgan, 1998), and it is even possible to conduct focus groups with one person at a time by using a nominal group technique (Stewart, 2007). In the end, this wide range of possibilities was beneficial to the research: it gave me the flexibility to invite as many focus groups as needed until saturation was reached, while accommodating no-shows and requests to change dates, which happen often when executives participate in research due to their unpredictable schedules (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2009). In the research proposal, based on discussions with other researchers, I had hypothesised that I would need at least two focus groups and set a goal to enrol ten to 12 participants in each focus group. In the end, I convened five focus groups which included a total of 24 participants.

Physical access to the executives was obtained through their former coaches, as a result of a cluster sampling approach (Creswell, 2006). There is no sampling frame for the population of executive coaches and therefore probability sampling was excluded. The method chosen to select coaches was purposive typical which is well suited to a pragmatic stance since it is defined in relation to the research need and is not intended to be definitive (Saunders et al., 2009). The target sample consisted in my LinkedIn network (1500 executives and executive coaches based in 50 countries) augmented with the membership of two chapters of the International Coaches Federation: the UK Chapter (1 500 members, largely based in the UK) and the Research Panel, which is an international chapter (4 500 members, based all over the world). Both ICF chapters include coaches who do not work with executives. However, the latest ICF Global Coaching Study (IFC & PwC, 2016) indicates that 53% of the ICF members coach managers in organisations, which was likely to add 3 000 coaches to my LinkedIn network. Throughout the research, the target sample grew through a snowballing method, since some of the executive coaches helped me identify others who might be interested in disseminating the research advertisement to their former clients.

Once executives had contacted me, received the participant’s information sheet and expressed interest in participating in the research, another layer of screening took place through interviews, by phone or by-email, with each prospective participant (Stewart, 2007). These interviews were designed to confirm that the prospective participants had experienced at least one important coaching outcome, that they remembered and were interested to discuss the behaviours of their coach, and that they were comfortable sharing such experience in a group. These interviews also explored their perspectives about and experience of giving feedback to their coach, so as to assess their potential to be strong contributors to the focus groups. Once mutual agreement had been reached that their contribution would match the purpose of the focus group, they signed the consent form, thus formally enrolling in the research. The recruitment process is illustrated in Figure 3.2 below. The research advertisement, participant information sheet and consent form used for the qualitative stand are presented respectively in Appendices I, II and III.

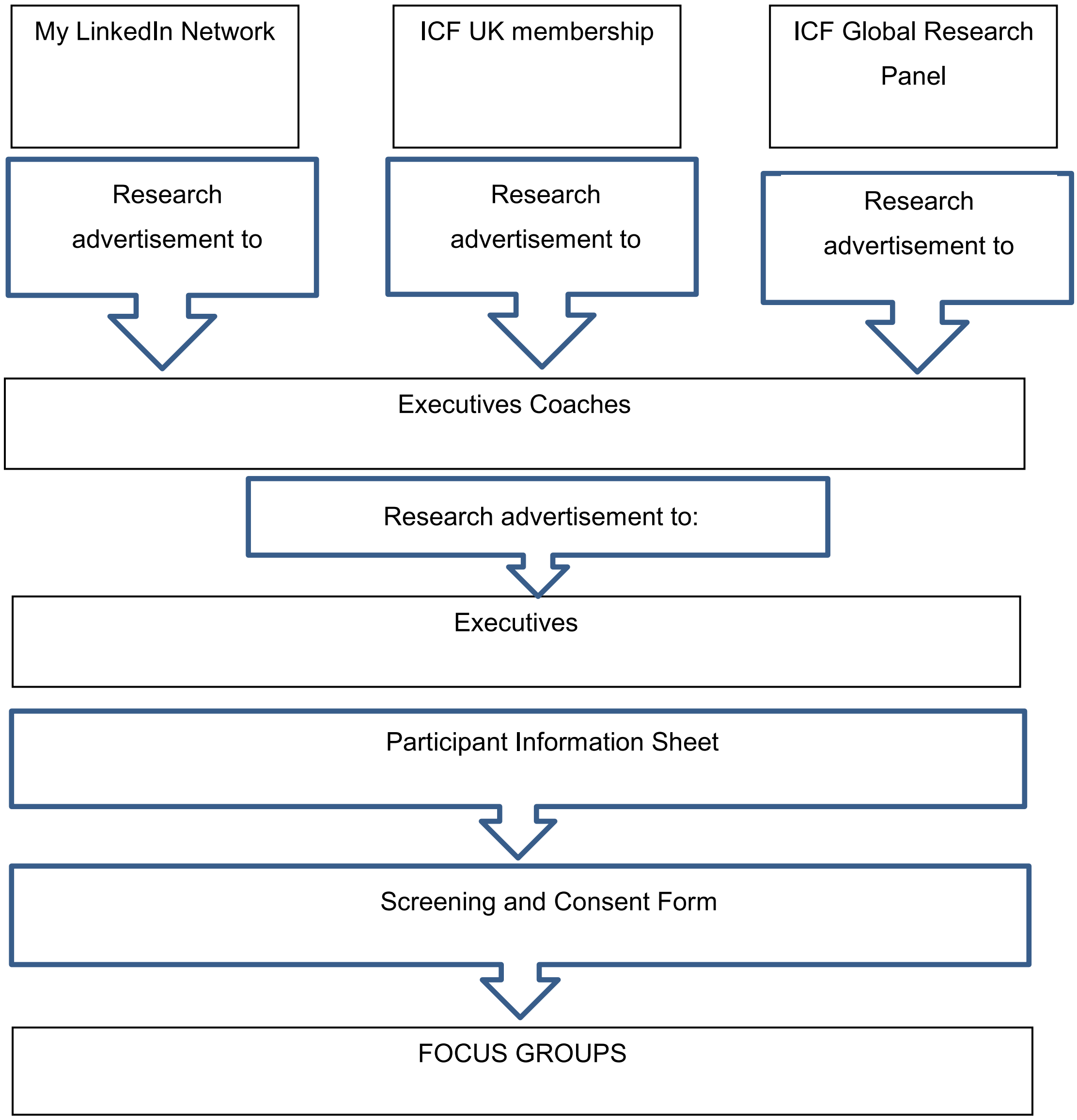

Figure 3.2: Flowchart of the participants' recruitment process for the qualitative strand

3.5.3. Rollout of the focus groups

Figure 3.3 below presents the rollout of the focus groups which took place between March and May 2017. The 24 participants of the focus groups were part of a batch of 32 executives who had initially signed the consent form. Sixteen executives had received coaching while based in various European, Middle-Eastern and Asia-Oceanian countries and were scheduled to attend online focus groups. In addition, two teams of executives based in the New York region (nine executives in the first team and seven executives in the second team) who had received coaching as part of a company-sponsored, leadership development initiative, were scheduled to attend a face-to-face focus group at their place of work.

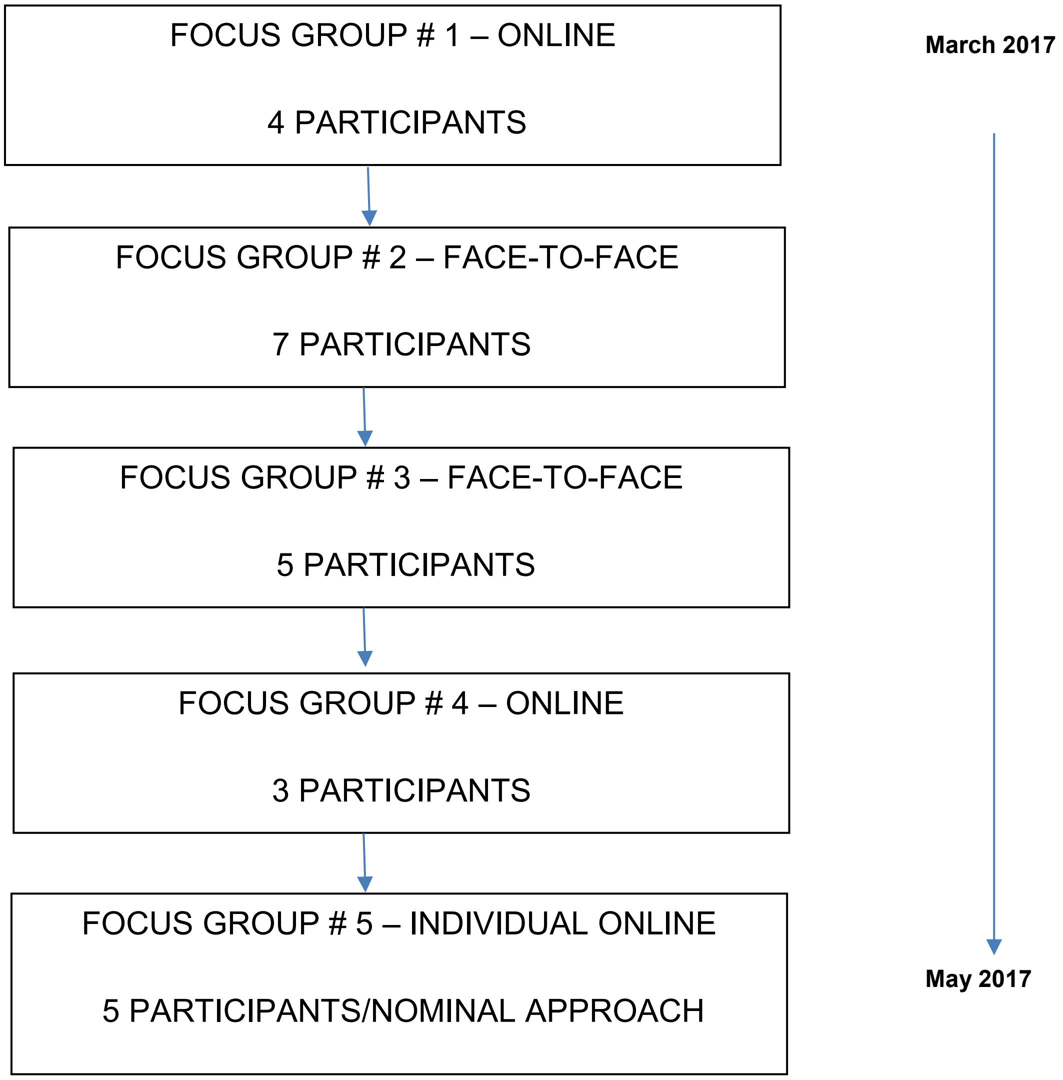

Figure 3.3: Rollout of the focus groups

For practical reasons and based on the recommendation of peer researchers, a time limit of two hours was set for each focus group. This limitation made it impossible for the first three focus groups to complete the entire task in one go due to the large number of behaviours to review. Instead, they worked sequentially as recommended by practitioners when such issues arise (Stewart, 2007). Four hours were required to rank the compilation according to the first criteria (first and second focus group). Subsequently, two hours (third focus group) were required to rank the resulting pool of behaviours based on the second criteria. At this stage, there were still some behaviours for which consensus had not been reached. As a result, four additional hours (fourth and fifth focus groups) were needed to review the work of the first two focus groups and reach data saturation.

The 16 prospective online participants were invited to choose between two dates for the first focus group. The date that obtained the most votes was then selected. The rest of the participants were put on a waiting list. Subsequently the two face-to-face focus groups took place. Since saturation had still not been reached at this stage, wait-listed participants for the next online focus groups were asked to vote between two dates again and the date obtaining the most votes was chosen for the fourth focus group. The rest of the participants were put on a waiting list. After the fourth focus group had taken place, the construction of the item pool was still in progress and a fifth focus group was launched. However, it proved impossible to secure a common date for the fifth focus group, due to schedule conflicts. Using the nominal approach (Stewart, 2007), five individual interviews were organised to continue working with the item pool until data saturation was reached (Krueger, 2015).

3.5.4. Characteristics of the sample

Table 3.1 above describes the sample of executives who participated in the five focus groups. Thirteen out of 24 participants were females. Ten participants were Europeans, seven North American, two South American and two Australasians. While most corporate functions were represented in the sample, the most prevalent was Human Resources, with five participants.

Table 3.1: Description of the focus group participants

Participant code (by order of enrolment)	**Gender**	**Nationality**	**Job position held during coaching**	**Job position held at the time of the focus group**	**Place of work when coached**	**Focus group #**
P01	F	British	HR Director	Same	U.K.	1
P02	F	Chilean	HR Director	Academic	Chile	1
P03	M	Mexican	Entrepreneur	In transition	Spain	1
P04	F	French	V.P. HR	In transition	Singapore	1
P05	F	Australian	Civil Servant	Same	Australia	4
P06	M	British	Partner, Tax	Same	Singapore	4
P07	F	Russian	Manager, Retail	HR Consultant	Russia	4
P08	M	British	C.O.O.	In transition	U.K.	5
P09	F	American	C.F.O.	Same	U.S.A.	2
P10	M	American	V.P. Marketing	Same	U.S.A.	2
P11	M	Spanish	V.P. International	Same	U.S.A.	2
P12	F	Indian	V.P. R&D	Same	U.S.A.	2
P13	F	Venezuelan	V.P. HR	Same	U.S.A.	2
P14	M	American	V.P. Supply Chain	Same	U.S.A.	2
P15	M	American	V.P. M&A	Same	U.S.A.	2
P16	M	American	C.O.O.	Same	U.S.A.	3
P17	F	American	Project director	Same	U.S.A.	3
P18	F	American	Project director	Same	U.S.A.	3
P19	M	American	C.E.O.	Same	U.S.A.	3
P20	F	American	C.F.O.	Same	U.S.A.	3
P21	M	British	HR Director	HR Consultant	U.K.	5
P22	F	Dutch	Scientific Director	Same	Netherlands	5
P23	M	British	Project Manager	Same	Netherlands	5
P24	F	British	Investment banker	Same	Malaysia	5

3.5.5. Data collection process

The focus groups generated the behavioural items contained in the item pool by using a task analysis process. It included the following steps: identify the tasks, select the ranking criteria, rank the tasks according to the criteria and review the results (Cadle, 2012).

3.5.5.1. Generation of items

I chose a modified Job Element Method (Primoff & Eyde, 1988) to support the generation of behavioural items. The method is based on an initial list obtained through a brainstorming of experts, processed by an analyst, and refined by the experts over multiple rounds of analysis until data saturation in reached. In the study, the initial list was processed by me, by integrating coaching behavioural attributes found in the expertise-based literature, leading to a compilation of 89 items. Then on, I tasked focus group participants with refining the list over multiple rounds of analysis. Additionally, participants were encouraged to add any item that they felt was missing from the compilation. Finally, they were invited to modify the wording of the items if they were unclear. Once the participants were satisfied with the resulting pool of items, they ranked them.

The behavioural items were structured as a Behaviour Observation Scale (Smith & Kendall, 1963). I selected a Behavioural Observation Scale rather than a Behavioural Anchored Scale (Latham & Wexley, 1977) because it is less prone to error and more user-friendly, particularly if the anchors do not coincide with the actual experience of the rater (McKenna, 2006). In the compilation, when including behaviours from anchored scales (for example the ICF competency model), I selected the behavioural descriptors at the highest level of expertise (example: Master Certified Coach level in the ICF competency model).

3.5.5.2. Ranking criteria and process

Cadle (2012) surfaced a debate in the task analysis literature about which criteria are the most relevant for ranking purposes. Her study indicated, however, that the final selection of criteria does not have a significant effect on the final ranking. That being said, she remarked that in practice, importance and difficulty are the most frequently chosen. Based on the pragmatist paradigm of the research, I decided to choose these two criteria, which had the added benefits of being closely aligned to the reduction methods which I would use in the quantitative strand. Importance was defined in relation to the three coaching outcomes: working alliance with the coach, generation of new insights and goal attainment. Difficulty was defined as follows: participants of the focus groups were invited to think about how difficult it would be for a manager without coach-specific training or experience in coaching to demonstrate expertise in the behaviour. This would allow eliminating behaviours that, while important, were generally found in a managerial population and may not be specific to executive coaching (Grant, 2016). One this was established, the focus groups participants ranked the items one criteria at a time because such a process has been shown to produce more reliability (Cadle, 2012).

3.5.5.3. Facilitation methods

I facilitated the focus groups myself, drawing from 25 years of experience supporting international teams and small groups. The first 20 to 30 minutes of the discussion were supported by a slide presentation. Slides are presented in Appendix IV. From then on, I adopted a facilitative approach.

The task analysis process was achieved through the manipulation of cards, each card representing one behaviour. For face-to-face focus groups the cards were directly manipulated on a table by the participants. For the video-based focus groups, due to technological limitations, the cards were manipulated by one person taking instructions from the participants. In-between focus groups, I listened to a recording of the previous session to ensure that the starting point of the next group was accurate in regards to where the previous group had left off.

When the number of items is large, it is recommended to perform the tasks analysis process by consecutive segments, such as job dimensions, to make it manageable for the participants (Cadle, 2012). The literature review led to identifying seven dimensions obtained in client research: empathic affective behaviours, assessment of strengths and developmental needs, challenge of assumptions, goal setting, giving the lead to the client, and behaving in a professional manner (Section 2.6.2.). I added a dimension, called business acumen, which grouped items specific to executive coaching and not found in previous classifications. I used these dimensions to aid the task analysis process during the first two focus groups until the number of items was small enough to allow the entire pool of items to be reviewed at once. Subsequently the dimensions were no longer used. Table 3.2 below presents the entire compilation classified under each dimension. The classification was based on my own understanding at the time. It was not intended to be definitive and was simply a logistical aid for the task analysis process. This was clearly stated to the participants of the first two focus groups, who were invited to reclassify an item under a different dimension should they wish to do so.

Table 3.2: Segmented compilation as reviewed by the first two focus groups

Empathic affective behaviours

- Accepted me as is
- Believed in my potential
- Communicated with optimism
- Expressed genuine curiosity about my issue and concerns
- Got my reality/understood what it was like for me
- Had a body language that showed accord
- Maintained eye contact
- Mirrored my gestures
- Paid close attention to me
- Provided reassurance
- Reinforced descriptions of my strengths
- Showed appreciation and understanding of my moods and emotions
- Showed interest in me
- Showed interest in my story
- Stayed present and engaged throughout the session

- Turned body to me
- Used humour appropriately

Assessment of strengths and developmental needs

- Encouraged me to become more aware of my experience during the session
- Invited me to discuss my challenges
- Invited me to discuss my strengths
- Invited me to discuss obstacles to my progress
- Invited me to evaluate my level of motivation
- Invited me to explore gaps between actual and desired performance
- Invited me to explore my approach to change
- Invited me to explore my sphere of influence
- Invited me to explore my values
- Invited me to explore the influence of my environment
- Invited me to reflect about my learning style
- Invited me to reflect on my life style choices

Challenge of assumptions

- Challenged my perspective
- Encouraged me to engage with deep/difficult emotions
- Explored my defensiveness
- Helped me interpret the results of a 360 or psychometrics
- Invited me to recognise and explore my assumptions
- Invited me to explore other people's perspective
- Invited me to explore the deeper or broader meaning of what I said
- Invited me to explore unintended consequences of my behaviours or beliefs
- Picked up on what I did not say and asked me about it
- Pointed out possible unconscious motives
- Pointed out recurrent themes in my behaviour
- Shared how they were experiencing my behaviours

Goal setting

- Challenged me to stretch beyond my comfort zone
- Encouraged informed experimentation to help me develop
- Encouraged me to generate alternative solutions to issues
- Encouraged me to make choices
- Focused me on my most important goals
- Held me accountable for the commitments I expressed
- Invited me to discuss my progress
- Invited me to discuss new behaviours I could engage in
- Invited me to explore how my resources could be activated
- Prompted me to derive consequences of future actions

Giving the lead to the client

- Actively brainstormed issues with me
- Adjusted the pace of the session to my needs
- Allowed periods of silent reflection during the session
- Asked if my objectives were met during the session
- Asked permission to give me feedback or challenge my thinking
- Asked me to describe my key learnings

- Checked if their understanding was correct
- Followed through on the key statements I made
- Invited me to clarify my objectives for the coaching session
- Invited me to give feedback on the coaching session
- Let me finish before talking
- Noted and responded to changes in my internal state
- Was responsive to my requests

Behaving in a professional manner

- Addressed my questions and concerns about the coaching process
- Communicated authentically, transparently, honestly
- Disclosed own fallibility
- Explained confidentiality
- Explained our respective roles
- Explored my level of engagement in coaching
- Expressed complex ideas simply
- Followed through on promises or agreements that we have made previously
- Made shifts of role explicit
- Showed a good balance between distance and proximity with me
- Spoke and acted confidently
- Spoke clearly and concisely
- Stayed non-judgmental and neutral
- Took charge of keeping track of time
- Used self as an example
- Was approachable
- Was consistent between what they did and how they behaved

Business acumen

- Established a shared understanding about my context and system
- Invited me to discuss alignment of my goals with those of the organisation
- Invited me to discuss the purpose of the coaching
- Invited me to explore ethical issues related to the coaching
- Offered models and exercises relevant to my own context
- Provided input that was practical, realistic and immediately usable
- Used relevant and valuable examples from their own knowledge
- Was knowledgeable about my organisation

3.6. QUALITATIVE DATA ANALYSIS

While it is suggested that the interpretation of an instrument be supported by a review of the literature (Tabachnik & Fidell, 2013), this might have been difficult to achieve since existing coaching models have largely ignored the client as a source of information and may have missed significant events and actions of the coach (Section 2.6.).

I therefore decided to strengthen the interpretation of the instrument by conducting micro process research through a thematic analysis of the focus group discussions. This approach surfaced which significant events had been used by the participants to describe the executive coaching behaviours contained in the item pool (Swift et al., 2017; Miles, Huberman & Saldana, 2013).

The thematic analysis started with a transcription of each focus group, which I conducted myself in order to deepen the data immersion process (Lunt, 2006). Extracts of two different transcripts (one of a face-to-face focus group and one of an online focus groups) are presented in Appendix XIV.

Thereafter, each transcript was coded to surface which aspects of the coaching process had underscored the selection of behaviours by the focus groups. Examples of these dimensions included actions taken by the coach to move the coaching process along (such as bottom lining, designing experiments), affective strategies of the coach to facilitate the process (such as being non-judgmental, being authentic), and impacts on the client (such as trust in the coach, self-confidence).

Subsequently, I generated the first level of aggregation, by identifying pattern codes:

- grouping codes through logical links, such as opposing (example: organisation objectives vs. individual objectives) or causal (for example: confidentiality to trust);
- identifying constructs described in the coaching literature (for example: affective empathy, mentoring).

Finally, I compared the data across focus groups to look for similarities. The process was iterative, alternating data display, writing and re-coding, until I reached an aggregation level that represented coaching micro-processes which could be easily related to coaching models. A representative extract of the coding process is presented in Appendix XV.

3.7. QUANTITATIVE DATA COLLECTION

The purpose of the quantitative data collection was to provide adequate information for the purpose of assessing the quality of the pool of items generated by the qualitative investigation.

3.7.1. Methods for data collection

The choice of a cross-sectional survey method was driven by the type of analyses which were conducted. Survey methods are well suited to perform a principal component analysis (PCA) which is typically used to analyse the construct validity of a pool of items (Creswell, 2006). Survey methods are also well suited to measure the strength of the relationships between an independent variable such as a feedback instrument and dependent variables such as coaching outcomes scales (Tabachnik & Fidell, 2013).

The choice of the cross-sectional approach was also driven by the research settings, which rendered multiple measurements of the main study variables impractical. On the one hand, because the executives participating in the quantitative strand of the research experienced a short coaching process that lasted less than four months and comprised about three sessions on average, intermediary changes for the dependent variables would have been difficult to interpret (Ely et al., 2010). On the other hand, the timespan between coaching sessions was not prescribed, so as to meet the demands and constraints of the participants' schedules. This resulted in heterogeneous coaching schedules, adding an additional effect to an already complex system (Theeboom et al., 2014).

3.7.2. Sampling methods

The target population consisted of executives who would undergo an executive coaching process consisting in at least three sessions. In similarity with the qualitative strand, participants were referred by their coaches, using a cluster sampling approach (Creswell, 2006). Physical access to the coaches who would refer participants was first attempted through gatekeepers in the large organisations that typically contract them. There is no sampling frame for the population of gatekeepers; therefore probability sampling was excluded and the method chosen was purposive typical (Saunders et al., 2009). The target sample initially consisted of my LinkedIn network (see Section 3.5.2.). Figure 3.5 below summarises the recruitment process of the participants. Research advertisements, participants' information sheets and consent forms are presented in Appendices V to X.

In quantitative analyses, the recommended size of a sample is driven by the nature of the statistical analyses that have been planned. Principal component analyses require, at the very least, a ratio of participants to item of 1:3, if a sufficient number of intercorrelations between items are above 0.6 (Tabachnik & Fidell, 2013). Since the group of coaching attributes selected by the focus groups contained 35 items, the minimum number of participants was 105. This number, being larger than what is generally required for multiple regression analyses, was thus retained as a minimum acceptable number of participants for the quantitative strand (Tabachnik & Fidell, 2013).

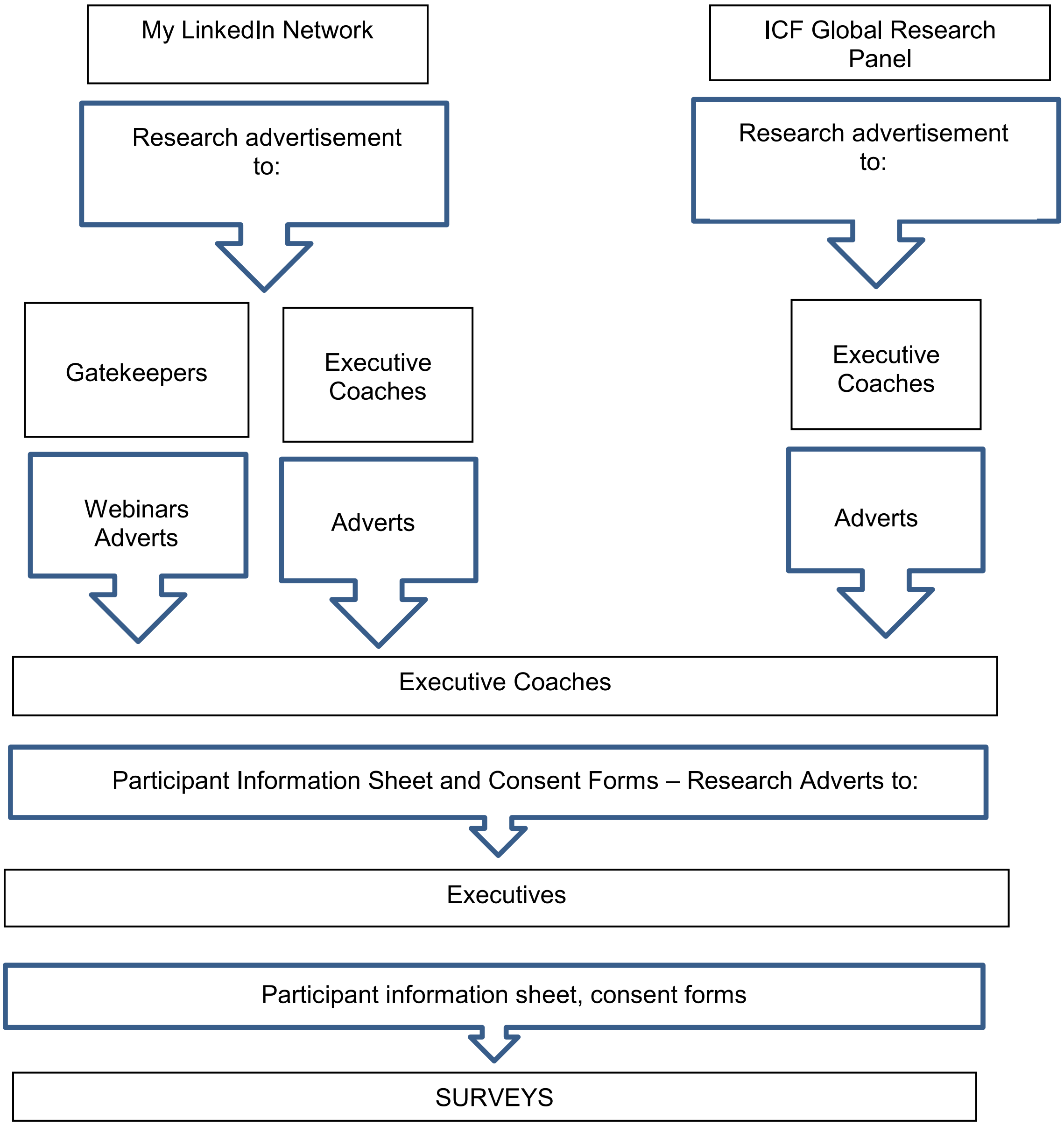

Figure 3.5: Flowchart of the participants' recruitment process for the quantitative strand

Out of the 11 gatekeepers contacted conditionally before the research started, three expressed interest. As soon as the research had been approved, kick-off webinars were scheduled with executive coaches who had been contacted by the gatekeeper and had expressed interest, so that I could present my topic of research and obtain cognitive access to them. However, the start of the process was delayed by several months due to the unexpected turnover of all three gatekeepers. In the end, two of the newly hired gatekeepers held a webinar, and only one webinar resulting in enrolling coaches for referral purposes. As a result, referrals started four months behind schedule. By then about one third of the research population was lost because executives had already started their coaching process.

To mitigate for the situation, I sent research invitations directly to individual executive coaches by using the same large networks that I had activated for the qualitative strand: my LinkedIn network and the two ICF chapters. To qualify for participation, these executive coaches would deliver a coaching programme consisting of at least three coaching sessions to an executive working in an organisation before the data collection ended at the end of December 2017. I spoke or e-mailed to each of interested executive coaches to assess that the context and techniques of the coaching process were similar to the one taking place in the gatekeeper's organisation. When this was not the case, I did not include the coach in the batch of referees.

3.7.3. Administration of the surveys

Figure 3.6 below summarises the timeline of administration of the surveys. Appendix XI presents a screenshot of the SurveyMonkey control panel that shows the number of accessed surveys.

The vast majority of the 107 coaching engagements included in the study (*N*=89) happened in the same large organisation, operating worldwide. It will be called organisation A for the remainder of the document because the gatekeeper requested that the name of the organisation and of the staff participating in the dissemination of the research advertisement be withheld. This international organisation delivers a diverse range of services, employing executives with varied specialties in multiple work locations. For the last ten years, organisation A has run a leadership development programme for all its executives. About 350 executives were scheduled to participate in the programme during the year 2017. The programme consisted in one or two leadership development workshops in English. After the first workshop and before the second workshop, if any, three to four hours of executive coaching took place in the form of several sessions held by phone or video-conference. The coaching was delivered by 20 external executive coaches based worldwide, who were, when possible, matched with participants who spoke the same native language. The coaches were highly experienced and had been working for this programme for many years. In 2017, 14 cohorts took place. They were launched progressively between February and October. The last programme ended in December 2017. Because of the delays in obtaining consent, only the executives participating in the last ten cohorts received the research advertisement.

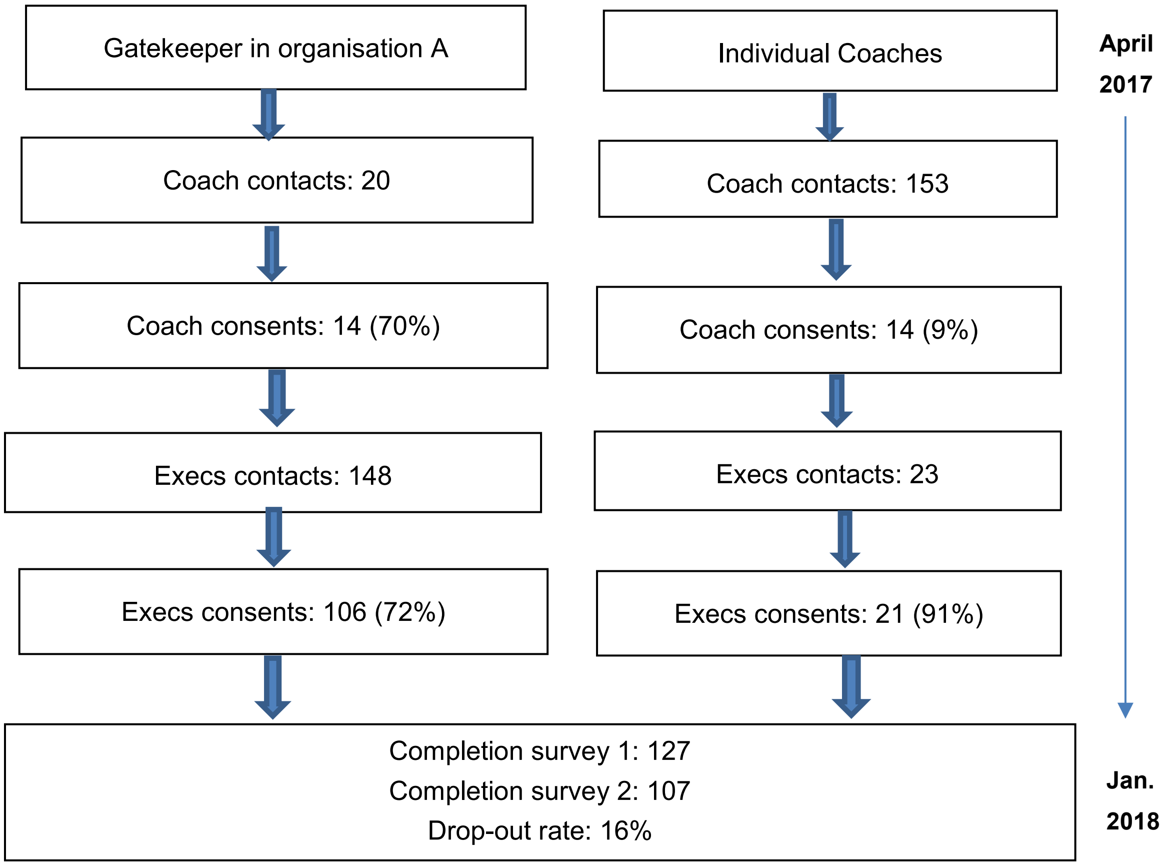

Figure 3.6: Administration of the surveys

The other coaching engagements (*N*=18) took place in multiple locations worldwide, in different organisations. The following coaching techniques were common with those used in organisation A: The debrief of a multisource feedback instrument, the setting of goals, and if possible, a reflective process about the implementation of goals. However, most executives did not attend a leadership development programme in combination with the coaching process.

The first coaching engagement commenced in April 2017 and the final coaching engagement ended in January 2018.

3.7.4. Characteristics of the sample

The 107 executives were coached by 28 coaches. The number of clients per coach varied between one and 13. The average duration of coaching was 2.8 months, and the range of duration was between two and seven months. Participants attended on average 3.4 coaching sessions (*SD*=1.2), translating into four hours (*SD*= 2.5) of executive coaching.

Ninety-five percent of executives receiving coaching described themselves as managers or senior managers, and 5% described themselves as directors. On average, the participants had 22.5 years of professional experience (*SD*=8). Regarding gender, 38% were female and 62% were male. The participants worked on all continents except South America, including 40% in Europe, 37.5% in Africa and the Middle East, 12% in North America and 10.5% in Oceania.

Twenty-seven percent of the respondents reported having received executive coaching in the past.

As figure 3.5 above indicates, 20 participants did not respond to the second survey. As a result, their responses were not included in the analyses, raising the question whether some of their characteristics were different from the participants who had responded to both surveys. T-tests were conducted to compare the means obtained by the 20 executives on the SRIS with those obtained by the other 107 executives. No significant difference was found. Using the same technique, no patterns were found about their demographic characteristics. In fact, anecdotical evidence gathered during the data collection process indicates that non-response was influenced by factors external to these 20 participants. Indeed, a few of them contacted me, upon receiving the link to the second survey, to mention that they had changed positions or that their coaching process had been postponed. A few others indicated that, once they received the second survey, their work schedule would not allow them to spare the time.

3.7.5. Data collection process

3.7.5.1. The first questionnaire

Due to the large number and geographical dispersion of the participants, web-based, self-completed questionnaires were used. The two questionnaires are presented in Appendices XII and XIII.

The first questionnaire started with a description of the study aim and objectives and with a participant information sheet which was followed by a consent form. Once the consent form was completed, participants were directed to the survey questions. The survey questions collected demographic information about the participants, expectations about the coaching process, and a control variable, the Self-reflection and Insight Scale (SRIS).

The demographic information consisted in control variables such as gender, number of years of professional experience, job title, place of work, previous experience of coaching of or another form of professional development, number of coaching sessions and duration of the coaching process. The SRIS (Grant et al., 2002) consisted in 20 Likert style rating questions, using a six-point scale (1=strongly disagree to 6=strongly agree).

3.7.5.2. The second questionnaire

The second questionnaire was sent shortly after the end of the coaching process. Using the pool of executive coaching behaviours created by the focus groups during the qualitative strand, the survey asked participants to state their level of agreement with a statement assessing that they had noticed each coaching behaviour using a 6-point Likert scale. A generic formulation of the question follows: *"During my coaching sessions, I noticed that my coach did [executive coaching behaviour]: 6= strongly agree to 1=strongly disagree.* Likert scales are considered the most suitable for use in behavioural research and principal component analysis (Hinkin, 1998). While recommendations on the optimal number of points vary, most researchers recommend 5 or 6 points, after which reliability levels off (Lissitz & Green, 1975).

The questionnaire continued with the short version of the WAI adapted to coaching (Corbière et al., 2006), the SQ (McCay-Peet & Toms, 2011), and a measure of the level of goal attainment. Subsequently, after stating the most important goal they had worked on with their coach, respondents were asked to state their agreement with having made progress on this goal using a 5-point Likert scale. In addition, they were offered the possibility of inviting co-workers to rate the level of attainment of the goal they had selected. There was no limit placed on the number of co-workers who could be invited. After checking that the co-workers agreed, participants sent us both an introductory email. Contact was attempted with each co-worker three to four weeks after the end of the coaching process. Once contact had been made with the co-workers, they received an email including the participant information sheet. When they gave their consent, they were presented with the goal that their colleague had selected to assess progress. They were then asked to state their agreement with the statement that their colleague had made progress on the goal, using a 5-point Likert scale.

3.8. QUANTITATIVE DATA ANALYSIS

Figure 3.7 below summarises the data analyses which were conducted for the purpose of building the client behavioural feedback instrument and assessing its reliability and validity, the two most important characteristics related to quality according to classical test theory (Rust & Golombok, 2009).

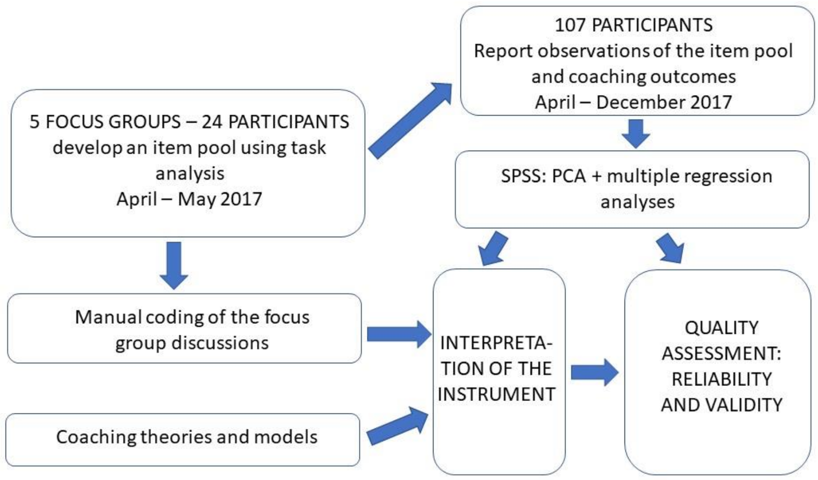

Figure 3.7: Data analyses conducted to develop the instrument

3.8.1. Construction of the instrument

I performed a principal component analysis (PCA) of the item pool developed by the focus groups to reduce the number of items and group them under a number of components (Kaushik & Gaur, 2014) by using the SPSS version 23.0.

In the first stage, I examined the data to ensure that it was suitable for the purpose of conducting a PCA. In particular, items intercorrelations were calculated to verify whether they were superior to 0.6 most of the time. Once I had established the suitability of the data, I used several criteria to decide on the number of components: Eigenvalues in relation to a Monte Carlo analysis, scree plot, and percentage of variance explained (Pallant, 2013). To conduct the rotation, I selected the orthogonal varimax rotation method in order to produce components that are not correlated, thereby supporting their interpretation (Williams, Onsman & Brown, 2010).

The interpretation of the components generated by the PCA was supported by a review of the literature as well as by my own experience as an executive coach (Tabachnik & Fidell, 2013), complemented with a thematic analysis of the focus group discussions (Section 3.6).

3.8.2. Reliability of the instrument

The method chosen to measure the reliability of the instrument was internal consistency, using the Cronbach's alpha coefficient (Tavakol & Dennick, 2011). Test-retest reliability was not compatible with the setting of the research during which only one measure of the item pool was taken. Since some of the coaches were rated by more than one client, inter-rater reliability could have been calculated. However, contrary to a fixed piece of work rated by multiple examiners, such as an essay, a set of coaching behaviours surveyed during multiple coaching session will never be the same (Greif, 2016).

3.8.3. Validity of the instrument

In the absence of empirically validated coaching scales developed from the perspective of the client (Section 2.6.2), the content validity of the instrument was difficult to assess (Rust & Golombok, 2009). However, a comparison between the item pool and the limited findings of client research was conducted to uncover similarities and differences.

Construct validity was established through the process of identification and interpretation of factors as part of the Principal Component Analysis (Kaushik & Gaur, 2014).

Criterion validity was analysed by measuring the strength of the relationships between the EXBOS and coaching outcomes scales based on the model presented in Section 3.6.2. Using the SPSS 23.0 package:

- I regressed the WAI, the SQ and the goal attainment measure, respectively, on the EXCBOS, together with five control variables (number of years of professional experience, gender, previous experience with coaching, number of hours of coaching received and score on the SRIS at the start of the coaching) (Pallant, 2013)
- To investigate mediating effects, I used a bootstrapping method automatised for SPSS (Hayes, 2013)
- To investigate interaction effects, I conducted hierarchical regressions analyses (Pallant, 2013).

Due to the low participation of co-workers, it was not possible to use their ratings of the goal attainment measure. As a result, I relied exclusively on self-ratings to measure goal attainment.

3.9. ETHICS

The Oxford Brookes Ethics Committee reviewed and approved the research proposal in January 2017. During the research process, each step was closely monitored in relation to the rights of the participants in managerial settings (Saunders et al., 2009), so as to meet the ethics regulations of the university (https://www.brookes.ac.uk/-research/research-ethics/).

During the data collection process, in order to avoid any conflict of interest, I excluded all my current clients or business partners from the sample of executives in both the qualitative and quantitative strands. To ensure that I would not breach any copyright law, I asked for and obtained the authorisation of the three authors (Anthony Grant, Marc Corbière and Lori McCay-Peet) who had published the respective scales that I used in the quantitative strand of the research.

The privacy of all participants was strictly protected. The gatekeeper contacted coaches on my behalf. Referring coaches received an information sheet and signed consent forms before sending the research advertisement to executives on my behalf. All coaches participated voluntarily and were free to withdraw from the research and stop sending research advertisement at any time. Each executive who contacted me after receiving the research advertisement, either in the qualitative or the quantitative strand, received an information sheet and signed a consent form. All executives participated voluntarily and were free to withdraw from the research at any time. Concerning the focus groups, during preliminary interviews which were conducted with each prospective participant, potential privacy issues were discussed in relation to the sharing of information with other group members before they signed the consent form (Gill, Stewart, Treasure & Chadwick, 2008).

The confidentiality of data and maintenance of anonymity of the participants was insured in both research strands:

- In the qualitative strand, I transcribed the focus group discussions myself.
- To process the quantitative data, I used de-identified samples, a reversible process in which the identifiers are removed and replaced by a code. I was the only person handling the data subsequently. In order to check for possible errors, I remained able to link the code to the original identifiers and identify the individual to whom the sample or information related.
- All qualitative and quantitative data was kept on an encrypted laptop to which only I had access through a password.

During the data analysis and thesis writing process, I made every effort to report every step of the research as accurately and transparently as possible by going back to my thesis journals. This is discussed further in the following section.

3.10. QUALITY

This section discusses the research design in relation to quality standards in qualitative and quantitative research. The resulting quality of the research is presented in Chapter 7, Section 7.5.

3.10.1. Overall quality of the research

Mixed-methods research must produce knowledge that meets the principles governing pragmatic research: usefulness and practice improvement (Bryman, 2006). I received anecdotical confirmation that client feedback was considered useful by practitioners as testified by the strong interest manifested by coach audiences about my topic of research. Since the summer of 2016, I have regularly presented my arguments and key literature review findings in webinars and conferences, in the UK, the United States, Turkey and in Belgium, in which over 200 executive coaches participated. I also posted a summary of my literature review findings on LinkedIn in January 2017 which have so far received 350 views. In addition, I received several invitations to present my findings, once they become available, within institutions in Europe and in the United States.

As Bryman (2006) indicated, another crucial element of quality in mixed-methods research is transparency, since multiple ways of combining methods exist. To maximise transparency, I kept a daily journal throughout the research. It included notes about my readings, questions, peer-discussions, supervisory sessions and methodological decisions from which I drew throughout the research process.

3.10.2. Quality of the qualitative strand

Four criteria are suggested to judge qualitative research (Lincoln & Guba, 1985): credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability. Credibility is demonstrated by establishing how the participants' views and the researcher's representation of them was consistent. This was achieved by empowering clients to construct the item pool and by using aggregated codes of the focus group discussions to illustrate the interpretation of the components. Each focus group was diverse in terms of nationality, which has been shown to increase the richness of the interactions, provided that the facilitator is culturally aware (Stewart, 2007).

Transferability refers to the degree to which results obtained can be transferable to other contexts. To allow for this, I described the context as thoroughly as possible and was reflexive about the assumptions that presided the research: every attempt was made to describe the participants and their work context, and to interpret the results of the data collection in relation to the characteristics of the focus group participants.

Dependability was demonstrated by describing the changes that happened in the context of the research and how it affected decisions I made, which are described in this chapter.

Confirmability establishes that the findings are derived from the data, and could, as a result, be confirmed or corroborated by other researchers using the same set of data. Preventively, this requires auditing the accuracy of the data collected: a form of auditing was performed by the 4th and the 5th focus groups since they were tasked to review the work of the three preceding focus groups. In addition, four focus group participants, as well as my two supervisors, reviewed the behavioural item pool before it was included in the survey used in the quantitative strand of the research.

3.10.3. Quality of the quantitative strand

To pre-emptively address threats to internal validity, a number of steps were taken prior to data collection (Podsakoff, Mackenzie, Lee & Podsakoff, 2003). If the measure of the independent and dependent variables cannot be temporally separated, Podsakoff recommends to guarantee response anonymity: this was clearly communicated to the participants in their information sheet. In addition, Podsakoff advises to introduce the questions in such a way that the respondent does not easily make a connection between the two variables. To that effect, introductory sentences at the start of each question were kept as neutral as possible.

In addition, in order to reduce the risk of acquiescence, the questionnaire clearly stated that participants did not need to "worry" if their coach had seldom displayed some of the behaviours, because there was no certainty about which behaviours were effective or not. Of particular concern was self-leniency since executives were asked to self-rate their level of goal attainment as a result of the coaching process. To address this form of bias, I had asked participants if they were willing to invite co-workers to provide their perspective. Unfortunately, low response rates did not allow the data collected to be included in the analyses.

In order to avoid threats linked to item characteristics, I had asked the last two focus groups and final reviewers to detect double-barrelled items (Hinkin, 1998), words with multiple meanings (Peterson, 2000), words that mix the occurrence of a behaviour with a putative motive for such behaviour (Clark & Watson, 1995) and technical jargon or colloquialisms (Podsakoff et al., 2003).

3.11. CONCLUSION

The methodology chosen to build a client behavioural feedback instrument for the executive coach was anchored in a pragmatic epistemology, a mixed-methods operational definition of feedback based on the Cognitive Affective Personal System Theory and a theoretical framework which I described as client-centred integrative. The design followed the principles of a mixed-method, sequential exploratory approach. The qualitative phase consisted in focus groups of experienced clients who built a pool of behavioural items, using the principles laid out by the client-centred theory and the expertise theory of coaching. The quantitative phase surveyed executives about the executive coaching behaviours and three coaching outcome measures selected from the evidence-based literature. The data collected was subjected to a principal component analysis, resulting in an instrument which was interpreted in relation to existing models of coaching, my own experience as a practitioner and the coding of the focus group discussions. Subsequently, multiple regression analyses were performed to measure the strengths of the relationships between the instrument and outcome measures, using a model derived from the evidence-based coaching literature. The research process was closely monitored to meet the standards set by the Oxford Brookes Ethics Committee. In addition, every attempt was made to meet the highest possible quality standards within the context of the research.

CHAPTER 4
FINDINGS FROM THE QUALITATIVE STRAND

4.1. INTRODUCTION

This chapter analyses the data collected during the qualitative strand of the research. The first part presents the results of the ranking and review process of a compilation of behavioural items conducted by the focus groups and compares it with other client studies. The second part presents the coaching micro-processes manifested by these behaviours. It concludes with a summary of findings related to the content validity of the item pool.

4.2. PRESENTATION OF THE POOL OF EXECUTIVE COACHING BEHAVIOURS DEVELOPED BY THE FOCUS GROUPS.

This section describes the ranking and review process of the focus groups, leading to a pool containing 35 important and difficult executive coaching behaviours. It presents the results of the reduction process by describing which behaviours were eliminated and retained from the behavioural items compiled from the literature, and which behaviours were added. It also describes the contribution of each focus group to the development of the pool.

4.2.1. Results of the reduction process

Figure 4.1 on the next page summarises the extent of the reduction of the compilation obtained from a review of the literature (the complete taxonomy is presented in table 3.2 in the previous chapter). A third of the behaviours contained in the compilation were retained and five new behaviours were added by the focus groups.

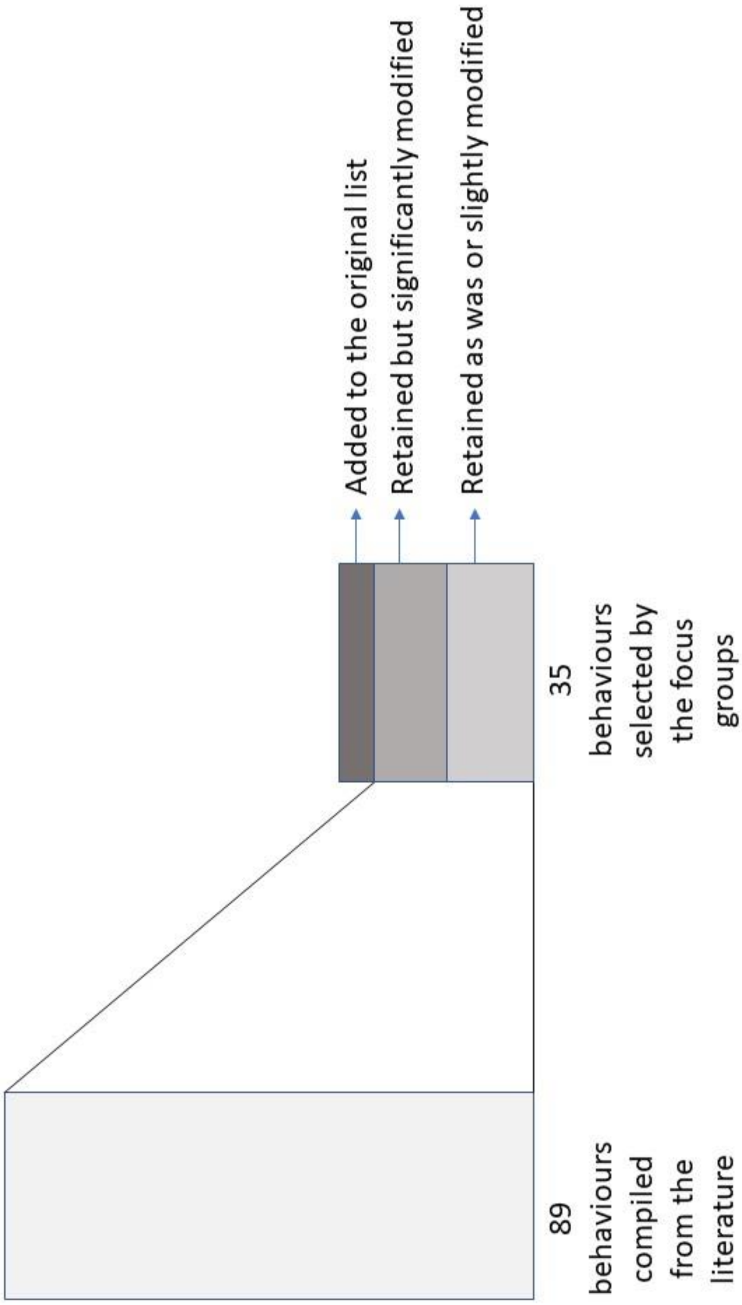

Figure 4.1: Reduction process leading to the item pool

Behaviours retained by the focus groups

A total of 30 behaviours (one third of the compilation) were retained. Nineteen behaviours were retained exactly or almost exactly while 11 behaviours were largely modified.

Out of the 19 behaviours retained exactly or almost exactly 10 belonged to the "showing genuine care" and "professionalism" sections of the compilation taxonomy:

- Acknowledged my emotions when discussing a topic
- Communicated authentically, transparently, honestly
- Did not display too much familiarity nor stayed overly distant with me
- Expressed complex ideas simply
- Stayed open-minded
- Was responsive to my needs
- Was supportive
- When I expressed concerns about confidentiality, invited me to discuss
- When shifting from inquiry to advisory mode, made it explicit
- When unable to provide expertise, acknowledged it.

An additional nine behaviours retained exactly or almost exactly were contained in the "assessment", "challenge" and "goal-setting" sections of the taxonomy:

- Encouraged me to become more aware of my experience during the coaching session
- Invited me to discuss new behaviours I could engage in
- Invited me to explore assumptions that I might have made
- Invited me to explore gaps between my current and desired situation
- Invited me to explore how I typically approach change
- Invited me to explore unintended consequences of my actions
- Invited me to reflect on the alignment between my own goals and those of my organisation
- Picked up on what I did not say and asked about it
- Used examples from life story to illustrate a point I made.

Amongst the 11 behaviours which were significantly modified by the focus groups, "stayed non-judgemental" replaced a double-barrelled item called "stayed non-judgemental and neutral". "Had a body language that showed accord" was broadened to "showed positive regard". In addition, two behaviours were narrowed down to focus them on the professional system of the client (the original wording from the taxonomy is placed in parentheses):

- Invited me to explore how my working environment influences me (environmental influences)
- Used examples from coaching engagements in other organisations to broaden my perspective on a situation (used relevant and valuable example from their own knowledge)

Finally, seven behaviours were shifted from a directive to an inviting, collaborative expression (the original wording from the taxonomy is placed in parentheses):

- Asked questions about my organisation to better understand the issues I presented (was knowledgeable about my organisation)
- Checked if understanding of my organisation was sufficient to discuss the issues I presented (established a shared understanding about)
- Encouraged me to think about (pointed out) possible unconscious motives for my actions
- Invited me to share feelings about a topic (noticed and responded to changes in my internal state)
- Offered (allowed) periods of silent reflexion
- Stepped into my world, using my vocabulary and metaphors (got my reality)
- Using the information that I shared, made new connections and surfaced patterns or recurrent themes about me (pointed out).

<u>Behaviours added by the focus groups</u>

Five behaviours (6%) were added to the item pool. Two behaviours added to the compilation reinforced the assessment of the client's professional system:

- Asked whether my organisation's culture enables or hampers my goals
- Invited me to state my personal vision for my role in the organisation.

Two were related to the provision of advice:

- Was prepared to share a point of view when I really needed advice
- When I requested advice, checked first if this was what I really needed and then invited me to reflect on my request.

One complemented the list of empathic behaviours:

- When I presented an issue, neither over-reacted nor stayed overly neutral

Behaviours eliminated by the focus groups

A total of fifty-nine behaviours were eliminated from the compilation (two thirds of the compilation). The following 26 behaviours were generally considered as duplicates or implied by the behaviours that had already been selected:

- Actively brainstormed issues with me
- Adjusted the pace of the session to my needs
- Asked for permission to give me feedback or challenge my thinking
- Believed in my potential
- Communicated with optimism
- Expressed genuine curiosity about my issue and concerns
- Followed through on the key statements I made
- Helped me interpret the results of a 360 or psychometrics
- Invited me to discuss the purpose of the coaching
- Invited me to explore ethical issues related to the coaching
- Invited me to explore my sphere of influence
- Invited me to explore the broader or deeper meaning of what I said
- Let me finish speaking before talking
- Maintained eye contact
- Mirrored my gestures
- Paid close attention to me
- Provided input what was practical, realistic and immediately usable
- Shared how they were experiencing my behaviours
- Showed interest in me
- Showed interest in my story
- Spoke and acted confidently
- Spoke clearly and concisely
- Stayed present and engaged throughout the session
- Turned body to me
- Was approachable
- Was consistent between what they did and how they behaved.

The seven behaviours listed below were considered less important by participants because they related more to other forms of helping services such as workplace training, psychotherapy or counselling:

- Encouraged me to engage with deep/difficult emotions
- Explored my level of engagement in coaching

- Invited me to reflect about my learning style
- Invited me to reflect on my lifestyle choices
- Provided reassurance
- Explored my defensiveness
- Used humour appropriately.

The following 26 behaviours were considered less difficult because participants commonly experienced similar behaviours from supervisors or colleagues. As a result, focus groups did not view them as specific to coaching. A significant number of these behaviours are related to goal setting and the management of the accountability of the client, contained in the "goal-setting" section of the taxonomy:

- Addressed my questions and concerns about the coaching process
- Asked if my objectives were met during the session
- Asked me to describe my key learnings
- Challenged me to stretch beyond my comfort zone
- Challenged my perspective
- Checked if their understanding was correct
- Encouraged informed experimentation to help me develop
- Encouraged me to generate alternative solutions to issues
- Encouraged me to make choices
- Explained our respective roles
- Offered models and exercises relevant to my own context
- Focused me on my most important goals
- Followed through on promises and agreements that we had made previously
- Held me accountable for the commitments I expressed
- Invited me to evaluate my level of motivation
- Invited me to discuss my strengths
- Invited me to clarify my objectives for the coaching session
- Invited me to discuss my challenges
- Invited me to discuss my progress
- Invited me to discuss obstacles to my progress
- Invited me to explore how my resources could be activated
- Invited me to explore my values
- Invited me to explore other people's perspective
- Invited me to give feedback on the coaching session
- Prompted me to derive concrete consequences of future actions
- Took charge of keeping track of time.

4.2.2. Contribution of each focus group to the construction of the item pool

As indicated in the methodology chapter, each focus groups started their work where the first focus group had left theirs off, with the exception of the first focus group, who started from the compilation containing 89 items. Table 4.1 below shows how each focus group contributed to the development of the pool. The first focus group worked on the "showing genuine care" section of the taxonomy and ranked behaviours by importance, the second focus group finished the ranking by importance by focusing on all other sections of the taxonomy. The third focus group reviewed and ranked the resulting pool by difficulty. The two final focus groups reviewed their work. At the end of the process, 35 behaviours deemed both important and difficult were selected.

Table 4.1: Contribution of each focus group to the item pool

Behaviours are presented in the alphabetical order of the final output
FC= Focus groups
IM= retained or added because it was considered more important
NI= removed because it was considered less important
DI= retained or added because it was considered more difficult
ND= removed because it was considered less difficult

Cells shaded in dark grey indicate that the behaviour was not present in the compilation of the literature.
Cells shaded in light grey indicate that the behaviour was not reviewed by the focus group.

	Importance		Difficulty	First review	Second review and final output
	FC #1	FC #2	FC #3	FC #4	FC #5
Behaviours retained from the compilation					
Showed appreciation and understanding of my moods and emotions	NI		Demonstrated an understanding of my moods and emotions	IM + DI	Acknowledged my emotions when discussing a topic
Was knowledgeable about my organisation		IM	ND		Asked questions about my organisation to better understand the issues I presented
Established a shared understanding about my context and system		IM	DI	IM + DI	Checked if their understanding of my organisation was sufficient to discuss the issues I presented
Communicated authentically, transparently, honestly		IM	DI	IM + DI	Communicated authentically, transparently, honestly
Showed good balance between distance and proximity		IM	DI	IM + DI	Did not display too much familiarity nor stayed overly distant with me
Encouraged me to be more aware of my experience during the session	IM		DI	IM + DI	Encouraged me to be aware of my own experience during the coaching session
Pointed possible unconscious motives		Encouraged me to think about possible unconscious motives	DI	IM + DI	Encouraged me to think about possible unconscious motives for my actions

	Importance		Difficulty	First review	Second review and final output
	FC #1	FC #2	FC #3	FC #4	FC #5
Expressed complex ideas simply		IM	DI	IM + DI	Expressed complex ideas simply
Invited me to discuss new behaviours I could engage in		IM	DI	IM + DI	Invited me to discuss new behaviours I could engage in
Invited me to explore gaps between my actual and desired performance	IM		DI	IM + DI	Invited me to explore gaps between my current and desired situation
Invited me to explore my approach to change	IM		DI	IM + DI	Invited me to explore how I typically approach change
Invited me explore the influence of my environment	IM		DI	Encouraged me to think about the influence of my personal and working environment on me	Invited me to explore how my working environment influences me
Invited me to explore unintended consequences of my actions, behaviours or beliefs		IM	DI	Invited me to explore unintended consequences of my behaviours, energy level, frame of mind or beliefs	Invited me to explore unintended consequences of my actions
Invited me to recognise and explore my assumptions		IM	DI	IM + DI	Invited me to recognise and explore assumptions that I might have made
Invited me to discuss alignment of my goals with those of the organisation		NI		Invited me to reflect on the alignment between my own goals and those of my organisation	Invited me to reflect on the alignment between my own goals and those of my organisation
Noticed and responded to changes in my internal state	Asked me about my mood, feelings and emotions about the situation		ND		Invited me to share my feelings about a topic
Allowed periods of silent reflexion during the session		IM	DI	IM + DI	Offered periods of silent reflexion

	Importance		Difficulty	First review	Second review and final output
	FC #1	FC #2	FC #3	FC #4	FC #5
Picked up on what I did not say and asked me about it		IM	DI	IM + DI	Picked up on what I did not say and asked me about it
Had a body language that showed accord			Showed positive regard	Showed positive regard and compassion	Showed positive regard, for example through comments, tone of voice, body language
Stayed non-judgemental and neutral	IM		DI	IM + DI	Stayed non-judgemental
Accepted me as is			Stayed flexible and open	Stayed flexible and open to partnering with me	Stayed open minded to what I said
Got my reality/understood what it was like for me	NI				Stepped into my world, using my vocabulary and metaphors
Used relevant and valuable examples from their own knowledge		IM	ND		Used examples from coaching engagements in other organisations to broaden my perspective on a situation
Used self as an example				Used own life experience and life story sparingly and appropriately	Used examples from their own life story to illustrate a point I made
Pointed out recurrent themes in my behaviour		NI			Using the information I shared, made new connections and surfaced patterns and recurrent themes about me
Was responsive to my requests		IM	ND		Was responsive to my needs
Reinforced descriptions of my strengths	NI				Was supportive (for example through comments, tone of voice or body language)

	Importance		Difficulty	First review	Second review and final output
	FC #1	FC #2	FC #3	FC #4	FC #5
Explained confidentiality		NI		Understood and managed the confidentiality of the coaching space in the organisational context	When I expressed concerns about confidentiality, invited me to discuss these concerns
Made shifts of role explicit		IM	DI	IM + DI	When shifting from inquiry to advisory mode, made it explicit
Disclosed own fallibility		IM	DI	IM + DI	When unable to provide expertise, acknowledged it
Behaviours added to the compilation					
				Asked whether my organisation culture enables or hampers my coaching goals	Asked whether my organisation culture enables or hampers my coaching goals
			Asked me about my vision	Invited me to share my vision for the future	Invited me to share my personal vision for my role in the organisation
			Responded to my need for advice	Was prepared to share a point of view when I really needed advice	Was prepared to share a point of view when I really needed advice
		Was not scripted	DI	IM + DI	When I presented an issue, neither overreacted nor stayed overly neutral
			Recycled my need for advice into powerful questions	IM + DI	When I requested advice, checked first if this was what I really needed and then invited me to reflect on my request

4.2.3. Comparison of the item pool with other client studies

This section considers the similarities and differences between the item pool developed by the focus groups during the qualitative strand of the research and the limited findings of client research surfaced during the literature review. The comparison is presented in Table 4.2 below.

The six behaviours unique to the item pool were all related to the client's organisational system (asked questions about my organisation to better understand the issues I presented, invited me to explore how my working environment influences me, invited me to reflect on whether my organisation's culture enables or hampers my development goals, invited me to state my vision for my role in the organisation, invited me to reflect on the alignment between my own goals and those of my organisation, used examples from coaching engagements in other organisations to broaden my perspective on a situation). In contrast, the item pool displayed less action planning and accountability behaviours than previous client studies (for example: confirmed action plans).

Table 4.2: Comparison between the item pool and client-centred' studies***

Cells shaded in light grey indicate that the behaviour identified by the focus groups was not cited in the other studies. Cells shaded in dark grey indicate that a behaviour present in at least one other study was not selected by the focus group participants.					
Item pool created by the focus group participants (2017)	***(De Haan et al., 2010)***	***(Hooijberg & Lane, 2009)***	***(Passmore, 2010)***	***(Gray et al., 2011)***	***(Tonomura et al., 2018)*****
Task analysis	*Critical incident technique**	*Open-ended survey*	*Grounded theory*	*Open-ended survey/criteria to select coaches*	*Client survey refined over time based on a measure of impact*
Acknowledged my emotions when discussing a topic			Holding emotions		
Asked questions about my organisation to better understand the issues I presented		Good preparation			
Asked whether my organisation culture enables or hampers my coaching goals	Unique to the item pool				
Checked if their understanding of my organisation was sufficient to discuss the issues I presented	Unique to the item pool				
Communicated authentically, transparently, honestly				Demonstration of effective communication skills	
Did not display too much familiarity nor stayed overly distant with me	Unique to the item pool				
Encouraged me to become aware of my own experience during the coaching session	Unique to the item pool				
Encouraged me to think about possible unconscious motives for my actions	Unique to the item pool				
Expressed complex ideas simply			Reflecting back		

Item pool created by the focus group participants (2017)	***(De Haan et al., 2010)***	***(Hooijberg & Lane, 2009)***	***(Passmore, 2010)***	***(Gray et al., 2011)***	***(Tonomura et al., 2018)*****
Invited me to discuss new behaviours I could engage in		Gap analysis			
Invited me to explore gaps between my current and desired situation		Gap analysis		Assistance in goal development and setting	
Invited me to explore how I typically approach change	Unique to the item pool				
Invited me to explore how my working environment influences me	Unique to the item pool				
Invited me to explore unintended consequences of my actions		Help assimilate feedback	Helping develop alternative perspectives	Encouragement of alternative perspectives	Questions helped me gain new awareness
Invited me to recognise and explore assumptions that I might have made	Direct confrontation/challenge			Assistance to help me make sense of a situation	Questions helped me gain new awareness
Invited me to reflect on the alignment between my own goals and those of my organisation	Unique to the item pool				
Invited me to share my feelings about a topic			Being empathetic	Show of compassion	
Invited me to state my personal vision for my role in the organisation	Unique to the item pool				
Offered periods of silent reflexion	Unique to the item pool				
Picked up on what I did not say and asked me about it	Unique to the item pool				
Showed positive regard, for example through comments, tone of voice, body language			Create good environment	Ability to establish rapport	
Stayed non-judgemental	Suspension of advice/judgement			Ability to establish rapport - creation of trust and respect	Made me feel safe enough to talk about anything

Item pool created by the focus group participants (2017)	***(De Haan et al., 2010)***	***(Hooijberg & Lane, 2009)***	***(Passmore, 2010)***	***(Gray et al., 2011)***	***(Tonomura et al., 2018)*****
Stayed open minded to what I said	Space/Freedom				Let me make my own decisions
Stepped into my world, using my vocabulary and metaphors	Metaphors				
Used examples from coaching engagements in other organisations to broaden my perspective on a situation	Unique to the item pool				
Used examples from their own life story to illustrate a point I made			Using self as a tool or example	Role modelling	
Using information I shared, made new connections and surfaced patterns and recurrent themes about me	Personal feedback			Identification of significant patterns of thinking and behaving in me	
Was prepared to share a point of view when I really needed advice	Advice	Made recommendations		Assistance in goal development and setting	Did not give direction or advice
Was responsive to my needs	Not being good enough				
Was supportive (for example through comments, tone of voice or body language)	Not being supportive				
When I expressed concerns about confidentiality, invited me to discuss these concerns	Breaking confidentiality		Agreeing on confidentiality rules		
When I presented an issue, neither overreacted nor stayed overly neutral	Leaving me to my own device				
When I requested advice, checked first if this was what I really needed and then invited me to reflect on my request	Being unsure				
When shifting from inquiry to advisory mode, made it explicit		Direct			

Item pool created by the focus group participants (2017)	*(De Haan et al., 2010)*	*(Hooijberg & Lane, 2009)*	*(Passmore, 2010)*	*(Gray et al., 2011)*	*(Tonomura et al., 2018)***
When unable to provide expertise, acknowledged it	Tools / experience				
	Quality of listening	Listening	Listening		Listened to me without interrupting until I finished talking
		Analysis of strengths and weaknesses			
		Focus	Staying focused		Confirmed the session goals at the start of the session
		Prioritise			
		Challenge	Provided both challenge and support	Provision of an appropriate mix of challenge and support	Gave me opportunities to set specific measurable goals
		Offered follow-up possibilities			
		Motivates to continue			
			Offering mechanisms for problem solving		
			Setting take-away tasks		Confirmed my action plan for in-between sessions
			Being non-directive		Ideas were not imposed on me but broadened my perspective
			Questioning		
				Promotion of action and reflexion	
					Conveyed observations and feelings to me

** Includes helpful and unhelpful behaviours, the latter negatively worded.*

*** This study, first published in 2015, was updated in 2018.*

****Published over the last ten years.*

4.3. MICRO-PROCESSES MANIFESTED BY THE POOL OF BEHAVIOURS

This section presents the results of the aggregated coding of the focus group discussions. The aggregated codes represent the coaching micro-processes on which the focus group relied to select the most important and difficult executive coaching behaviours.

4.3.1. Micro-processes manifested by the behaviours contained in the item pool

The following micro-processes emerged from the aggregated coding of the focus group discussions. They represent significant events during the coaching process, manifested by the behaviours that were considered as both important and difficult by the focus group participants.

Balancing individual and organisational needs

Focus groups recalled that an important aspect of the coaching dialogue consisted in reflecting about their own developmental needs in relation to their employer's business culture and strategy. Managing this polarity was considered a difficult part of the coaching process and was not always successfully managed. Interestingly, focus groups tended to attribute more responsibility to the coach than to themselves in achieving the task. Most of the time, the lack of knowledge of the coach about the company was cited as one of the main reasons for disagreements. In this example, a participant in focus group 2 did not accept his coach's suggestion to be more vulnerable in the workplace:

> "you might be able to experiment with a more vulnerable approach in the workplace. Is that a good idea, or not? You would want to understand a little bit about the context, or to understand how hard that's going to be, for the client. It depends on understanding the kind of work environment they are going to get back into".

In another instance, a participant from focus group 5, reflecting back on his experience, regretted that the coach never surfaced the polarity in their discussions:

> "If I see on a spectrum between somebody who truly deeply understand my organisation and someone who truly deeply understands me: she understood me and what I needed and demonstrated that much more than she demonstrated an understanding of the organisation, so I almost felt like she was a little bit outside the context of the organisation".

In contrast, this quote from a participant in focus group 4 illustrates a successful experience in which the coach challenged the authenticity of his goals:

> "There would have been times she would ask me if this is really what is going to make me happy; and if what I, how I am struggling how I am trying to behave, I am trying to achieve within my organisation is really what I wanted myself long term and we discussed these kinds of things quite helpfully".

In this other example, a participant from focus group 5 reported an experience where the coach invited her to actively manage the polarity to generate mutual benefits:

> "the ones I like are the "coachings" that teach me, how to be more me, and manage myself more, better, efficiently, with less hassle, that I think that is good for the organisation as well".

Balancing inquiry and advocacy

Whether or not the coach should provide advice generated animated discussions in all the focus groups. Participants reported being informed about or trained into "rules" that a coach should never give advice, which they found quite stifling. In focus group 1, this participant compared, in unfavourable terms, the negative feedback he received as a student of coaching when he wanted to give advice to his "client", to how he successfully experienced advice in receiving mode during his own coaching process:

> "If you look at I going on a journey as qualifying as a coach, so of course I am hearing […] don't give answers [to the client], don't do and don't, don't, don't, don't. But in terms of my experience [as a client] if we specifically agreed, let's go into that mode, it was very, very helpful, if we hadn't had done that, it would have actually compromised what we were doing, I think a little bit, rather than helping, which is what it did".

Focus groups preferred the coach to be situational and flexible in relation to advice giving, based on their needs, as explained by this participant in focus group 2:

> "that's my personal opinion, it might be different from anybody - but I expect the coach to give me back some things, to help me get better, to help me improve what I do, not necessarily just be, you know, just be the psychotherapist: basically, let you speak and so on, to get a feel comfortable, because I don't need that, personally. And so, I, it's about getting better, or realizing how to address potential behaviours that could compromise [your career] and in fact are".

In this example from focus group 3, the informing style of the coach matched his needs:

> "the coach that I had constantly used himself as an example: and some of it was business and some of it was personal, and it was always relevant to me".

In this quote from the same focus group, a more consultative approach was adequate:

> "it was more about asking the right questions, she was very good at that […]. She knew how to ask the right questions, that would help me see which direction I should go to, which decisions".

Career advice

Focus groups overwhelmingly expected that their coach would provide career advice when they requested it. In fact, this participant in focus group 2 represented a widely held opinion, especially within the most senior members of the focus groups, that the coach was their primary source of career development support.

> "[People like me] they don't know what they are doing it because they often never have been told".

As this focus group 2 participant explained, the provision of career advice was instrumental in triggering his intention to change. In this quote, he described how his coach helped him reframe some of the developmental feedback he had received in relation to his career progression.

> "[we discussed] how do you prepare yourself and therefore work and develop the skills and the behaviours that will help you move to the next level", and "where he thinks I am using all the skills that I need for the current position".

For this focus group 4 participant, the provision of career advice was helpful to address negative self-assessments she had made about her inability to adjust to a new working culture:

> "she could draw analogies with other contexts, which made me feel that not only she was understanding mine but she was also helping me normalise what was for me a particularly unusual working culture".

Focus groups noted that the coach generally tailored the method of delivery of career advice to their preference which made the process more effective. This focus group 5 participant described how her coach skilfully used cognitive empathy to deliver career advice from a strength-based stance:

> "she was able to help me see the kind of qualities and skills that I have and that I am trying to develop are actually critical to the organisation and to move up in the organisation so for me that was a huge leap of development right then".

In contrast, a participant in focus group 2 reported a more confrontational approach which helped her realise that her goals were unrealistic and she needed to plan for a longer developmental journey:

> "a good coach will tell you: "honey, you are not ready", or help you understand: what do you need to get there?"

<u>Challenge</u>

Challenging behaviours were considered critical to trigger the participants' intention to change. They were often described using active terms, such as in this quote from two participants in focus group 4:

> "forcing you to either be more transparent or thoughtful about yourself", or, "pushing you to think about some of the root causes behind observed actions".

Challenging behaviours were perceived as both uncomfortable and necessary to create a cognitive breakthrough during the coaching process. Participants such as this one in focus group 3 acknowledged that it was as risky for the coach as for herself:

> "[it's important for the coach] to take risks for the client, for the sake of your client, in your questions".

As indicated by this focus group 5 participant, challenging behaviours activated his learning loop:

> "[There is] a bit of testing and experimentation – and checking back on that testing and experimentation"

Challenge was also related to goal setting and monitoring. In this example, a focus group 2 participant explained how his coach challenged him not just to come up with goals, but also to own them:

> "you ask the client to actually come up and define what actions they are going to take and to what extent they did deliver on those actions – but I think you make them take the ownership of it".

When participants reflected on coaching sessions when challenge was absent, they shared that it felt like the process was incomplete, as explained by a participant in focus group 1:

> "if the coach does not challenge, then you are just in your comfort zone, you might lead [the coaching session] and have all the answers yourself but not arrive at anything new".

<u>Cognitive empathy</u>

All focus groups considered that the ability of the coach to deeply understand what they thought and felt individually and in relation to their working context was a skill that was difficult to do well. A focus group 2 participant summarised the concept:

> "It's acknowledging, it's testing, it's asking questions for clarification, it's engaging [..] with the person you are speaking to. So, it's asking-for-clarification-questions and saying, you know if I understand what you are saying it's this. Or for me it could mean this."

During the third focus group session, to illustrate the difficulty, a participant recalled a coaching process during which his coach was not successful at understanding him because she seemed too attached to her own agenda. This resulted in a great deal of frustration and adversely impacted his perception of trust in the relationship:

> "maybe the coach doesn't know everything, just maybe…Maybe the coach can learn something from the client. [It would be better] if they seem open and just trust".

One of the manifestations of cognitive empathy was the ability of the coach to play back what they heard in a more concise form. During the third focus group session, a participant used the word *"bottom-lining"* to describe the ability of the coach to summarise and manage time efficiently during the coaching process, which made another participant marvel at the result: "they make you say something in one minute that would have taken 20 minutes!"

In focus group 5, a participant described how the relevant use of metaphors demonstrated that cognitive empathy had been achieved:

> "There were times when she had clearly explored some of the [comic book] characters I was referring to, and some of their character traits, so as to you use them to explain in your coaching journey what was going on. She was quickly able to bottom line where were you at, what was going on".

Another manifestation of cognitive empathy was described in focus group 3; in this example the coach brought back elements that she recalled from earlier stages of the coaching process as a device to further the self-reflection of the client:

> "What was wonderful was that she would reference things that weren't in my stated goals, but that I had talked about, from like several sessions ago, and like bring them back to things I am currently saying – and that I had forgotten about – and that's a good thing – I do think that – it's not just even note-taking, but it's like a paying attention".

The cognitive empathy of the coach was also described in relation to the client's employer. In this example, a participant in focus group 5 recognised that his coach would not have been effective without it:

> "I work in a Japanese organisation, so you can imagine I recognise the difficult piece of the organisational culture and the individual cultures. I was just wondering about the level of understanding that is required by the coach: I think that it is the awareness. The awareness is important and it affects its place into the whole coaching experience".

In this other example from focus 3, the participant explained how he helped his coach become more knowledgeable about his company so that he could be supported better:

> "You need to have a discovery process with the person so that you try to relive and describe their own system though, because I think it's important to arrive at how they conceptualise what is their own…the concept that they operate in, so yeah, you want to get that information – you want to hear what they have to say on that topic because it supports how they feel the organisation work and how they fit into it".

<u>Compassion</u>

Compassion was acknowledged as a device allowing them to feel safe in the relationship, as described by this participant of focus group 5:

> "[she was] absolutely there to help me in the interaction. I can feel she was on my side, if there is a problem".

This other participant in focus group 5 indicated that safety enabled him to bring relevant material to the coaching session:

> "if the environment is created in the safe space and I understand that she is only there – all she is thinking about in these two hours is how to help me – then there is a positive pull for me to put things on the table".

For this participant in focus group 3, safety dispelled feelings of shame which had prevented him to be forthcoming in the past:

> "You know like compassion, rather than judging, rather than thinking: my god, this person does not know what they are doing".

Focus groups indicated that compassion not only created safety in the relationship but also led to a deep sense of connection, as described by this focus group 5 participant:

> "it was using all of those things which actually made me feel, actually very human. So, I was connecting with her in a very, very strong way".

Four coaching behaviours were linked to compassion: flexibility, appreciation, being non-judgmental and confidentiality.

Flexibility was defined, in focus group 1, as

> "that idea of responding and working together and changing as it becomes necessary to change."

In focus group 4, a participant described how her coach demonstrated flexibility cognitively, by showing

> "an openness to talk about something else that has happened, or overridden what you had planned, something more urgent or more pressing".

In focus group 1, flexibility was also associated with emotional intelligence:

> "It's picking up on these emotional cues and going at the pace that the client wants".

Appreciation

The appreciative attitude of the coach was contagious, inviting the client to re-consider certain emotions associated with the presenting issues. It this example from focus group 3, the behaviour led to immediate gratification:

> "The coach I worked with was really good and I was, felt really appreciative. The thing I like about any coach are that they reframe some things so that becomes positive".

In this other example from focus group 5, the coach used appreciative techniques to produce sustainable change:

> "she might help to understand and even challenge the legitimacy of the behaviour that somebody else is showing towards me, and that would be in a way increasing […] my confidence".

Non-judgemental

In focus group 3, a participant linked the non-judgemental attitude of his coach to the strength of the working alliance:

> "they really are your partner, your true partner, they are not there, in their own mind they are not assessing you, they are not judging you".

Other participants in this focus group agreed that they were under no illusion that some of what they had disclosed could have been judged negatively by their coaches. However, they appreciated the ability of their coach to manage body and verbal language so as to stay neutral:

> "When I talk to a coach, I want him / her to somehow communicate to me that even if what I am saying make them think in their mind, "I am not sure what they are talking about…", that they hold this in confidence inside".

In addition, in focus group 5, a participant noticed how both verbal and non-verbal behaviours reinforced his impression that he was not going to be judged:

> "At no point did the body language or the words that were used made me feel like, I was made to feel stupid or being judged differently than how I was judging myself and I thought that was quite powerful".

Confidentiality

For most participants, confidentiality was considered a given. As a result, they did not request or discuss it with their coach. However, they did in retrospect consider that it was an important part of the process, especially when the coach was involved with several executives in the same organisation, as this participant in focus group 3 testified:

> "she coached other people in the organisation and I still to this day have no idea who she was coaching".

In contrast, for a few participants, it was essential that confidentiality be discussed as it was related to their professional identity, as in this example in focus group 5:

> "I was talking about work and foreign embassies […] and you need that personal confidentiality because your reputation is being discussed".

Seeing patterns

Seeing patterns represented the ability of the coach to recombine information differently, so as to create new ideas, which then triggered further reflexions for the client. As this participant in focus group 5 summarised:

> "the whole value in the process was about understanding behaviours and what was useful was seeing, was for her to spot patterns, and then get me to reflect upon how I'd felt upon seeing that pattern and join the dots and my reflexions on how it made me feel, how I felt about this particular period of working life: that was very strong".

Seeing patterns thus became a building block to meaningful challenge, as described by this participant in focus group 5:

> "she would on occasion reflect back what she was hearing, which might be just a reflection of what I had actually said, or it might be identification of patterns – hum – and sometimes those patterns would come across to me as gentle challenge: is this really the way you want to be?".

4.3.2. Relationship between micro-processes and client outcomes

As indicated in the methodology chapter, the ranking and review process was related to importance, which had been defined in relation to coaching outcomes such as the working alliance, the generation of new insights and the attainment of goals. As a result, the coding of the focus group discussions generated relationships codes between micro-processes and client outcomes, which are presented in this section.

<u>Coaching micro-processes in relation to trust</u>

As summarised in Figure 4.2 below, both empathic behaviours, manifested in aggregated codes such as compassion and cognitive empathy, as well as process behaviours manifested in aggregated codes such as career advice and balance between individual and organisational needs, were linked to the building of trust.

Focus groups agreed that the professional credibility of the coach was foundational to building trust. This explains why cognitive empathy, career advice and balance between individual and organisational needs were linked to trust. As this focus group 2 participant explained:

> "You are a coach: I could be a coach too, you know. [For] 30 years I have been doing this teaching and coaching people to go in the right direction. So why is it that you are qualified – that is to me the question always at the back of my mind – that maybe sometimes is a barrier to break".

Within the micro-process compassion, the authenticity of the coach was considered particularly important to build trust. In this quote from focus group 2, the participant linked honesty to credibility in the formation of trust:

> "you absolutely have to be honest [as a coach], if you don't the credibility starts to decrease".

For this participant in group 1, authenticity was described as the gel that created the bond with the coach:

> "the art of the relationship: how you build the connection, how you weave this together with humanity and feeling […] maybe I'll use the word genuine".

Adopting a non-judgemental attitude was also linked to trust as described by this participant in focus group 3:

> "one that was key is did not make assumptions or judgements about me, I think that's a very important one and it's actually very impactful, because it builds trust".

Finally, confidentiality, even if it had often not been explicitly discussed with the coach, featured in the building of trust, as explained by this participant in focus group 3:

> "it takes a lot for some people to trust a complete stranger, and the stranger and the coach has to someway communicate [about] holding the confidentiality sacred".

Figure 4.2: Activity diagram for the formation of trust

<u>Coaching micro-processes in relation to new insights</u>

As shown in Figure 4.3 below, focus groups related all the coaching micro-processes to the generation of new insights, with the exception of compassion and confidentiality. Within the micro-process of challenge, one code in particular, called 'space', was identified as a major trigger of new insights.

The code 'space', described a pause, either during or in-between coaching sessions, as explained by this focus group 1 participant:

> "the coach has to sit back, and really let the executive let the solutions emerge from the dialogue… [it] requires a lot of self-restraint"

The production of the 'space' was enabled by skilful management of the polarity between inquiry and advocacy by the coach. In this example, a focus group 2 participant recalled how the coach pushed back when he was tempted to surrender his resourcefulness to him:

> "a session where you go and hoping someone is going to say, oh well…here is the answer, you just need to do it like this: this is your problem and here is the solution. It was very interesting how the space was cleared for me to come up with my own answers if you like, both having the advice request being put back to me in question and sparing personal stories, and the neutrality".

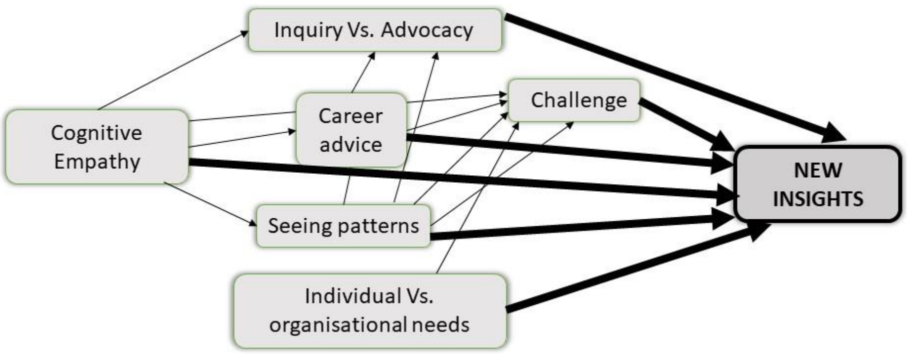

Figure 4.3: Activity diagram for the generation of new insights

<u>Coaching micro-processes in relation to goal attainment</u>

During the discussions, the focus groups barely mentioned goal achievement as a coaching outcome. This may be linked to the fact that most action-planning items had been removed by focus group participants on grounds that they were not specific to coaching.

4.3.3. Summary of findings

Table 4.3 below summarises the relations made by the focus group participants between the behaviours they selected for the purpose of developing the item pool, the micro-processes they represent and the outcomes they help achieve. Compassion and confidentiality were considered as uniquely linked to trust and were manifested by 14 important and difficult behaviours. Career advice, cognitive empathy and balance between individual and organisation needs were linked to both trust and new insights and were manifested by 12 important and difficult behaviours. Finally, balance between inquiry and advocacy, seeing patterns and challenge were uniquely linked to new insights and were manifested by the remaining nine behaviours.

Table 4.3: Relations between the item pool, micro-processes and client outcomes

Important and difficult behaviours	Micro-processes	Client outcomes
Acknowledged my emotions when discussing a topic	Compassion	**TRUST ONLY**
Communicated authentically, transparently, honestly		
Did not display too much familiarity nor stayed overly distant with me		
Invited me to share my feelings about a topic		
Showed positive regard		
Stayed non-judgmental		
Stayed open minded		
Was supportive		
When I presented an issue, neither over-reacted nor stayed overly neutral		
Expressed complex ideas simply		
Offered periods of silent reflection		
Was responsive to my needs		
When unable to provide expertise, acknowledged it		
When I expressed concerns about confidentiality, invited me to discuss	Confidentiality	
Used examples from coaching engagement in other organisations to broaden my perspective	Career advice	**TRUST AND NEW INSIGHTS**
Used examples from their own life story to illustrate a point I made		
Asked questions about my organisation to better understand the issues I presented	Cognitive Empathy	
Checked if their understanding of my organisation was sufficient to discuss the issues I presented		
Encouraged me to become more aware of my own experience during the coaching session		
Encouraged me to think about possible unconscious motives for my actions		
Invited me to explore how I typically approach change		
Invited me to explore how my working environment influences me		
Stepped into my world, using my vocabulary and metaphors		

Important and difficult behaviours	Micro-processes	Client outcomes
Asked whether my organisation's culture enables or hampers my goals	Balance btw indiv. and org. needs	
Invited me to reflect on the alignment between my own goals and those of the organisation		
Invited me to state my personal vision for my role in the organisation		
Was prepared to share a point of view when I really needed advice	Balance between inquiry and advocacy	**NEW INSIGHTS ONLY**
When I requested advice, checked first if this was what I really needed and then invited me to reflect on my request		
When shifting from inquiry to advisory mode, made it explicit		
Picked up on what I did not say and asked me about it	Seeing patterns	
Using the information I shared, made new connections and surfaced patterns and recurrent themes about me		
Invited me to discuss new behaviours I could engage in	Challenge	
Invited me to explore gaps between my current and desired situation		
Invited me to recognise and explore assumptions I might have made		
Invited me to explore unintended consequences of my actions		

4.4. CONCLUSION

Working from a set of 89 behaviours compiled from a review of existing scales, participants made a number of significant changes as they reduced the scale to 35 items. All behaviours which were expressed in a directive manner were shifted to an inviting, collaborative expression. In addition, most action planning and accountability behaviours were removed on grounds that they were not specific to the job of an executive coach.

The thematic analysis of the focus group discussions showcased similarities but also differences with existing coaching scales. In terms of similarities, participants acknowledged the importance of both compassionate and challenging behaviours, and kept most of them in the item pool. In terms of differences, participants expressed a need for more business and organisational input from their coach, which led them to add several new behaviours. Notably, focus groups considered that the micro-process "cognitive empathy", had to be understood not just in terms of the executive as an individual but also in relation to the working context. In particular, they highlighted the importance of the micro-process "balancing individual and organisational needs", consisting in supporting a reflection about the client's developmental needs in relation to their employer's business culture and strategy. In addition, focus groups preferred the coach to be situational and flexible in relation to advice giving, leading them to add behaviours related to the micro-process "balancing inquiry and advocacy". In particular, they overwhelmingly expected that their coach would provide "career advice" when they requested it.

The next chapter presents the extent to which these behaviours were reported by the participants of the quantitative strand, and how they were related to the outcomes measures that were surveyed.

CHAPTER 5
FINDINGS FROM THE QUANTITATIVE STRAND

5.1. INTRODUCTION

The purpose of the quantitative strand was to develop the feedback instrument by further reducing the item pool and assessing its reliability, as well as its construct and criterion validity. The chapter starts with an analysis of the suitability of the data collected for the purpose of conducting the statistical analyses that were planned for such purpose. Subsequently, it presents the results of the principal component analysis (PCA), leading to the feedback instrument. Then, it provides an item analysis of the instrument. Finally, it presents the results of the reliability and criterion validity tests performed conducted to assess the quality of the instrument.

5.2. SUITABILITY OF THE DATA

5.2.1. Suitability of the data for a PCA

A PCA requires a minimum ratio of number of participants per item. At the time of the completion of the qualitative data collection, 35 behaviours had been retained from the compilation by at least one focus group or added to the compilation by at least two focus groups. Four behaviours, added by the final focus group only, were included to the survey conditionally, in the event that the sample size would be sufficient for all 39 behaviours to be included in the analyses. Since this was not the case, only the initial 35 behaviours were analysed. With 107 participants for 35 items, the sample was on the lower range and required a large number of high correlations between items to be deemed acceptable (Williams et al., 2010). After the first rotation, the correlation matrix between items confirmed that this was the case, with a significant number of correlations above 0.6 (Table 5.8).

However, not all participants had ranked all the behaviours, with response levels ranging from N=98 to N=107. To maintain a suitable sample size, missing data would need to be replaced by the mean, which is acceptable if the percentage of missing data is inferior to 5% of participants for each item (Tabachnik & Fidell, 2013). This was the case for 32 behaviours. In contrast, three behaviours had a percentage of missing behaviours between 5% and 8.5%. After examining the full range of responses of participants who did not score these three behaviours, I could not detect any pattern.

To check whether outliers might impact the results of the analyses, I calculated the 5%-trimmed mean for each item and compared it to the mean. The comparison showed only a small difference which led me to keep the outliers in the analysis. In addition, I examined the matrix scatterplots between each pair of items and did not find any evidence of curvilinearity (Pallant, 2013).

Finally, I checked that the value of the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin was greater than .6 and the Bartlett's test of sphericity value was significant, as shown in Table 5.1 below.

Table 5.1: Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure and Bartlett's test after the first rotation

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy.		.932
Bartlett's test of sphericity	Approx. Chi-square	3557.866
	Df	595
	Sig.	.000

5.2.2. Suitability of the data for multiple regressions

Multiple regression analyses are particularly sensitive to sample size, multicollinearity and singularity, outliers, normality, linearity, homoscedasticity, and independence of residuals.

Despite the non-normality of the distributions of the variables in the model, the sample size was sufficient to conduct parametric analyses and multiple regression analyses (Tabachnik & Fidell, 2013). As a precaution, I calculated and compared correlations obtained through parametric and non-parametric methods and found them similar.

While outliers did not significantly impact the difference between the mean and the trimmed 5% mean, as a precaution, for each regression, I calculated Mahalanobis distances. Each time, no more than two cases showed distances superior to the critical value. As a result, I kept outliers in the analyses (Tabachnik and Fidell, 2013).

I found no evidence of multicollinearity or singularity, nor violations of linearity or homoscedasticity for the residuals upon examination of the residual scatterplots.

5.2.3. Issues with the research context

As a result of difficulties encountered with the recruitment of participants (Section 3.6.4.), two distinct groups of executives participated in the research:

- Those referred by executive coaches who had been contracted by the gatekeeper of organisation A (89 participants)
- Those referred by executive coaches who were ICF members and worked for multiple organisations (18 participants)

While I had ensured during the recruitment process that ICF coaches were following a process similar to those of the coaches contracted by organisation A, most of the participants referred by ICF coaches had not participated in a leadership development workshop prior to the coaching process. Therefore, I investigated whether the inclusion of the ICF sample impacted the results of the PCA. To that effect, I performed independent sample T-tests to compare the means obtained by each group of participants for the item pool. I found no significant difference indicating that the full sample was suitable to conduct the PCA.

To investigate whether the inclusion of the ICF sample may have impacted the results of the multiple regression analysis, I performed independent sample T-tests to compare the means obtained by each group of participants for the control and dependent variables. A significant difference with a moderate effect existed for the rating of the WAI (which was higher in the ICF sample) and the SRIS (which was higher in the organisation A sample). These findings led me to recalculate the multiple regressions, retaining only the 89 participants employed by organisation A. Overall, the results were similar to those of the full sample, with one exception: the second component no longer had a significant unique contribution to the variance of the WAI.

5.3. PRINCIPAL COMPONENT ANALYSIS

5.3.1. Number of components

I used four criteria to decide to select a two-component solution: Eigenvalues, scree plot, Monte Carlo analysis and percentage of variance explained (Pallant, 2013).

The first rotation of all 35 items extracted four components with eigenvalues higher than 1, as shown in Table 5.2 below.

Table 5.2: Eigenvalues and percentage of variance explained.

Component	Initial eigenvalues	% of Variance
1	19.2	54.8
2	2.5	7.0
3	1.4	4.0
4	1.2	3.4

However, the scree plot, showed in Figure 5.1 below consisted in a steep curve from component 1 to component 2, followed by a clear change of shape, indicating that a two-component solution was a more likely fit to the data.

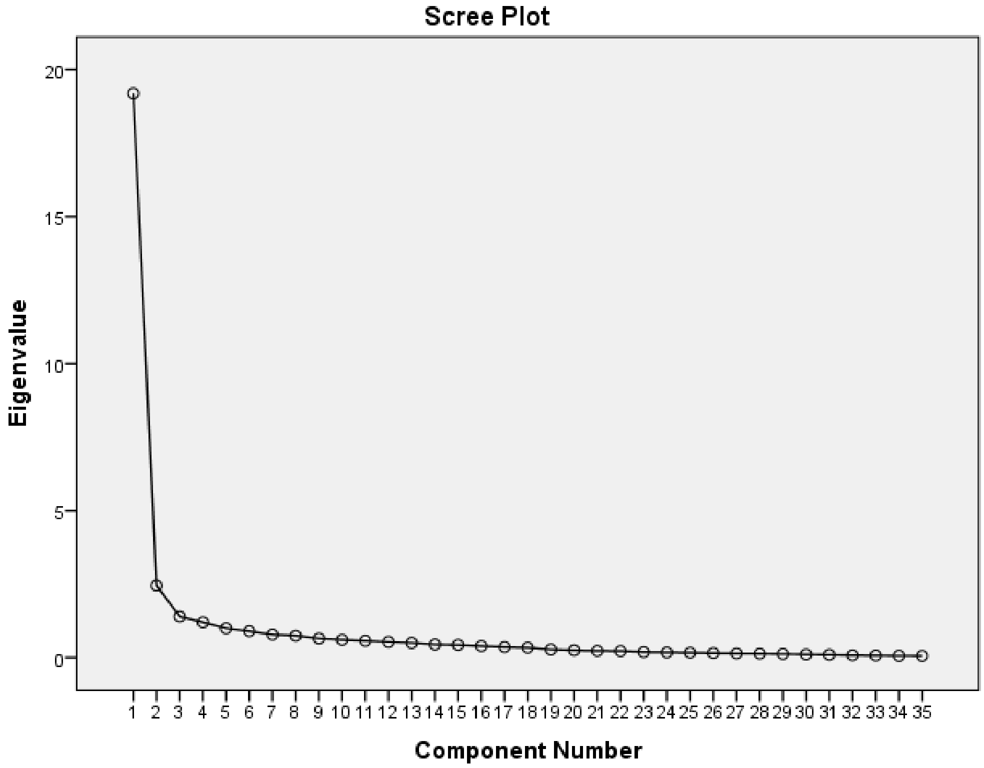

Figure 5.1: Scree plot – first rotation with 35 behaviours

The suitability of a two-component solution was further confirmed by a Monte Carlo analysis (Pallant, 2013) which showed that only two components with eigenvalues superior to 1 exceeded the corresponding criterion values for a randomly generated data matrix of the same size (35 variables x 107 participants), as shown in Table 5.3 below.

Table 5.3: Monte Carlo PCA for parallel analysis

Component	Actual eigenvalue from PCA	Criterion value from parallel analysis	Decision about component
1	19.193	2.2672	Accept
2	2.450	2.0917	Accept
3	1.397	1.9610	Reject
4	1.199	1.8475	Reject

Finally, I conducted two additional rotations of the 35 behaviours: one with a one-component solution and one with two-component solution. The one-component solution explained 56% of the variance. In contrast, the two-component solution, explained 64% of the variance, adding 8%. In addition, the behaviours loading on the second component were describing a behavioural dimension which was clearly distinct from the behaviours loading on the first component (ways of being of the coach Vs. actions taken by the coach). Based on such accumulated evidence, I decided to keep two components in the scale.

5.3.2. Results of the rotation

As justified in Section 3.7.2., I selected the orthogonal varimax rotation method for the final stages of the analysis. The complete results of the first varimax rotation are presented in Table 5.4 below, whereby loadings below 0.40 are omitted.

Table 5.4: Rotated component matrix with 35 behaviours [a]

	Component	
	1	2
My coach invited me to reflect on the alignment between my goals and the goals of my organisation	.793	
My coach checked if their understanding of my organisation was sufficient to discuss the issues I presented	.767	
My coach used examples from coaching engagements in other organisations to broaden my perspective on a situation	.762	
When I requested advice, my coach checked first if this is what I really needed and then invited me to reflect on my request	.758	
My coach invited me to state my personal vision for my role in my organisation	.717	.404
When shifting from inquiry to advisory mode, my coach made it explicit	.714	
My coach invited me to explore how I typically approach change	.709	.496
When I expressed concerns about confidentiality, my coach invited me to discuss these concerns	.700	
When unable to provide expertise, my coach acknowledged it	.686	
My coach invited me to explore unintended consequences of my actions	.672	
My coach invited me to reflect on whether my organisation's culture enables or hampers my development goals	.671	
My coach asked questions about my organisation to better understand the issues I presented	.655	
My coach encouraged me to think about possible unconscious motives for my actions	.652	.465
My coach invited me to discuss new behaviours I could engage in	.646	.507
My coach encouraged me to be aware of my own experience and behaviours during the coaching session	.643	.544
My coach invited me to explore gaps between my current and desired situation	.622	.490
My coach invited me to recognise and explore assumptions I might have made	.620	.468
My coach used examples from their own life story to illustrate a point I made	.619	
My coach picked up on what I did not say and asked me about it	.604	.433
My coach communicated authentically, transparently, honestly		.855
My coach was supportive (for example through comments, tone of voice or body language)		.841
My coach showed positive regard (for example through comments, tone of voice, body language)		.821
My coach stayed open minded to what I said		.804
My coach was responsive to my needs		.783
My coach stayed non-judgemental		.748
My coach acknowledged my emotions when discussing a topic		.748
When I presented an issue, my coach neither over-reacted nor stayed overly neutral		.695
My coach invited me to share my feelings about a topic	.452	.665
My coach expressed complex ideas simply	.547	.655

	Component	
	1	2
Using the information I shared, my coach made new connections and surfaced patterns or recurrent themes about me	.501	.630
My coach stepped into my world, using my vocabulary and metaphors	.457	.618
My coach invited me to explore how my working environment influences me	.473	.610
My coach was prepared to share a point of view when I really needed advice	.541	.595
My coach offered periods of silent reflection	.414	.457
My coach did not display too much familiarity nor stayed overly distant with me		.348

Extraction method: Principal component analysis.
Rotation method: Varimax with Kaiser normalization.
a. Rotation converged in three iterations.

For the second varimax rotation 13 behaviours were removed as they did not meet one of both of the following criteria (Tabachnik & Fidell, 2013):

- Twelve behaviours loading on two components (difference of loading lower than 0.2)
- One behaviour which obtained a loading of less than 0.5 on the second component.

This next rotation explained 65% of the variance with two clear factors. One more item was removed because it loaded on the two factors with a difference inferior to 0.2.

The final rotation resulted in a solution that explained 64% of the variance, indicative of an adequate construct validity. The first component explained 53.3% of the variance. The second component explained 10.7% of the variance. The final version of the scale, called the Executive Coaching Behaviour Observation Scale (EXCBOS) is presented in Table 5.5 below.

Table 5.5: Rotated component matrix [a], varimax, with 21 behaviours [a]

Executive Coaching Behaviour Observation Scale	Components	
	1	2
My coach checked if their understanding of my organisation was sufficient to discuss the issues I presented	.79	
My coach used examples from coaching engagements in other organisations to broaden my perspective on a situation	.79	
My coach invited me to reflect on the alignment between my goals and the goals of my organisation	.79	
When I requested advice, my coach checked first if this is what I really needed and then invited me to reflect on my request	.78	
When I expressed concerns about confidentiality, my coach invited me to discuss these concerns	.72	
When shifting from inquiry to advisory mode, my coach made it explicit	.72	
My coach invited me to state my personal vision for my role in my organisation	.72	
When unable to provide expertise, my coach acknowledged it	.71	
My coach invited me to explore how I typically approach change	.72	
My coach invited me to reflect on whether my organisation's culture enables or hampers my development goals	.69	
My coach asked questions about my organisation to better understand the issues I presented	.68	
My coach invited me to explore unintended consequences of my actions	.65	
My coach used examples from their own life story to illustrate a point I made	.64	
My coach communicated authentically, transparently, honestly		.86
My coach was supportive (for example through comments, tone of voice or body language)		.86
My coach showed positive regard (for example through comments, tone of voice, body language)		.84
My coach stayed open minded to what I said		.82
My coach was responsive to my needs		.79
My coach stayed non-judgemental		.75
My coach acknowledged my emotions when discussing a topic		.75
When I presented an issue, my coach neither over-reacted nor stayed overly neutral		.68

Only loadings greater than 0.5 in absolute magnitude are presented (*N*=107)

Cross-loadings are omitted

a. Rotation converged in 3 iterations.

5.3.3. Interpretation of the components

5.3.3.1. The first component: transformational professional learning

The first component included 13 behaviours, manifesting all the executive coaching micro-processes discussed by the focus groups: balancing individual and organisational needs, balancing inquiry and advocacy, career advice, challenge, cognitive empathy, compassion, confidentiality and seeing patterns. Together, these micro-processes evoke the deployment of a professional transformational learning process, grounded in

Dewey's philosophy (Jackson & Cox, 2009), theorised in adult learning (Mezirow, 1990) and investigated in executive coaching (Kets De Vries, 2013; Sammut, 2014; Moons, 2015; Theeboom, Van Vianen & Beersma, 2017). Arguably, the behaviours and micro-processes may be recombined into four distinct phases of the individual learning process: preparation, creativity, goal setting and maintenance of trust.

Preparation was considered by Dewey (1910) as the basis of knowledge acquisition for the purpose of getting things done. The preparation phase is a key anchor to the adult learning process (Kolb, 1984), and is routinely used by coaches in the early stages of their interventions (Maxwell, 2016).

The creativity phase describes a co-creative process during which the reflective dialogue is used to generate serendipitous connections between thoughts, evocative of an extended cognition (Cox, 2015). This co-reflective dialogue has been described by evidence-based theorists such as Grant (2016), who have considered the coaching process as a space to develop self-determination, a pre-condition to achieve self-efficacy which is needed to come up with creative solutions to new problems (Bandura, 1977). In addition, multiple qualitative investigations of the coaching process from a client-centred and coach-developmental lens, have identified the creativity phase as an integral part of the coaching process, naming it "inspiring action" (Hooijberg & Lane, 2009, p. 488), "creating resonance" (Moons, 2015, p. 52), or "the ability to identify patterns" (Myers, 2014, p. 187). Kets de Vries (2013) argued that creativity comprises two distinct processes: illumination (where the client is in self-reflecting mode) and verification (where client and coaches are in active discussion).

Because of the future orientation of coaching (Clutterbuck & Spence, 2016), goal setting is considered an important part of the coaching process. In fact, most coach competency models feature goal-setting skills prominently (Bartlett II et al., 2014) and most coaches report using goal-setting and monitoring behaviours liberally (Vandaveer et al., 2016).

The first component of the scale also included three behaviours related to transparency and confidentiality, both strongly related to the management of breakdowns during a learning process (Moons, 2015).

5.3.3.2. The second component: empathy

The eight behaviours loading on the second component manifested a range of empathic behaviours from the executive coach, all related to the micro-process compassion surfaced by the focus group discussions.

Empathy was conceptualised by Rogers (1957), in helping disciplines, as the understanding of how clients perceive the world around them and as the ability to communicate it back to them in an appreciative manner. In client studies, empathy has been identified as an important coaching behavioural dimension. For example, clients interviewed by O'Broin and Palmer (2010, p. 128) mentioned the "coach's ability to adapt to the client", the "bond and engagement between the client and the coach", and the "level of collaboration" and Myers (2014) reported observations of the "coach's empathy, warmth & acceptance" as a crucial part of the process.

Bachelor (1988, p. 232) distinguished cognitive empathy (which refers to the understanding of how a person feels and what they might be thinking), affective empathy (experiencing the same feeling), sharing empathy (communicating back) and nurturing empathy (manifesting a "sustained, attentive, caring" presence). In the instrument, cognitive, sharing and nurturing empathic behaviours were represented. Affective empathy was not.

5.3.4. Item analysis of the instrument

The item analysis consisted in assessing the level of item endorsement (to what extent the respondents tend to agree with the statement) and of item discrimination (to what extent the item measures the same concept as all other items) (Rust & Golombok, 2009).

5.3.4.1. Item endorsement

Table 5.6 and Figures 5.2, 5.3 and 5.4 present the characteristics of the distribution of the EXBOS and its components. Component 2 / empathy and all of its constitutive items had the highest mean scores and presented a distribution of scores with high negative skewness and kurtosis, indicative of very high endorsement. This would suggest that component 2 / empathy may not distinguish higher from lower empathy (Rust & Golombok, 2009).

In contrast, the distribution of scores obtained by behaviours loading on component 1 / professional transformational learning was flatter and less negatively skewed. Such characteristics are indicative of a more moderate item endorsement, and suggest that component 1 appears more adequate to distinguish higher from lower professional learning.

Table 5.6: Descriptive statistics of the EXCBOS

	Comp-onent	Min	Max	Mean	SD	Skew-ness	Kurtosis
Total scale	**----**	**29**	**126**	**107.6**	**16.9**	**-1.82**	**4.63**

	Comp-onent	Min	Max	Mean	SD	Skew-ness	Kurtosis
Component one	**----**	**21**	**78**	**62.6**	**12.9**	**-1.27**	**1.61**
Component two	**----**	**8**	**48**	**45.0**	**5.4**	**-4.04**	**22.3**
My coach stayed open minded to what I said	2	1	6	5.70	0.7	-3.79	18.29
My coach showed positive regard (for example through comments, tone of voice, body language)	2	1	6	5.69	0.7	-3.67	19.61
My coach communicated authentically, transparently, honestly	2	1	6	5.69	0.7	-3.67	19.61
My coach was supportive (for example through comments, tone of voice or body language)	2	1	6	5.68	0.8	-3.67	15.26
My coach was responsive to my needs	2	1	6	5.63	0.8	-3.08	11.32
My coach stayed non-judgemental	2	1	6	5.59	0.9	-2.79	8.61
My coach acknowledged my emotions when discussing a topic	2	1	6	5.52	0.8	-2.41	8.43
When I presented an issue, my coach neither over-reacted nor stayed overly neutral	2	1	6	5.48	0.9	-2.20	6.18
My coach invited me to explore unintended consequences of my actions	1	1	6	5.10	1.1	-1.73	3.47
My coach asked questions about my organisation to better understand the issues I presented	1	1	6	5.10	1.2	-1.58	2.24
My coach invited me to state my personal vision for my role in my organisation	1	1	6	4.99	1.2	-1.18	0.83
My coach invited me to explore how I typically approach change	1	1	6	4.92	1.3	-0.98	0.05
My coach checked if their understanding of my organisation was sufficient to discuss the issues I presented	1	1	6	4.92	1.4	-1.44	1.58
When I expressed concerns about confidentiality, my coach invited me to discuss these concerns	1	1	6	4.90	1.2	-1.40	2.02
When I requested advice, my coach checked first if this is what I really needed and then invited me to reflect on my request	1	1	6	4.85	1.2	-1.29	1.47
My coach invited me to reflect on the alignment between my goals and the goals of my organisation	1	1	6	4.84	1.2	-0.94	0.48
When unable to provide expertise, my coach acknowledged it	1	1	6	4.78	1.3	-1.28	1.39
When shifting from inquiry to advisory mode, my coach made it explicit	1	1	6	4.61	1.4	-0.90	0.12
My coach invited me to reflect on whether my organisation's culture enables or hampers my development goals	1	1	6	4.59	1.3	-0.86	0.06

	Comp-onent	Min	Max	Mean	SD	Skew-ness	Kurtosis
My coach used examples from their own life story to illustrate a point I made	1	1	6	4.51	1.5	-0.90	0.10

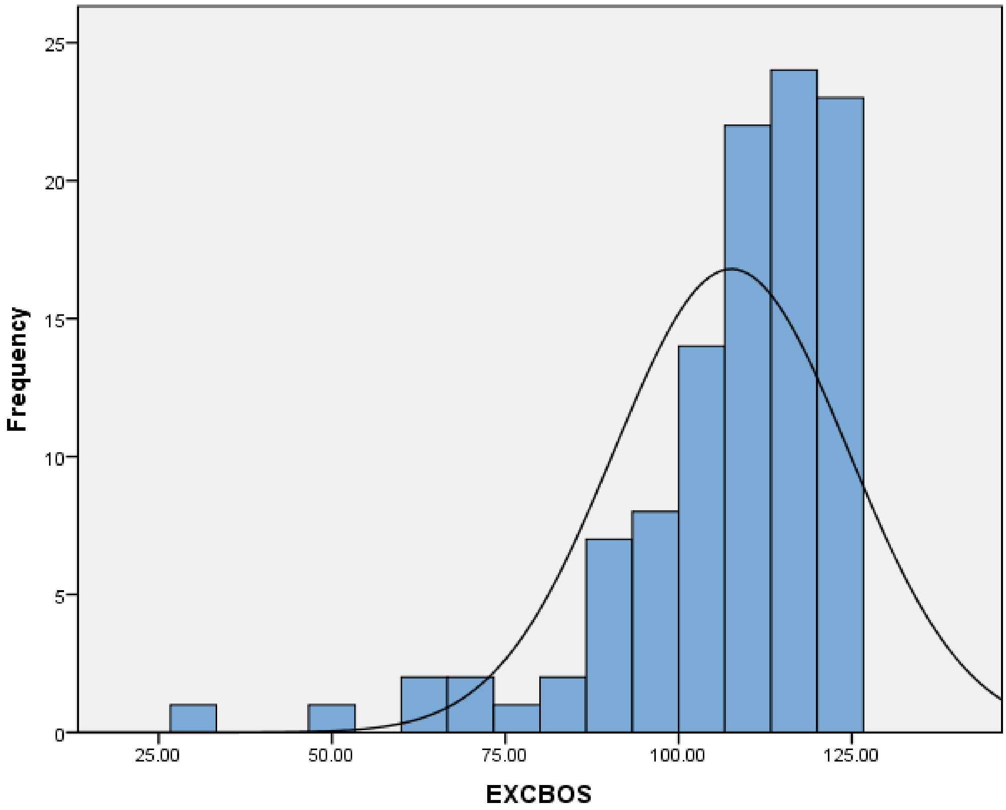

Figure 5.2: Distribution of scores on the EXCBOS

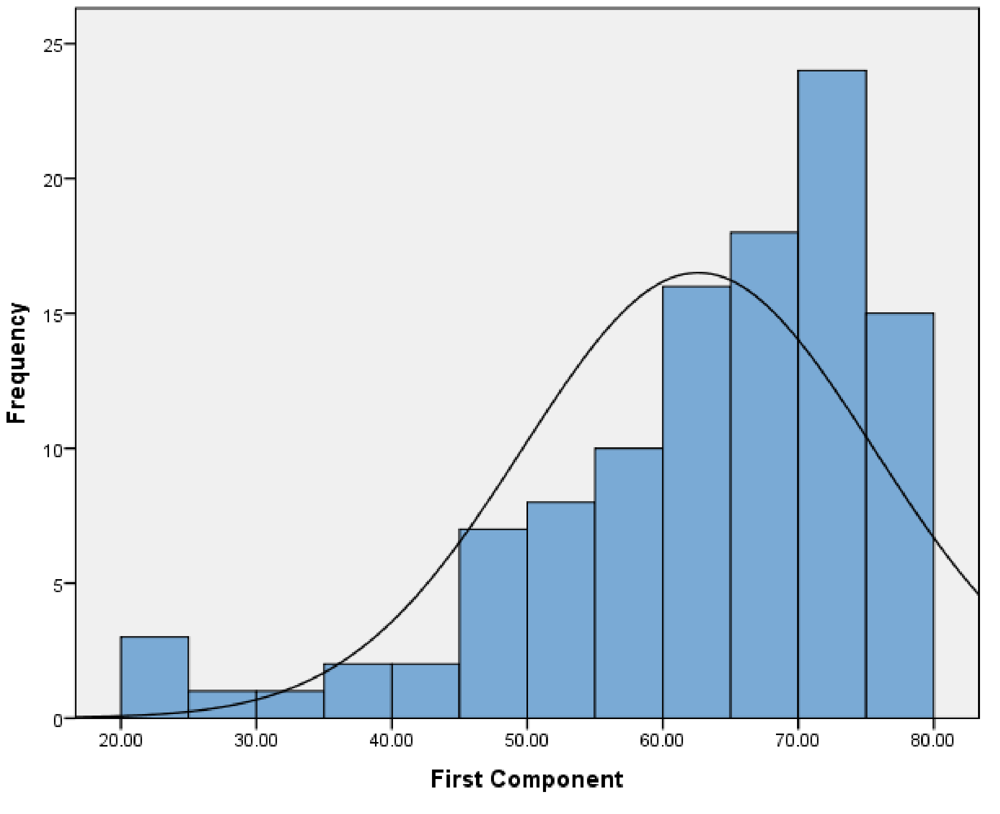

Figure 5.3: Distribution of scores on the first component / transformational professional learning

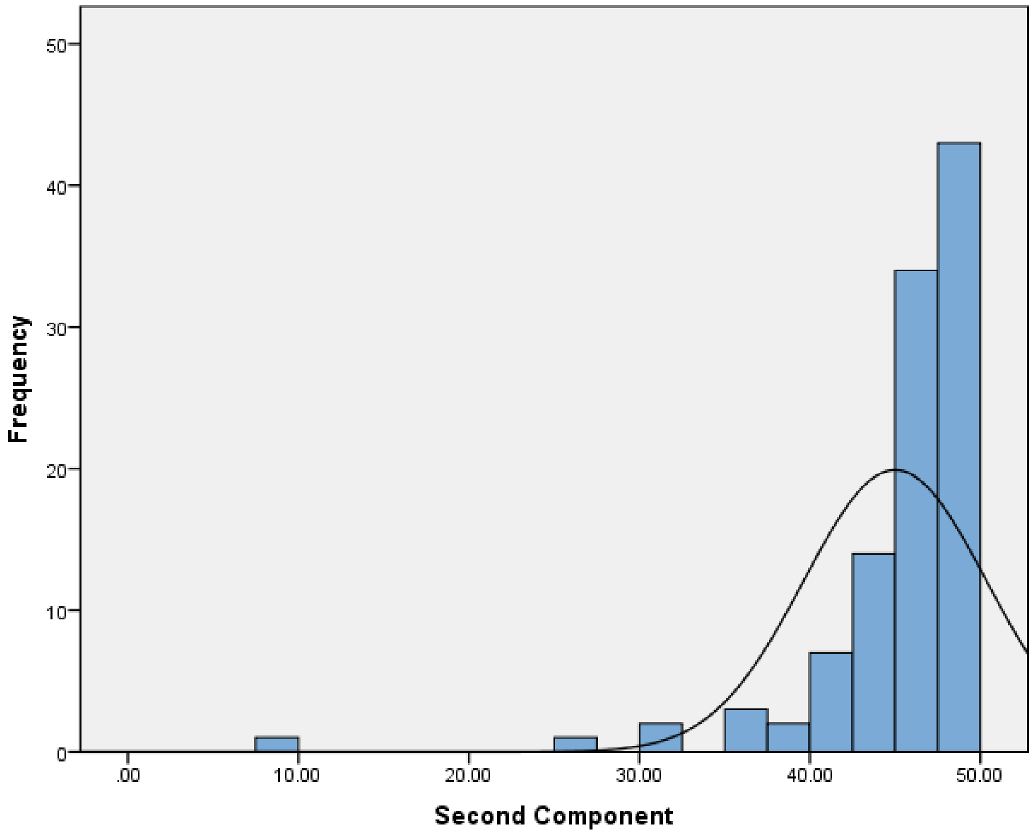

Figure 5.4: Distribution of scores on the second component / empathy

5.3.4.2. Item discrimination

Table 5.7 below presents a table of cross correlations between items contained in the instrument and table 5.8 below presents the correlation coefficient between each item score and the total score for the scale. Taken together they suggest that all items make a moderate to high contribution to the instrument, indicative of adequate discrimination (Rust & Golombok, 2009).

Table 5.7: Inter-item correlation matrix

My coach…	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21
checked if his/her understanding of my organisation was sufficient to discuss the issues I presented	-																				
used examples from coaching engagements in other organisations to broaden my perspective on a situation	.64	-																			
invited me to reflect on the alignment between my goals and the goals of my organisation	.68	.55	-																		
When I requested advice, checked first if this is what I really needed and then invited me to reflect on my request	.72	.61	.67	-																	
When I expressed concerns about confidentiality, invited me to discuss these concerns	.72	.60	.52	.54	-																
When shifting from inquiry to advisory mode, made it explicit	.67	.55	.69	.73	.53	-															
invited me to state my personal vision for my role in my organisation	.63	.55	.80	.72	.50	.70	-														
When unable to provide expertise, acknowledged it	.68	.60	.66	.68	.59	.58	.56	-													
invited me to explore how I typically approach change	.67	.55	.82	.68	.50	.74	.79	.64	-												
invited me to reflect on whether my organisation's culture enables or hampers my development goals	.58	.62	.65	.49	.46	.47	.48	.57	.57	-											
asked questions about my organisation to better understand the issues I presented	.63	.59	.61	.62	.56	.50	.51	.54	.56	.52	-										
invited me to explore unintended consequences of my actions	.52	.48	.56	.61	.34	.59	.65	.45	.59	.33	.40	-									
used examples from his/her own life story to illustrate a point I made	.52	.64	.45	.45	.45	.43	.38	.45	.40	.37	.55	.38	-								
communicated authentically, transparently, honestly	.48	.33	.50	.45	.39	.47	.52	.48	.58	.27	.45	.30	.33	-							
was supportive	.48	.39	.47	.46	.27	.47	.51	.55	.58	.41	.51	.31	.29	.76	-						
showed positive regard	.43	.35	.44	.44	.34	.41	.51	.44	.56	.36	.46	.24	.23	.76	.80	-					
stayed open minded to what I said	.47	.30	.44	.34	.33	.51	.44	.40	.58	.27	.28	.29	.26	.75	.69	.67	-				
was responsive to my needs	.54	.42	.49	.54	.31	.57	.53	.49	.57	.38	.53	.48	.32	.66	.81	.68	.69	-			
stayed non-judgemental	.54	.39	.40	.56	.33	.46	.51	.47	.50	.26	.38	.47	.33	.68	.66	.62	.61	.72	-		
acknowledged my emotions when discussing a topic	.56	.41	.49	.51	.37	.41	.47	.50	.53	.41	.48	.30	.32	.66	.68	.67	.56	.66	.67	-	
When I presented an issue, neither over-reacted nor stayed overly neutral	.53	.36	.54	.53	.34	.56	.47	.49	.56	.38	.47	.27	.38	.69	.58	.55	.61	.57	.54	.68	-

Table 5.8: Corrected item total correlation

Items	
My coach checked if his/her understanding of my organisation was sufficient to discuss the issues I presented	.82
My coach used examples from coaching engagements in other organisations to broaden my perspective on a situation	.71
My coach invited me to reflect on the alignment between my goals and the goals of my organisation	.80
When I requested advice, my coach checked first if this is what I really needed and then invited me to reflect on my request	.80
When I expressed concerns about confidentiality , my coach invited me to discuss these concerns	.64
When shifting from inquiry to advisory mode, my coach made it explicit	.77
My coach invited me to state my personal vision for my role in my organisation	.78
When unable to provide expertise, my coach acknowledged it	.75
My coach invited me to explore how I typically approach change	.82
My coach invited me to reflect on whether my organisation's culture enables or hampers my development goals	.62
My coach asked questions about my organisation to better understand the issues I presented	.70
My coach invited me to explore unintended consequences of my actions	.60
My coach used examples from his/her own life story to illustrate a point I made	.56
My coach communicated authentically, transparently, honestly	.67
My coach was supportive (for example through comments, tone of voice or body language)	.68
My coach showed positive regard (for example through comments, tone of voice, body language)	.63
My coach stayed open minded to what I said	.60
My coach was responsive to my needs	.71
My coach stayed non-judgemental	.65
My coach acknowledged my emotions when discussing a topic	.67
When I presented an issue, my coach neither over-reacted nor stayed overly neutral	.66

5.4. RELIABILITY OF THE INSTRUMENT

As indicated in the methodology chapter (Section 3.7.2), the context of the research allowed only one method of measuring the instrument's reliability. The internal consistency of the EXCBOS and that of its two components were very high, with Cronbach's Alpha coefficients above .90, as indicated in table 5.9 below. This is indicative of the fact that some items might be redundant and that additional analyses would be required to standardise the scale (Tavakol & Dennick, 2011).

Table 5.9: Reliability of the EXCBOS

N=107	Cronbach's Alpha
Executive Coaching Behaviour Observation Scale (EXCBOS)	.95
Component 1	.94
Component 2	.94

5.5. CRITERION VALIDITY OF THE INSTRUMENT

5.5.1. Reliability and descriptive statistics of the control and dependent variables

To introduce the investigation of the relationships between the Executive Coaching Behaviour Observation Scale and coaching outcomes, this section presents the reliability and descriptive statistics of the three dependent variables (Working Alliance Inventory, Serendipity Quotient and goal attainment measure) and of the control variable (Self-reflection and Insight Scale).

Table 5.10 below presents the Cronbach's Alpha coefficients for each independent and dependent variable. The coefficients were high, indicative of a strong internal consistency of the scales.

Table 5.10: reliability of the dependent and control variables

N=107	Cronbach's Alpha
Self-reflection and Insight Scale (SRIS)	.90
Working Alliance Inventory (WAI)	.92
Serendipity Quotient (SQ)	.90

Note: the Cronbach's Alpha was not relevant for the goal attainment measure since it consisted in only one item.

As shown in Table 5.11 below, for both the WAI and the SQ, the distribution of scores was negatively skewed. In addition, the distribution of scores had a positive kurtosis. In contrast, the SRIS showed a flatter and less skewed distribution.

Table 5.11: Distribution of scores for the dependent and control variables

Scale	Description	N	Mean total	Min	Max	SD	Skewness	Kurtosis
Working Alliance Inventory	12 items, 5-point Likert scale	107*	50.9	20	68	6.9	-1.0	1.4
Serendipity Quotient	7 items***, 5-point Likert scale	107*	28.1	10	35	4.8	-0.7	1.0
Goal attainment measure	1 item, 5-point Likert scale	84**	4.1	1	5	0.7	-	-
Self-reflection and Insight Scale	20 items, 6-point Likert scale	107*	96.7	63	120	13.3	-0.3	-0.6

*Missing data was replaced with the mean after it was established that the impact of non-response was not sufficient to alter the results of the analyses and that no pattern was discernible.
**Missing data was not replaced with the mean after it was established that a significant difference existed in the rating of the Executive Coaching Behaviour Scale between participants who had reported a goal and those who had not.
*** While McCay-Peet and Toms (2011) retained only five items in their article, they had originally defined the scale with seven items. In the second questionnaire, I included all seven items, and retained them all since the Cronbach's Alpha was larger than with only five items.

5.5.2. Demographic characteristics of the main study variables

I calculated mean scores and standard deviations for each scale across each of the demographic characteristics used as control variables: gender, work experience, previous experience with coaching, and place of work. The results are presented in Table 5.12 below.

Table 5.12: Demographic characteristics of the variables

Demographic characteristics	EXCBOS 21 items		WAI 12 items		SQ 7 items		GA* 1 item		SRIS 20 items	
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
All (*N*=107)	107.59	16.94	50.86	6.86	28.06	4.81	4.13	.71	96.70	13.34
Gender										
Males (66)	106.32	17.37	50.80	6.47	27.68	4.88	4.17	.78	96.16	13.22
Females (41)	109.65	16.24	50.94	7.51	28.66	4.69	4.06	.57	97.57	13.64
Work experience										
<=18 yrs (37)	111.75	11.22	51.87	4.62	29.08	4.41	4.23	.67	95.56	14.35
19 -25 (35)	107.01	15.35	48.79	8.19	27.22	5.00	4.04	.66	98.70	12.44
26+ (34)	103.44	22.43	51.78	7.19	27.85	5.02	4.12	.82	96.20	13.34

Previous experience with coaching										
Yes (29)	107.97	16.12	50.99	8.10	27.85	4.59	4.14	.57	93.38	14.22
No (78)	107.45	17.34	50.81	6.39	28.13	4.92	4.13	.75	97.93	12.87
Workplace										
Europe (43)	108.13	16.83	51.27	7.92	27.74	4.78	4.06	.75	97.15	12.25
Afr. and ME (40)	106.50	18.27	50.81	6.34	28.33	4.71	4.21	.68	97.33	14.84
North Amer. (13)	104.81	19.17	48.79	6.25	26.85	5.86	4.00	.67	99.13	10.64
Asia Ocean. (11)	112.75	8.12	51.87	4.86	29.73	3.98	4.33	.71	89.73	14.02

*Goal Attainment, *n*=84

For each variable, I conducted independent-sample T-tests to compare the means obtained between males and females. No significant difference was found. Likewise, there was no significant difference between participants who had previous experience with coaching and those who did not. One-way between groups analyses of variance were conducted to explore the impact of work experience: no significant difference in means between groups was found. Using a similar technique led to the conclusion that no significant difference in means existed between participants based on the geographic continent in which they worked. These results indicated that these demographic characteristics did not appear to influence the way executives perceived behaviours, assessed the strength of the working alliance, the generation of new insights, goal attainment, nor scored on the SRIS.

5.5.3. Correlations between the scales

To explore the association between pairs of variables, I calculated the correlations between the independent and dependent variables using Pearson product-moment correlation coefficients, since the sample size was sufficient to use parametric methods. The results are presented in Table 5.13 below.

Table 5.13: Pearson product-moment correlation coefficients between the main study variables

SCALE	1	2	3	4	5
EXCBOS	-				
WAI	.51**	-			
SQ	.56**	.61**	-		
GA	.08	.27*	.30**	-	
SRIS	.16	.11	.08	-.15	-

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

<u>The EXCBOS in relation to the dependent variables</u>

The EXCBOS had a large positive correlation with the WAI (r=.51, n=107, p<.001) and with the SQ (r=.56, n=107, p<.001).

In contrast, the EXCBOS did not correlate with the goal attainment measure, despite the fact that the coaching approach implemented by the coaches in the sample was goal-focused, resulting in 78.5% of the survey participants reporting at least one goal.

<u>The dependent variables in relation to each other</u>

The WAI had a large positive correlation with the SQ (r= .61, n=107, p<.001). Correlations of 0.6 and higher between two scales typically raise concerns that the concepts they represent may overlap (Tabachnik & Fidell, 2013). However, the two constructs are clearly different. Indeed, the WAI reports bonding and mutual agreement on tasks and goals between the client and the coach, while the SQ describes the client's cognitive states preceding the generation of new insights. Arguably, a similar correlation was found in a study that used the same two coaching outcome scales (Sonesh et al., 2015b).

The WAI had small positive, significant correlation with the goal attainment measure (r=.27, n=84, p<.05). In addition, the SQ had a medium positive correlation with the goal attainment measure (r=.3, n=84, p<.01). The result of these preliminary analyses supported further investigations of the mediating effect of the WAI and the SQ on the relationship between the EXCBOS and the goal attainment measure.

<u>The SRIS in relation to the independent and dependent variables</u>

The SRIS did not correlate with any of the variables in the model. This indicated that any interaction effects on the relationship between the behaviour and outcome variables were unlikely to be uniquely explained by this scale.

5.5.4. Results of the multiple regression analyses

The objective of the multiple regression analyses was to investigate a number of hypotheses related to the relationships between the EXCBOS and the outcome scales (Section 3.7.3.3.). In addition, analyses were conducted to assess the unique contribution of each component to the variance of the outcome scales.

5.5.4.1. Changes in the WAI

Hypothesis 1a was supported: The EXCBOS remained significant to predict the WAI when controlling for five characteristics of the client: number of years of professional experience, gender, previous experience with coaching, number of hours of coaching received and the SRIS score of the participant at the start of the coaching process.

The regression produced a significant model explaining 30.1% of the variance (p<.001). The EXCBOS was the only statistically significant independent variable with a unique contribution of 23.3% (B=.204, p<.001). Detailed calculations are presented in Appendix

XVI. Table 5.14 below summarises the influence of the independent variables in the model.

Table 5.14: Regression of the Working Alliance Inventory on six independent variables

Variable	WAI
EXCBOS	.204**
SRIS	.036
Number of years of professional experience	.120
Hours in coaching	.454
Previous experience with coaching	.242
Gender	-.181
R^2 (adjusted R^2)	.301 (.258**)

**p<.001

5.5.4.2. Changes in the SQ

Hypothesis 1b was supported: The EXCBOS remained significant to predict the SQ when controlling for the same five client characteristics.

The regression of the SQ on the same five variables produced a significant model explaining 32.7% of the variance (p<.001). The EXCBOS was the only statistically significant independent variable with a unique contribution of 27.4% (B=.155, p<.001). Detailed calculations are presented in Appendix XVII. Table 5.15 below summarises the influence of the independent variables in the model.

Table 5.15: Regression of the Serendipity Quotient on six independent variables

Variable	SQ
EXCBOS	.155**
SRIS	.000
Number of years of professional experience	.036
Hours in coaching	.219
Previous experience with coaching	.792
Gender	.761
R^2 (adjusted R^2)	.327** (.289**)

**p<.001

5.5.4.3. Mediation effects of the WAI

To investigate the mediating effect of the WAI on the relationship between the EXCBOS and the SQ, I used the PROCESS macro for SPSS (Hayes, 2013). The mediation model resulting from the analysis is described in Figure 5.5 below:

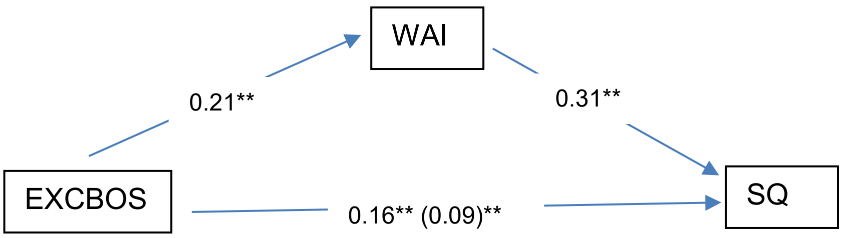

Figure 5.5: Mediation effect of the WAI

Un-standardised coefficients for each path

** p<.001

Hypothesis 2a was supported: There was a significant indirect effect of the EXCBOS on the SQ through the WAI: *ab*= 0.065, *BCa CI* [0.12, 0.36]. The WAI could have accounted for 40% of the total effect, P_M=.40, which is considered a medium effect size. Detailed calculations are presented in Appendix XVIII.

5.5.4.4. Changes in goal attainment

Hypothesis 1c was not supported: The regression of the goal attainment measure on the EXCBOS and the same five variables produced a non-significant model. These results indicated that in this sample, not any of the variables were not a good predictor of goal attainment. Detailed calculations related to the investigation of hypothesis 1c are presented in Appendix XIX.

To investigate the phenomenon further, I conducted three additional analyses: I assessed whether there were significant differences in the scoring of the EXCBOS between participants who had or had not reported a goal, whether the type of goal produced different correlation coefficients between the EXCBOS and the goal attainment measure, and whether mediation effects existed for the SQ (hypothesis 2b).

Differences between participants who set and did not report a goal

In the sample, 78.5% reported a goal at the end of the coaching process, and 21.5% did not. A Mann-Whitney U test revealed a significant difference with a medium effect size in the scoring of the EXCBOS between participants who had reported a goal (*Md*= 114, *N*=84) and those who had not (*Md*=99, *N*=23), *U*= 440, *z*=-3.302, *p*=0.01, *r*=.31).

To investigate the matter further, I conducted a direct logistic regression to assess the impact of the EXCBOS and the same five control variables on the likelihood that the respondent would have reported a goal at the end of the coaching process. The model containing all predictors was not statistically significant, indicating that none of the variables was able to distinguish between participants who had reported a goal and those who had not.

Differences between the type of goals

I investigated whether the relationship between the instrument and goal attainment were significantly different depending on the type of goal reported by the survey respondents using a typology in use in leadership development training (Scisco et al., 2017). As shown on Table 5.16 below, two types of goals were related to skill development (communication and team management), one to cognitive improvement (strategic and tactical thinking) and one to affective improvement (emotional intelligence).

Table 5.16: Types of goal selected by participants

N=107	Frequency	Percent
No goal	23	21.4
General improvement	6	5.6
Communication	33	30.8
Strategic and tactical thinking	12	11.2
Emotional intelligence	16	15.0
Team management	17	15.9

For each of the four types of goals emerging from the coding, none of the correlations were significant, indicating the type of skill developed was unlikely to be a moderator of the relationship between the instrument and goal attainment.

Mediation effects

Finally, I conducted a multiple regression analysis of the goal attainment measure on the WAI, the SQ and the EXCBOS. The model was significant and explained 12% of the variance (*p*<0.05). However, none of the variables had a significant, unique contribution to the variance.

Thereafter, I examined whether a mediation effect of the SQ on the relationship between the WAI and the goal attainment measure existed. The model was not statistically significant, thus indicated that hypothesis 2b was not supported.

5.5.4.5. Interaction effects

To investigate hypothesis 3a, I conducted a hierarchical regression of the WAI. Step 1 regressed on the instrument and the SRIS, step 2 added the interaction term (z score of the instrument multiplied by z-score of the SRIS). Hypothesis 3a was not supported. While both models were significant, the difference between the two models was not, indicating that there was no significant interaction effect of the SRIS on the relationship between the EXCBOS and the WAI. Detailed calculations are presented in Appendix XX.

To investigate hypothesis 3b, I conducted a hierarchical regression of the SQ. Step 1 regressed on the instrument and the SRIS, step 2 added the interaction term (z score of the instrument multiplied by z-score of the SRIS). Hypothesis 3b was not supported. While both models were significant, the difference between the two models was not, indicating that there was no significant interaction effect of the SRIS on the relationship between the EXCBOS and the SQ. Detailed calculations are presented in Appendix XXI.

To investigate hypothesis 3c, I conducted a hierarchical regression of the goal attainment measure. Step 1 regressed on the instrument and the SRIS, step 2 added the interaction term (z score of the instrument multiplied by z-score of the SRIS). Hypothesis 3c was not supported since both models were non-significant, indicating that there was no interaction effect of the SRIS on the relationship between the EXCBOS and goal attainment.

5.5.4.6. Contribution of each component

The regression of the WAI on the two components and the same five control variables produced a significant model explaining 31.3% of the variance ($p<.001$). The two components were the only statistically significant independent variables with a unique contribution of 3.80% for the first component ($B=.139$, $p<.05$) and a unique contribution of 5.15% for the second component ($B=.392$, $p<.01$). Detailed calculations are presented in Appendix XXII.

The regression of the SQ on the two components of the scale produced a significant model explaining 34.4% of the variance ($p<.001$). The first component was the only statistically significant independent variable with a unique contribution of 17.14% ($B=.208$, $p<.001$). In contrast, the second component was not a significant predictor of the SQ. Detailed calculations are presented in Appendix XXIII.

The regression of the goal attainment measure on the two components and control variables produced a non-significant model (Appendix XXIV).

5.6. CONCLUSION

The principal component analysis of the item pool of executive coaching behaviours developed by the focus groups resulted in the Executive Coaching Behaviour Observation Scale, a client feedback instrument containing 21 behaviours on two orthogonal components explaining 64% of the variance of the model. Its two components were clearly related to two important dimensions of executive coaching identified in the literature: transformational professional learning and empathy, suggesting adequate construct validity. Its reliability, measured through internal consistency, was very high, especially for the second component, indicative of the need for further analyses. The item analyses provided contrasting results, with a high level of endorsement suggesting caution and an adequate level of discrimination.

The following hypotheses investigating its relationship with the outcome scales were supported:

- The client feedback instrument was a significant predictor of the Working Alliance Inventory and the Serendipity Quotient when controlling for four demographic variables and for the level of Self-reflexion and Insight of the client at the start of the coaching process.
- The Working Alliance Inventory partially mediated the relationship between the Executive Coaching Behaviour Observation Scale and the Serendipity Quotient
- While the two components of the instrument had a unique significant contribution to the variance of the Working Alliance Inventory, only the first component had a unique significant contribution to the variance of the Serendipity Quotient.

In contrast, while significant differences existed in the scoring of the Executive Coaching Behaviour Scale between respondents who had reported a goal and those of had not, the instrument was not a significant predictor of the variance of the goal attainment measure.

In addition, the Self-reflection and Insight score of participants at the beginning of the coaching process did not moderate the relationship between the Executive Coaching Behaviour Scale and the coaching outcome scale.

CHAPTER 6
DISCUSSION

6.1. INTRODUCTION

This chapter discusses the findings of the qualitative and quantitative strands of the research in relation to the research aim.

6.2. RELIABILITY OF THE FEEDBACK INSTRUMENT

The reliability of the instrument, solely assessed through internal consistency, showed a high Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.95. Arguably, it indicates that the instrument may need to be further reduced through additional research because some of its items may be redundant (Tavakol & Dennick, 2011). As a result, from a positivist perspective, the instrument cannot be considered for the purpose of normatively assessing coaches or comparing their ability. At the same time, in a pragmatic functionalist approach to test design, each test is "specific to a particular situation and cannot be generalised" (Rust & Golombok, p. 38). This suggests that the feedback instrument is adequate as a guide during or after a coaching process, as long the client and coach agree to use it as shared evidence to discuss ways to improve the quality of the coaching process.

6.3. CONTENT OF THE FEEDBACK INSTRUMENT

This section discusses the specificity of the feedback instrument. Two orthogonal components resulted from the PCA of the item pool (Section 5.3.3.). The first component evoked four distinct phases of a professional transformational learning process: preparation, creativity, goal setting and maintenance of trust, which is not always linear (Boyatzis, 2006). The second component contained empathic behaviours that built trust, bonding and agreement between the client and the coach, which support the learning process. The resulting coaching process underlying the item instrument is summarised in Figure 6.1 below.

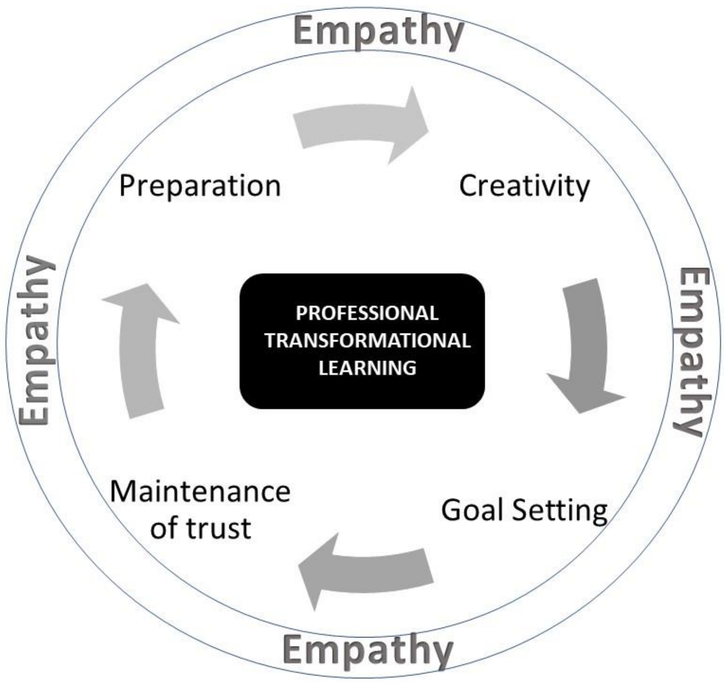

Figure 6.1: The coaching process underlying the instrument

6.3.1. Professional transformational learning

Preparation

As indicated in Table 6.1 below, the behaviours contained in the preparation phase evoked a consultative process based on the deployment of coaching micro-processes such as cognitive empathy and challenge. On the one hand, clients share, deepen and develop their own discoveries by answering reflective questions proposed by their coach (Cox, 2013; Hawkins, 2013). On the other end, coaches develop new knowledge about the client's context in a non-directive manner, thus obtaining information which will increase the quality of their decisions during a complex adaptive system such as the coaching conversation (Senge, Hamilton & Kania, 2015).

With the micro-process balance between individual and organisational needs, the organisation featured as a contextual element in the preparation phase in alignment with a pragmatic view of workplace learning (Cox, 2013, p. 47). As Cox summarised it: "application [of learning] depends upon the background knowledge the coach has".

Two behaviours (invited me to explore unintended consequences of my actions and invited me to explore how I approach change) appeared to be related to the findings of adult developmental theorists (Kegan, 1982) who consider that they go through life stages in the way they interpret experiences and make decisions concerning the future. In adapting it to the client, cognitive-developmental coaching theorists have stated that coaches will be more effective if they tailor their interventions to the developmental stage of the client, which requires them to collect information on the topic (Bachkirova, 2011).

Table 6.1: Behaviours and micro-processes during the preparation phase

PREPARATION		
Items	Micro-processes	Coaching models
-Checked if understanding of organisation was sufficient -Invited me to explore how I approach change -Asked questions about my organisation to better understand the issues I presented	Cognitive empathy	Reflective questions (Cox, 2013; Hawkins, 2013)
-Invited me to state my personal vision for my role in the organisation	Balance between individual and organisational needs	Workplace learning (Cox, 2013)
- Invited me to explore unintended consequences of my actions	Challenge	Developmental stages (Bachkirova, 2011)

Creativity

As indicated in Table 6.2 below, the creativity phase was represented by three informing behaviours, manifesting the contribution of the executive coach to the creative process through three micro-processes: balance between inquiry and advocacy, career advice and seeing patterns. Kets de Vries (2013, p. 153) compared the co-active engagement of the coach and the client during this phase to those of jazz musicians during an improvisation set: “using their talent for reconstruction, reformulation and respectful listening, [coaches] improvise on the themes their clients present, recasting motives, phrases and statements to recreate experiences in new and interesting ways”. He also compared the coach to a cloud manager, an integrator of “multiple ideas, fantasies, representations and relationship patterns”.

Table 6.2: Behaviours and micro-processes during the creativity phase

CREATIVITY		
Items	Micro-processes	Coaching models
-When I requested advice, checked first if this is what I really needed and then invited me to reflect on my request	Balance between inquiry and advocacy	Co-active engagement (Kets de Vries, 2013)
-Used experiences from coaching engagements in other organisations to broaden my perspective	Career advice	
- Used examples from own life story to illustrate a point I made-	Seeing patterns	

Goal setting

Table 6.3 below presents the behaviours related to the goal-setting phase. They manifested only one micro-process: balance between individual and organisational needs, and were more related to a reflective exercise rather than an action-planning endeavour. While most coach competency models feature goal-setting skills prominently (Bartlett II et al., 2014), Clutterbuck and Spence (2016, p. 229) argued that coaching may be better adapted to the exploration and achievement of “mid-level goal constructions” which they describe as “intention or personal striving”, rather than the achievement of performance-oriented goals. By defining the concept of goal in that manner, they relate it more to the second level of the Kirkpatrick model (cognitive change) than to the third level (behavioural change). The view of the participants of the focus groups may then reflect a similar point of view. Indeed, they had eliminated most of the action planning and goal monitoring items from the compilation of the literature, on the ground that they were not coach-specific.

Table 6.3: Behaviours and micro-processes during the goal-setting phase

GOAL SETTING		
Items	Micro-processes	Coaching models
-Invited me to reflect on the alignment between my goals and the goals of my organisation -Invited me to reflect whether my organisation’s culture enables or hampers my development goals	Balance between individual and organisational needs	Mid-level goal constructs (Clutterbuck & Spence, 2016)

Maintenance of trust

As shown in Table 6.4 below, three behaviours were related to addressing potential breakdowns during the coaching process and manifested two micro-processes linked to trust by the focus groups (compassion and confidentiality) and one micro-process linked to creativity (balance between advocacy and inquiry). They may be an indication that the learning process can be uncomfortable (Kets De Vries, 2013), leading to ruptures of trust, requiring that the coach becomes more transparent and creative so as to strengthen their trustworthiness (Moons, 2015).

Table 6.4: Behaviours and micro-processes during the maintenance of trust phase

MAINTENANCE OF TRUST		
Items	Micro-processes	Coaching models
-Invited me to discuss concerns about confidentiality -When unable to provide expertise, acknowledged it -When shifting from inquiry to advisory mode, made it explicit	Confidentiality Compassion Balance between inquiry and advocacy	Managing ruptures of trust (Moons, 2015)

6.3.2. The second component: empathy

As presented in Table 6.5 below, the eight behaviours loading on the second component manifested a range of empathic behaviours from the executive coach, represented by the micro-process compassion. While cognitive, sharing and nurturing empathic behaviours were represented, affective empathy was not. These findings are echoed in a study focused on the exploration of coaches' empathic behaviours (Will, Gessnitzer & Kauffeld, 2016) in which cognitive and sharing empathy strengthens the bond between the client and the coach. In contrast, affective empathy does not, echoing results that have been obtained in other helping settings (Marjanovic, Struthers & Greenglass, 2012). While Will's study does not include nurturing empathy in her review of empathic behaviours, the concept is related to 'presence' in Gestalt coaching (Bluckert, 2014).

Table 6.5: Empathic behaviours and micro-processes

EMPATHIC BEHAVIOURS		
Items	Micro-processes	Coaching models
-Stayed open-minded to what I said -Showed positive regard -Communicated authentically, transparently, honestly -Was supportive - Was responsive to my needs -Stayed non-judgmental -Acknowledged my emotions when discussing a topic -Neither over-reacted nor stayed overly neutral	Compassion	Empathy (Will et al., 2016; Bluckert, 2014)

6.4. RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN THE INSTRUMENT AND COACHING OUTCOMES

6.4.1. Working Alliance Inventory

During the quantitative strand of the research, participants consistently scored high on the WAI. The instrument was found to have a significant statistical relationship with the WAI, in line with other studies that have empirically shown that the coach's behaviours play a crucial role in building the working alliance (De Haan & Gannon, 2016). Both components uniquely contributed to the relationship with the working alliance. Likewise, during the qualitative strand of the study, focus groups linked several micro-processes with trust, a concept related to the working alliance. Two micro-processes were related to the second component of the scale (compassion and cognitive empathy) and three were related to the first component of the scale (career advice, balance between individual and organisational needs and confidentiality).

Empirical research has shown that the two facets of the working alliance, bonding and agreement, are correlated (Corbière et al., 2006). Both will be considered to assist in the interpretation of the relationship between the EXCBOS and the WAI.

Bonding is closely related to the concept of trust, which was chosen by the focus groups to rank the importance of behaviours. Trust is a heuristic leading to a decision about the amount of vulnerability one is willing to display in a relationship in relation to the evaluation of a risk of doing so, within an uncertain context (Atkinson & Butcher, 2003). In coaching, the concept of trust is immature: an examination of the studies compiled by De Haan and Gannon in their review of the literature about the coaching relationship indicates that a great deal of confusion exists about the term, which is alternatively presented as an outcome (Grant & Stober, 2006) or as a behavioural dimension (Boyce, Jackson & Neal, 2010).

The way focus group participants described the formation of trust with their coach aligns with a two-dimension model of trust (McAllister, 1995), which distinguishes affect-based trust and cognition-based trust. Affect-based trust is formed when the recipient views the actions of the other party as a manifestation of genuine care and concern for their welfare. In contrast, cognition-based trust results from an assessment of the competence, reliability and dependability of the other party. By empirically studying the two components of trust in relation to each other, McAllister’s model indicates that cognition-based might be likely to cause affect-based trust, which in turn predicts bonding. The model might thus explain why both components uniquely contributed to the variance of the WAI in the study.

Atkinson and Butcher (2003) added temporality to the model by studying two related concepts, impersonal trust (based on roles and reputations) and personal trust (based on interpersonal relations). They argued that impersonal trust, because it emerges from cognitive and rational assessments, can happen relatively quickly in a helping relationship. In contrast, personal trust is rooted in subjectivity and affect and takes longer to develop. This claim might explain why coaches enrolled in the quantitative part of the study obtained relatively higher scores on the second component. It is indeed possible that they may have wanted to overplay empathic behaviours so that personal trust develops faster, because the time frame of the coaching intervention was short.

Agreement building behaviours are reminiscent of the deployment of influence tactics. Indeed, Lewis-Duarte and Bligh (2012) empirically linked the choice of influence techniques by the coach to the level of commitment of the client in the coaching relationship. They distinguish four behavioural dimensions related to influence: inspirational tactics, coalition tactics, consultation and rational persuasion.

The fact that the first component of the EXCBOS contained influencing behaviours might provide an additional justification for the fact that it was related to the WAI. Indeed, influence tactics featured prominently in the focus group discussions, resulting in selecting several influencing behaviours which are contained in the first component of the scale. Examples include “used examples from other engagement to broaden my perspective" (consultation), "invited me to state my personal vision" (inspiration), "invited me to explore unintended consequences of my actions" (coalition), invited me to reflect on the alignment between my goals and those of my organisation" (rational persuasion).

6.4.2. Serendipity Quotient

During the quantitative strand, participants consistently scored high on the SQ. While the instrument was found to have a significant relationship with the SQ, only the first component had a unique contribution. These results echo the discussions of the focus groups, who did not link the micro-process compassion to the generation of new insights when they reflected on their past experience.

In the literature, preparation, creativity and goal-setting behaviours included in the first component have been all been linked to the generation of new insights. According to Sternberg and Lubart (1995), they might encourage others to change the representations they hold in order to solve the problem and to reject assumptions that prevented the problem to be solved. In addition, they might support the emergence of a new relation between two concepts related to the problem, thus triggering creativity. Specifically, informing behaviours, because they influence the encoding, re-categorisation and recombination of concepts, have been linked empirically to the generation of new insights (McCay-Peet & Toms, 2011).

That being said, in the management literature, compassionate behaviours such as promoting safety in the supervisory relationship have been related to cognitive change, especially through the strengthening of self-efficacy (Bandura, 1977). Likewise, safe and positive approaches to feedback have been linked to creativity (Fredrickson, 2001).

6.4.3. Goal attainment

While the regression of the goal attainment measure on the EXCBOS, the WAI and the SQ resulted in a significant model, the feedback instrument was not related to change in goal attainment, nor did it predict whether the participant would set a goal or not. Overall, the coaching experience was related to goal achievement since almost nine out ten executives reported having set at least one goal during the coaching process. In addition, they agreed with the statement that they had made progress towards their goals by the end of the coaching process. Furthermore, while the sample was too small to allow any statistical analyses, 25 co-workers who rated the goal achievement level of eight participants agreed that they had made progress.

There are several possible explanations to help understand these results. Firstly, participants of the quantitative strand could have inflated their scores. As described in the methodology chapter (Section 3.7.3.2.), inflations of self-assessment scores are prevalent in relation to goal attainment. One of the possible causes of the self-inflation of goal attainment scores is that self-efficacy, which often increases as a result of a coaching intervention, contributes to the phenomenon (Nieminen et al., 2013).

Another possibility is that other factors were more potent than the behaviours of the coach in the achievement of goals. For example, for the participants employed in organisation A (*N*=89), it is possible that the leadership workshop which preceded their coaching programme could have positively impacted their motivation to achieve goals. In fact, the workshop featured appreciative inquiry techniques, most likely leading a majority of participants to focus more on their ideal self rather than on their 'ought' self (Boyatzis & Howard, 2015), as they envisioned their upcoming coaching process. This would have likely reinforced their intrinsic motivation (Sheldon & Elliot, 1998). Moreover, the analysis of the nature of the goals selected by all the participants of the quantitative strand (Section 5.4.3.) displayed more a learning orientation than a performance orientation. This choice of goals would have been likely to increase the intrinsic motivation of the participant even further (Dweck & Leggett, 1988; Kasser & Ryan, 1993).

6.4.4. Interaction effects

At the start of the coaching process, participants of the quantitative strand obtained on average a moderate score on the SRIS, though with some variability. Yet, it did not appear to have an impact on the outcome of the coaching process. On a more speculative note, if intrinsic motivation had been increased as a result of the workshop and the coaching process, this would have explained why the hypotheses made about the moderation effect of the SRIS, as well as other control variable examined in the study, were not supported. It is indeed possible that the level of intrinsic motivation generated during the programme was sufficient to offset other moderation effects linked to the participants' characteristics at its start.

6.5. SCORES OBTAINED BY THE COACHES

28 experienced coaches participated in the quantitative strand of the research. Overall, the survey results indicated that their clients moderately agreed that they had noticed the behaviours contained in the EXCBOS from them during their coaching process. Behaviours loading on the second component were more frequently observed and in a more consistent manner than those loading on the first component.

As Table 6.6 below shows, participants moderately agreed that they had observed preparation behaviours from their coach. This might be due to the fact that most of these behaviours are related to the collection of information about the organisation. Arguably, executive coaches tend to under-estimate the importance of such information to set the stage for the coaching process (Clutterbuck, 2010).

Table 6.6: Observation of preparation behaviours during the quantitative strand

OBSERVATIONS OF PREPARATION BEHAVIOURS	
Behaviours in the instrument	Noticed during the coaching process
-Checked if understanding of organisation was sufficient	Moderately agreed
-Invited me to explore how I approach change	Moderately agreed
-Asked questions about my organisation to better understand the issues I presented	Moderately agreed
-Invited me to state my personal vision for my role in the organisation	Moderately agreed
- Invited me to explore unintended consequences of my actions	Moderately agreed

As Table 6.7 below indicates, the two informing behaviours contained in the creativity phase of the coaching process were the least observed by the participants of the quantitative strand. They were also observed with the least consistency. This may be a manifestation of an ambivalence towards giving advice, resulting from a confusion between prescribing skills and informing skills (Heron, 2001). Backus (2018), who interviewed experienced coaches, reported that they generally experience giving advice as a manifestation of their performance anxiety (which led them to deploy prescribing behaviours to address their own needs for reassurance) rather than as a manifestation of support to the client’s reflective process (which would have led them to deploy informing behaviours in relation to the client’s needs). While prescribing behaviours are considered counter-productive in relation to a coaching process (Cox, 2013), this is not the case for informing behaviours (Whitworth, Kimsey-House, Kimsey-House & Sandahl, 2007).

Table 6.7: Observation of creativity behaviours during the quantitative strand

OBSERVATION OF CREATIVITY BEHAVIOURS	
Behaviours in the instrument	Noticed during the coaching process
-When I requested advice, checked first if this is what I really needed and then invited me to reflect on my request	Moderately agreed
-Used experiences from coaching engagements in other organisations to broaden my perspective	Slightly agreed
- Used examples from own life story to illustrate a point I made	Slightly agreed

Table 6.8 below indicates that participants slightly to moderately agreed with the statement that their coaches displayed goal-setting behaviours, indicating that they may have insufficiently included the organisation in the process. This might have been counterproductive. Arguably, in their review of the literature about the use of goals in coaching, Clutterbuck and Spence (2016) concluded that a systemic approach to goal setting seems more adapted than an individualistic approach to the fast-changing and complex systems in which executives operate. Additionally, individual goals that are misaligned with group goals have been linked to lower group performance (Minski, 2015).

Table 6.8: Observation of goal-setting behaviours during the quantitative strand

OBSERVATION OF GOAL-SETTING BEHAVIOURS	
Behaviours in the instrument	Noticed during the coaching process
-Invited me to reflect on the alignment between my goals and the goals of my organisation	Moderately agreed
-Invited me to reflect whether my organisation's culture enables or hampers my development goals	Slightly agreed

Table 6.9 below indicates that participants of the quantitative strand moderately agreed that their coach displayed maintenance of trust behaviours. These results can be interpreted in two ways: either some coaches did not sufficiently challenge the clients, or they managed to stretch their clients without ruptures of trust. Arguably, trust may have been strong enough to support ruptures during the transformational process, in light of the high scores received by coaches on the behaviours loading on the second component of the instrument.

Table 6.9: Observation of maintenance of trust behaviours during the quantitative strand

OBSERVATION OF MAINTENANCE OF TRUST BEHAVIOURS	
Representative behaviours on the scale	Noticed during the coaching process
-Invited me to discuss concerns about confidentiality	Moderately agreed
-When unable to provide expertise, acknowledged it	Moderately agreed
-When shifting from inquiry to advisory mode, made it explicit	Moderately agreed

As displayed in Table 6.10 below, during the quantitative strand, participants strongly agreed that their coaches had displayed cognitive, sharing and nurturing empathic behaviours, echoing results in other empirical observations (De Haan & Nilsson, 2017; Tonomura et al., 2018). This high level of endorsement may be a manifestation of the fact that empathic behaviours feature prominently in the coaching competency models that inform the training and assessment of coaches (Bartlett II et al., 2014).

Table 6.10: Observations of empathic behaviours during the quantitative strand

EMPATHIC BEHAVIOURS	
Behaviours in the instrument	Noticed during the coaching process
-Stayed open-minded to what I said	Strongly agreed
-Showed positive regard	Strongly agreed
-Communicated authentically, transparently, honestly	Strongly agreed
-Was supportive	Strongly agreed
- Was responsive to my needs	Strongly agreed
-Stayed non-judgmental	Strongly agreed
-Acknowledged my emotions when discussing a topic	Strongly agreed
-Neither over-reacted nor stayed overly neutral	Moderately agreed

6.6. CONCLUSION

In line with the pragmatist paradigm and the theoretical lens of the research, the study suggests that, by focusing on professional transformational learning and empathic behaviours during client feedback interventions, clients may find effective discussion points to increase the working alliance and the generation of new insights.

In comparison with current competency models and previous research on the client's perspective, the feedback instrument included more preparatory behaviours most notably to help manage the polarity between individual and organisational needs and more informing behaviours most importantly in the creativity phase of the process. In contrast, it contained less goal-setting behaviours. In light of the fact that the instrument was linked to the achievement of new insights but not to the achievement of goals, it raised a question about the role of coaches at the third level of the Kirkpatrick model, that of the client's behavioural change.

The fact that both components contributed to the strength of the working alliance, indicated that in this sample, coaches used both affective strategies (to increase likeability) and cognitive strategies (to increase credibility) to generate bonding and agreement. In contrast, only the first component was related to the generation of new insights. Blackman (2016) in her systematic review of empirical evidence in business coaching, alluded to a debate about ways in which the effectiveness of the executive coach can be predicted. One side of the debate believes that counselling and psychotherapy skills suffice (Bono et al., 2009; Grant, 2016). The other side argues that managerial skills and sectorial knowledge are also indispensable (Kilburg, 2016). Based on empirical evidence gathered from over 100 studies, Blackman and her team concluded that business acumen is indispensable to the success of the executive coach. The results of this study support such conclusion.

CHAPTER 7
CONCLUSION

7.1. INTRODUCTION

The aim of the study was to develop a client behavioural feedback instrument for the executive coach, based on a mixed-methods approach to feedback anchored in the Cognitive Affective Personal System Theory and a theoretical framework which I described as client-centred integrative. The first component contained behaviours which were related to a four-step process of professional transformational learning (preparation, creativity, goal setting and maintenance of trust). The second component included cognitive, sharing and nurturing empathic behaviours to support the learning process. The instrument had a significant positive relationship with two important coaching outcomes: the Working Alliance Inventory and the Serendipity Quotient, a measure of the generation of new insights. However, it was not related to goal attainment.

Chapter 1 introduced the research aim and objectives. Chapter 2 addressed the first objective of the study: it critically reviewed the theoretical literature to provide an operational definition of client feedback in executive coaching and to support the development of an instrument, and it identified the knowledge gaps that needed to be addressed to develop such an instrument. Chapter 3 addressed the second objective of the study and presented the methods selected to achieve the research aim. Chapter 4 and Chapter 5 addressed the third research objective of the study by developing a feedback instrument and measuring its reliability and validity. Chapter 6 discussed the results.

This final chapter addresses describes how the study contributes to the knowledge, theory and practice of client feedback in executive coaching. It also discusses the limitations of the research.

7.2. CONTRIBUTION TO KNOWLEDGE AND THEORY

The client behavioural feedback instrument, while it did not meet the criteria of reliability required for a standardised test, and could benefit from further research to eliminate redundant items, offers a discussion device to executive coaches interested in using formative client feedback during the coaching conversation to support their professional development. Two clear components emerged from the PCA, indicative of adequate construct validity: a professional transformational learning process and the provision of empathy to support it. In terms of content validity, which was difficult to establish due to the lack of previous client research, the instrument may challenge commonly accepted views about the respective contribution of the coach and the client. Indeed, the results of the study encourage executive coaches to partner with their clients in designing the coaching conversation, contrary to a prevalent expert's discourse in the coaching community which views clients as the passive recipients of the professional expertise of the coach (Stokes, 2015). In addition, the study suggests that executive coaches may want to contribute more to the substance of the coaching conversation, especially during the creativity phase of the process, challenging a view that the coach need not possess substantive knowledge about the client's business and organisation to be effective (Bono et al., 2009; Grant, 2016). Finally, it questions the nature of goals in coaching, envisioning them more as a generation of guiding principles (Clutterbuck & Spence, 2016), than as an action planning and monitoring exercise (Grant & Stober, 2006). In terms of criterion validity, the results suggest that the executive coaching behaviours contained in the instrument are related to two important coaching outcomes: the strength of the coach-client relationship and the generation of new insights.

The study paves the way to filling several gaps that were identified in the literature review: the absence of a theory of client feedback in executive coaching, the lack of knowledge about effective executive coaching behaviours and the lack of knowledge about the client's perspective of the coaching process. Overall, it is an invitation to the coaching community to reflect on and rebalance the respective contribution of the client and the executive coach in the coaching process. These findings, if confirmed through subsequent research, have several implications for practitioners, educators and supervisors which will be explored in the subsequent sections.

7.3. IMPLICATIONS FOR PRACTITIONERS

After decades of a prevalent expert's discourse, it is going to take time for executive coaches to trust that client behavioural feedback can support their development. As discussed in the literature review, inexperienced clients neither feel confident nor credible and prefer not to report their observations. Since one of the pillars of trust is perceived credibility (Atkinson & Butcher, 2003) and since perceived credibility is a moderator of the effectiveness of feedback (Jawahar, 2010), an executive coach may need to ensure as a first step that a new client feels knowledgeable enough about the process of coaching before requesting feedback. This indicates that further research is needed to design ways to teach clients ahead of the coaching process how to use the instrument. For example, if coaching is embedded in a leadership development programme, a module related to client feedback could be included during the kick-off workshop, prior to the first coaching session.

Even when coaching more informed clients, their feedback might still be difficult to accept and integrate for coaches, especially if they fear that such feedback might not be positive. Bachkirova (2015) suggested that the fear of being rejected by the client is a major trigger of self-deception for the coach. She noted that the fear of rejection is amplified by the expert's discourse, in which coaches and clients alike believe that the coach is solely responsible to choose the 'right' technique and to drive the success of the intervention. Once self-deception is in place, it feeds the tendency to block new information, such as client feedback, initiating a vicious cycle (Ditto & Lopez, 1992). While supervision might be a way to counter a fear of rejection, Bachkirova (2015, p. 5) remarked that if the coach is in the grip of self-deception, "the relevant material may not reach supervision at all". As a result, further research should investigate whether coaches might benefit from bringing their attitudes to client feedback in supervision prior to a client feedback event. By addressing their own resistance to client feedback ahead of the process, they may improve their listening and integrate the information received from their clients in a better way. Indeed, longitudinal studies of student feedback in education and sports coaching indicate that the self-evaluations made by teachers and students converge overtime (Gaertner, 2014).

The coach developmental theory has suggested that external feedback data, whether it comes from the client or from another source, might become less important as the coach matures professionally and is able to rely solely on internal feedback (Clutterbuck, 2010). This would indicate that the instrument be primarily used at earlier stages of a coach's professional development. That being said, deliberate practice, which has been conceptualised by Ericsson (2006) and has found successful applications in psychotherapy (Chow, Miller, Seidel, Kane, Thornton et al., 2015), provides another perspective. Indeed, Ericsson rejected the claim that mastery consists in unconscious performance. On the contrary, masters need to regain control over the most difficult aspect of their practices and identify specific behaviours that they can improve on, by actively soliciting behavioural feedback from those who benefit from their craft.

7.4. IMPLICATIONS FOR EDUCATORS

Coaching is often a profession that is chosen as a second career. As a result, the background of coaches varies considerably, including former psychologists, human resource specialists, business managers or educators (Bachkirova, 2016b). The instrument suggests that psychologists or educators who have no experience working in business contexts may be at risk of under-deploying informing behaviours which are crucial during the creativity phase of the professional transformational learning process. Inversely, business executives who transition to coaching without having undergone a rigorous self-development process, and without knowledge or practice of adult learning techniques, may be at risk of ineffectively deploying empathic behaviours which are crucial to build trust.

Both profiles need different types of training. Yet, few courses appear to differentiate the developmental needs of their students (Stein, Page & Maltbia, 2014). Further research might want to assess the suitability of modular programmes in which aspiring executive coaches select courses based on their backgrounds and learning needs.

7.5. QUALITY AND LIMITATIONS OF THE RESEARCH

7.5.1. Qualitative limitations

Despite precautions taken during the recruitment of participants for the qualitative strand, there were a few issues which might have affected the credibility of the results. Participants gave a two-hour commitment each to the research, which represents a significant amount of time for executives. It is possible that they had a level of interest in the topic and/or a time availability higher than what would be expected from an average executive having already experienced coaching. As a matter of fact, the percentage of participants of the online focus groups who were in-between jobs was higher than the unemployment rate of executives worldwide. Most participants of the online focus groups reported a positive experience with their coaching process and a desire to emulate coaching behaviours in their managerial interactions. Three participants had actually decided to get training as an external coach and had started coaching as part of their training. This may have explained their interest in participating in the research but may also have biased some of their responses. However, since the focus group continued until data saturation was reached, I believe that these limitations were mitigated.

In terms of dependability, and while steps were taken to minimise researcher's bias, I had a vested interest in the study which undoubtedly influenced the process by which I compiled the behaviours reviewed by the focus groups, the way I facilitated the focus groups, and the way I coded their discussions to illustrate quantitative findings. To address this issue, I attempted to be as transparent as possible in the way I reported my theoretical lens, methodological choices, and data interpretation techniques, so that readers can make their own decision about the suitability of the methods I chose and the decisions I made along the way.

Concerning confirmability, while interviewee bias was limited since neither the name of their coach, nor the content of their coaching process were disclosed during the discussions, it is possible that a participant could have chosen to withdraw a particularly representative coaching experience that they judged to be too sensitive to share. That being said, because focus groups took place until data saturation, it is likely that a relevant sample of experiences was shared.

7.5.2. Quantitative limitations

Sample size and context

Obtaining a sufficient sample size for the construction of the scale was a challenge. As a result, considering the number of items in the pool (35), the sample of 107 participants was on the lower range of what is deemed acceptable to conduct a principal component analysis. While the low number of participants was acceptable considering the nature of intercorrelations between items contained in the scale, future studies should try to obtain bigger samples. In addition, the vast majority of participants of this study were middle managers as opposed to senior executives. Since there are indications in the literature that senior executives might have different needs (Athanasopoulou & Dopson, 2018), future studies should try to focus on them.

As presented in the methodology chapter, the sample consisted in executives referred from two distinct sources with different coaching contexts: organisation A, on the one hand, and ICF coaches, on the other hand. While most of the analyses were not impacted by the inclusion of the ICF sample, there was one exception. In organisation A, in which all participants attended a leadership development workshop prior to the coaching process, the second component was not significantly related to the WAI. These results appear consistent with possible effects of the workshop on the self-efficacy of the participants, about which I speculated in the previous chapter. Further research should investigate whether such effect can be identified in other samples.

Choice of rating scale

The second survey relied on an agreement rating scale rather than on a frequency rating scale to measure the prevalence of the coaching behaviours contained in the item pool during the coaching process. Arguably, agreement ratings may be influenced by the respondent’s attitude towards the coach: in other words, if the client had a positive opinion of the coach, this may have inflated the score. At the same time, frequency behaviours may be more difficult to rate because the respondent has to provide a precise estimate. Overall more research is needed to assess the impact of agreement and frequency scales on cognitive biases experienced by respondents (Podsakoff et al., 2018).

Common method variance

Despite precautions taken in the design of the second questionnaire, common method variance could not be completely excluded because participants measured the independent and dependent variable at the same time (Podsakoff et al., 2003).

In contrast, the SRIS, which acted as a control variable, was measured in the first questionnaire, therefore at a different time than other variables. Thus, it was not affected by common method variance, which might have impacted the strength of its correlations with other variables. That being said, one study (Bozer et al., 2013) found correlations using a similar approach: executives with higher learning goal orientation and self-efficacy at the start of the coaching process were more inclined to reflect on themselves and receive feedback by the end of the coaching process. Such contrasted findings indicate that further studies are needed to test the moderating effect of client's characteristics before the coaching starts on the outcome of coaching.

Affectivity and mood

The discussion chapter speculated that, as a result of the leadership development workshop preceding the coaching process, participants employed by organisation A might have increased their self-efficacy, possibly resulting in an inflation of goal attainment scores. It is not known whether the workshop had other effects on the scoring process.

Item comprehension

To address problems of comprehension linked to item characteristics, while the survey had been adequately reviewed, it was written in English, a language that was not native for a majority of the participants. The extent to which it might have impacted the scoring is not known.

Self-leniency

Unfortunately, I could not obtain enough third-party data about the level of goal attainment to contrast with the self-assessments, since only a very small number of participants agreed to involve co-workers in the rating of their goal attainment scale. As a result, the effects of self-leniency remained unexplored in this study.

Causality

With cross-sectional methods, it is not possible to conclude that a relationship is causal. One cannot completely exclude the possibility that, as a result of the coaching process, the perception of the strength of the working alliance modified the manner with which coaching behaviours were recalled. Indeed, the coaching relationship evolves over time (De Haan & Gannon, 2016). In fact, as the relationship progresses, affective perceptions tend to override cognitive perceptions, thus affecting the score of the scale (McAllister, 1995). However, since the coaching relationship was of short duration in the present study, it might have prevented the phenomenon to occur.

Likewise, an increase in the Serendipity Quotient may have allowed the client to recall coaching behaviours at a more granular level, thus impacting the scoring of the scale. Indeed, qualitative research shows that the client becomes more adept at distinguishing coaching behaviours from consulting or counselling behaviours over time, and that such ability develops over a short number of sessions (Karboul, 2014; Jones, 2015). In fact, a between subject study has established a causal link between coach credibility and an increase in client self-awareness (Bozer et al., 2014).

Further research is therefore needed. That being said, some of the coaching behaviours contained in the item pool have been causally linked with the working alliance and cognitive change scales related to the Serendipity Quotient by other researchers.

Longitudinality

The impact of the number of coaching sessions on the outcome of the intervention is subject to debate (Theeboom et al., 2014; Jones et al., 2016) and it not known whether a larger number of sessions would have impacted the results of the study.

In addition, the choice of asking participants to rate their progress on goal attainment immediately after a relatively short coaching programme rather than a few months later had an influence on the rating (Ely et al., 2010). It is indeed possible that participants would have still been in the early stages of their goal implementation process at the end of such a short coaching process. They might have, as a result, substituted the concept of attainment with something else, such as hope, a placebo effect, which has been identified in psychotherapy as a factor influencing the outcome of the intervention (Asay & Lambert, 1999).

Next steps in the validation of the scale

To address concerns about reliability and validity of the scale, especially if used for the purpose of normatively comparing coaches, additional research will be necessary, such as another set of data collection and a Confirmatory Factor Analysis. This would help further reduce the scale, and offer further confirmation that items that load on the same component measure the same construct (Williams et al., 2010). Additionally, to increase its external validity, the scale would benefit from being retested in other contexts, with larger samples and in a longitudinal manner.

7.6. HOW TO USE THE INSTRUMENT

Feedback theory predicts that the level of professional development of the coach is likely to moderate the effectiveness of client behavioural feedback, thus requiring a flexible approach to its use. In addition, time is scarce during an executive coaching session. As a result, the balance between the learning and development of the client and that of the coach must be managed skilfully. For example, further research could investigate whether a feedback instrument unduly distracts the client, and whether the drawbacks of such distraction outweigh the benefits of client feedback. To inform future studies, this section reviews the literature on existing feedback scales developed in sports coaching, education and psychotherapy to discuss what the scale could contain, how it could be administered, when it could be collected and how results could be reported.

Scope of the feedback

The introduction chapter made the case for a behavioural client feedback instrument in relation to the coach's professional development needs. In education, Richardson (2005) remarked that there is no clear pattern in the design of student feedback instruments, with no ideal mix between the scoring of individual teachers' behaviours, characteristics of the teaching environment and students' outcome measures. Arguably, the most recent instruments developed in the education space (Gaertner, 2014) and sport coaching (Fletcher & Roberts, 2013) are focused on behaviours and do not include outcomes.

More research is needed to assess whether the Executive Coaching Behaviour Observation Scale would benefit from the addition of client outcomes. Arguably, a recent instrument developed for mentors relies on both (Brodeur et al., 2015); however, it is too soon to measure its benefits.

Immediate or deferred feedback

The principal advantage of deferred feedback is that it does not take up valuable session time. In executive coaching, one client feedback instrument exists that includes both behavioural observations and outcome measures, which has been developed overtime, a-theoretically, using a web-based system of post-coaching data collected between 2013 and 2015 from over 2500 clients (Tonomura et al., 2018), and is now available for sale. The quality of the scale is problematic in the absence of a sound research methodology. However, the format of administration is worth considering. The form is designed to be completed online, post-coaching and contains statements about observed behaviours of the coach as well as questions about outcomes experienced as a result of the coaching process. Each question is structured as a 7-point Likert scale measuring the level of agreement of the client with both behavioural and outcome statements. Definition of each point is as follows: "1=completely disagree, 2=disagree, 3=somewhat disagree, 4=neither, 5=somewhat agree, 6=agree, 7=completely agree").

The Leadership Scale for Sports (Chelladurai & Saleh, 1980, p. 37; Fletcher & Roberts, 2013) is designed for team athletes who rate effective leadership behaviours of their sport coach at regular intervals and especially after an important game. Athletes rate their coach as follows on 40 behaviours: "Using the following scale, please circle a number from 1 to 5 indicating your level of agreement with each of the statements regarding your coach: 1=Never, 2=seldom / 25% of the time, 3=occasionally / 50% of the time, 4=often, 75% of the time, 5=always". Results are communicated to coaches on an on-going basis.

In education, a web-based student feedback system for individual teachers has been implemented in two German school districts since 2009 (Gaertner, 2014). Using a 4-point Likert scale, it invites students to report their level of agreement regarding behaviours organised in building blocks which can be selected by the teacher depending on the specific needs of the class. There are no recommendations as to whether the instrument should be administrated during or at the end of the course.

For immediate client feedback, the instrument developed in psychotherapy which solely surveys client outcomes (Miller et al., 2015) is designed to be simple and brief, so as to make it easier to use during a session. It consists in four questions, on a 10-point Likert scale: 10 very high to 1 very low. It may be administrated by the psychotherapist during or at the end of a session.

Frequency of feedback

Arguably, the length of the instrument would need to be considered in relation to the frequency of its administration. For example, the Leadership Scale of Sports contains 40 items and is ill-suited for immediate administration. The psychotherapy client feedback instrument developed by Miller contains four items and can easily be administrated during or at the end of each session. Action research would be suitable to identify best practices in terms of frequency of administration in relation to size of the instrument in executive coaching.

Reporting of the feedback results

Miller's instrument offers web interfaces allowing the recipients of feedback to compare their performance over time or to obtain benchmarks based on average ratings obtained by a similar population of professionals. Moreover, feedback results are linked with online training tools, thus supporting the deliberate practice of the professional. Similar interfaces exist in combination with multisource feedback instruments for managers (Scisco, Biech & Hallenbeck, 2017).

7.7. PERSONAL REFLEXIVITY

After having practised executive coaching for 17 years, this was my first foray in research. In this section, I share some thoughts about the tensions that I experienced by choosing a mixed-methods approach, in the hope that it will help other researchers. In addition, I discuss issues with participants' enrolment in quantitative and mixed-methods research, which limited the range of possible designs and led to limitations linked to the size of the sample.

Personal challenges with a mixed-method design

At the onset of my doctoral research programme, I was warned that choosing a mixed-method over a mono-method as a first-time researcher would be challenging. Since it is a hybrid method, it is recommended to have experience in both quantitative and qualitative approaches before using it. However, as a pragmatist, I chose the doctoral programme because it combines a process of learning to be a researcher with a tangible contribution to practice. I could not envision doing anything else than choosing the methodology most appropriate to answer the research question I had selected. Arguably, both mixed-methods and action research would have been suitable. However, because I had set myself to complete the programme in three years, I could not see how action research could be successfully implemented in the time frame allocated for the purpose of collecting data.

Challenges with exploratory designs are not only related to time but also to the integration between the qualitative and quantitative data (Creswell, 2010). It may come as a surprise that I experienced some tensions within a sequential design, which clearly separates the qualitative and quantitative strands. However, in this study the qualitative and the quantitative strands were not implemented sequentially because the qualitative strand took longer than expected. As a result, I had very little time between the end of the focus groups which generated the item pool and the launch of the second survey of the quantitative strand. Therefore, I was not able to complete the coding of the focus group discussions before the second survey was finalised. Arguably, this was not necessary, since the work of the focus groups had directly produced the item pool. However, this data might have helped to refine the survey further. After discussing with my supervision team, I decided to transcribe and code the focus group discussions at a later stage and to use the results to support the interpretation of the instrument. Consequently, I recognise that I stepped away from a purely sequential exploratory design towards a multi-method approach. That being said, from a pragmatic perspective, this was a conscious choice in service of the research question.

Personal learnings and insights about client feedback

After many years facilitating the professional development of my clients through the delivery of behavioural feedback, these last three years gave me the opportunity to research the inverse proposition. By defining client feedback as situational and behavioural and anchoring it in a theoretical framework that I described as client-centred integrative, I obtained an instrument which, if used as a discussion point and not for normative comparison purposes, may help clients become a more credible and effective source of feedback for their executive coach.

The research topic was directly related to a problem that I experienced as a practitioner of executive coaching: while I had noticed interest from my clients to provide me with formative feedback, there was no evidence to anchor our discussion. The literature review indicated that the absence of evidence hampered not only the quality but also the emergence of formative client feedback, which was detrimental the quality of the coaching process. During the research process itself, I experienced that clients are willing to provide feedback on coaching behaviours if supported to do so by the sharing of knowledge. Indeed, during the qualitative strand, 32 busy executives accepted to give two hours of their time to participate in focus groups. Likewise, over 80% of the participants of the quantitative strand requested an executive summary of the research results, as well as the feedback instrument when available.

Sharing findings about the study have led to meaningful discussions with clients, supervisees as well as webinar and conference participants. For example, my supervisees have showed interest in the different facets of empathy and how to decide when each is needed. They are also intrigued by the idea of adopting a more flexible approach to advice giving, which they thought was not possible in coaching.

In my own practice I have started to experiment with a new approach of goal setting and monitoring, inviting my clients to design plans by themselves or with the help of other parties when they are ready to do so, instead of including it in the coaching process. I am yet to observe any impact on the quality of the results of the coaching process, in line with what the research results indicated . Most importantly, the study has equipped me with explicit theoretical foundations to inform my clients and supervisees about the process of executive coaching, thus enriching the relevance of their feedback.

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Appendix I:

Focus group participant: Research advertisement

Dear ____________

I am organising focus groups of executive clients to explore the most important coaching behaviours from their perspective. I am asking for your assistance in disseminating invitations to potential participants, defined as executives who have had at least three executive coaching sessions delivered in English in the last 2 years. This research would lead to the development of an instrument that clients could use to give effective behavioural feedback to their coach during a coaching session, thus increasing the quality of coaching.

The participation will be entirely voluntary and participants will be given a choice between virtual and face to face focus groups, which will run for approximately 2 hours. The participants of the focus group will help create a survey of coaching behaviours. This survey will be used in a quantitative study which will measure the contribution of these behaviours to effective coaching.

Should you agree to assist me, please let me know by sending me an email at helenes@helseiconsulting.com. I will then send you an information sheet and template of a cover email to share with one or more executives in your network who have already experienced coaching. These executives, if interested, will then contact me to receive a consent form to participate in the research. You will no longer be involved and will not be asked to send reminders.

Upon request, I will send you a summary of the study. In the meantime, you are more than welcome to check my LinkedIn page where I have summarised the findings of my literature review https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/executive-coaches-its-time-get-real-feedback-from-your-helene-seiler?trk=prof-post and to regularly check for new postings.

Should you require any additional information, please contact me at helenes@helseiconsulting.com

Best regards
Hélène Seiler

Appendix II:
Focus group participant: information sheet

OXFORD BROOKES UNIVERSITY

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET: FOCUS GROUP

Thank you for your interest in this research study. Researchers in coaching and other social sciences rely on curious individuals like you to advance knowledge and improve practice.
Before you decide whether or not to take part in this particular research, it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully.

What will happen to me if I take part?

You are invited to participate in a virtual, 2-hour long focus group, with 5 to 8 other executives, during the months of March and April 2017.

What is the purpose of the study?

The aim of the study is to explore which behaviours of executive coaches most strongly contribute to effective coaching. This research will lead to the development of a feedback instrument containing these behaviours. Executives will be able to use this instrument during a coaching session to give feedback to their coach, thus increasing the quality of coaching in organisations.

What are the possible benefits of taking part for me?

As a participant of the focus group you will get more clarity about effective coaching behaviours. This will help you reflect on your own coaching behaviours with your team members.

Why have I been invited to participate?

You have had at least one previous experience of coaching in the last two years, with at least 3 coaching sessions.

What should I do if I want to take part?

To take part in the research, reply to helenes@helseiconsulting.com. I will suggest a ten-minute time slot so that I can answer your questions and discuss the next steps.

Do I have to take part if I respond?

If you do decide to take part, you will retain this information sheet for your files and sign a consent form electronically. You are still free to withdraw at any time and without giving a reason.

Will what I say in this study be kept confidential?

Confidentiality, privacy and anonymity will be ensured in the collection, storage and publication of research material. Research data will be kept securely at all times. Laptops and other devices will be encrypted. Data will be stored in Google Drive, for which the University has a security agreement. Data generated by the study will be retained in accordance with the University's policy on Academic Integrity: the data generated in the course of the research will be kept securely in paper or online form for a period of ten years after the completion of a research project.

What will happen to the results of the research study?

The result of the research will be used to produce a thesis, as part of the completion requirements of a Doctorate of Coaching and Mentoring at Oxford Brookes.

Who is organising and funding the research?

I am conducting the research as a student at Oxford Brookes University, Faculty of Business. This research is self-funded.

Who has reviewed the study?

This research has been approved by the University Research Ethics Committee, Oxford Brookes University.

Contact for further Information

For further information, feel free to contact the researcher Hélène Seiler, DMC Student, Faculty of Business at 15005120@brookes.ac.uk. Should you have any concerns about the way in which the study has been conducted, please contact the Chair of the University Research Ethics Committee on ethics@brookes.ac.uk.
In addition, please note that the research study is supervised by Dr Christian Ehrlich, Senior Lecturer (cehrlich@brookes.ac.uk) and Dr Adrian Myers, Senior Lecturer (amyers@brookes.ac.uk)

Thank you very much for having taken the time to read the information sheet.
March 2017

Appendix III:

Focus group participant: consent form

CONSENT FORM

Full title of Project: Assessing the executive coach behaviours: development of a feedback instrument for executive clients

Contribution of the executive participating: taking part in a focus group about effective coaching behaviours

Name, position and contact address of Researcher:

Hélène Seiler, Student, Doctorate of Coaching and Mentoring
Faculty of Business, Oxford Brookes University
N202, Wheatley Campus
Gipsy Lane
Oxford, OX30BP
15005120@brookes.ac.uk

Please initial box

1. I confirm that I have read and understand the information sheet for the above study and have had the opportunity to ask questions. In particular I understand that the focus group will be audio recorded for data analysis purposes and I give my consent. ☐
2. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time, without giving reason. ☐
3. I agree to take part in the above study. ☐

____________________	____________	__________________
Name of Participant	Date	Signature
____________________	____________	__________________
Name of Researcher	Date	Signature

Appendix IV:

Introductory slides for the focus groups

Effective client feedback requires empirical knowledge about effective behaviours.

SITUATION: COACHING NEEDS	COACHING BEHAVIOURS	IMPACT: COACHING OUTCOMES

THIS IS THE RESEARCH GAP THAT YOU WILL HELP TO FILL

Helene Seiler - March 2017 3

We will review behaviours in four clusters

Showing genuine care

Displaying Professionalism

Giving the lead to you

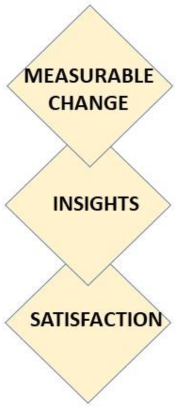
Facilitating the process

Helene Seiler - March 2017 4

You will be asked to select the coaching behaviours that are the most effective

- **Showing genuine care**
- **Professionalism**
- **Giving the lead to you**
- **Facilitating the process**

?



Helene Seiler - March 2017 5

What do we mean by effective?

COACHING EFFECTIVENESS	EXAMPLES OF MEASUREMENTS
IMPACT ON THE ORGANIZATION	Financial ROI Increase in workforce engagement
BEHAVIORAL CHANGE	Goal attainment from self-perspective and from the perspective of co-workers
LEARNINGS AND INSIGHTS / COGNITIVE CHANGE	Increase in self-insight, self-awareness, increase in career satisfaction
REACTION, SATISFACTION WITH THE COACH, PROCESS	Quality of the collaboration with the coach / fit

Adapted from McKie (2007)

Helene Seiler - March 2017 6

You will also be asked to select the behaviours that are the most difficult to master

Appendix V:
Coach referee for surveys: research advertisement

Request for research participants

__________ aims for excellence in executive coaching and welcomes research which will help us improve the quality of the coaching we offer. From time to time we are approached for support with research. We're pleased to be able to tell you about a research project being undertaken by Hélène Seiler, an executive coach from our network, who is currently a Doctoral Student in Coaching and Mentoring at Oxford Brookes University. The aim of her research is to study effective coaching behaviours and create an instrument allowing clients of executive coaching to offer behavioural feedback to their coach during a coaching session. Executives are defined as people having authority over people or projects in an organisation. Executive coaching typically helps them reach goals that lead to increased engagement and effectiveness at work.

About the research topic

During coaching sessions, executive coaches routinely use feedback to support their clients in their progress. Yet, clients rarely reciprocate despite a growing body of research showing that empowering them to give feedback to their coach improves the quality of the relationship and ultimately the impact of coaching. Empirical studies have shown that clients experience coaching in a way external observers and coaches do not. Yet, when probed, they do not clearly and consistently describe what their coach did to contribute to the outcomes they have experienced, making it difficult for the coach to know what is needed to increase their effectiveness. Equipping clients with information about effective coaching behaviours would give them a stronger voice and allow their coaches to obtain a richer picture of their performance during the coaching process, making adjustments as needed.

Your contribution to the study

Should you agree to assist Hélène, your role would consist in sending a research announcement to the clients you will be coaching in 2017, at the start of the coaching process. The protocol would unfold as follows:

1. You e-mail Hélène at helenes@helseiconsulting.com
2. Hélène sends you a participant information sheet and a consent form to sign
3. You sign the consent form electronically
4. Hélène sends you a research announcement template to disseminate to your clients

5. You e-mail the research announcement to your clients. From then on, no further requests would be made to you.
6. Interested clients reach out to Hélène
7. Hélène sends them the surveys

What questions will be asked and how about the confidentiality?

Each client participating in the research completes two surveys, one at the beginning for control purposes and one at the end of the coaching process. In total this won't take more than 30 minutes of their time. In the second survey, they will be asked about the coaching behaviours they have observed and to measure the effectiveness of coaching. This will allow Hélène to explore links between coaching behaviours and the effectiveness of coaching. In addition, when possible and if the clients are interested, co-workers nominated by each client may be surveyed about their perspective on the level of goal attainment reached at the end of the coaching. Participation is voluntary and obtained only after reading an information sheet and completing a consent form. There is no obligation for any participant to take part in the research and no consequence if they choose not to participate. Confidentiality, privacy and anonymity is ensured in the collection, storage and publication of research material. Research data is kept securely at all times

As a participating coach, you would be offered the opportunity to test the feedback instrument, as soon as the first prototype is built. Upon request to the researcher, you would receive a summary of additional findings of the research thesis.

If you are interested please send an email directly to Hélène Seiler, the researcher at helenes@helseiconsulting.com

Thank you for considering this opportunity.

Appendix VI:

Coach referee for survey: participant information sheet

OXFORD
BROOKES
UNIVERSITY

Thank you for your interest in this research study. Researchers in coaching and other social sciences rely on curious individuals like you to advance knowledge and improve practice.
Before you decide whether or not to take part in this particular research, it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully.

What is the purpose of the study?

The aim of the study is to explore which behaviours of executive coaches contribute the most to effective coaching.
https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/executive-coaches-its-time-get-real-feedback-from-your-helene-seiler
This research will lead to the development of a feedback instrument containing these behaviours. Clients will be able to use this instrument during a coaching session to give feedback to their coach, thus increasing the quality of coaching in organisations.

Why have I been invited to participate?

You have expressed interest in participating at ______________

Do I have to take part in this research?

If you do decide to take part, you will retain this information sheet for your files. You are still free to withdraw at any time and without giving a reason by sending an email to the researcher. There are no consequences whatsoever if you prefer not to participate.

What will happen to me if I take part?

You will not be required to complete any survey yourself.
Upon your acceptance, you will send to one or more clients you will be coaching as of September 2017 a short presentation about the research. An invitation template is included in the email you have received. If a client is interested to participate, they will contact the researcher directly to receive a link to an electronic survey. This first survey will assess their current level of self-insight so that the researcher can have a starting point. They will receive a second survey at the end of the coaching, in which they will be

asked questions about the coaching behaviours they have observed from you during the coaching process, as well as questions about their perspective of the results of the coaching. It is important to note this survey will be sent after they have completed their work with you, so they will not know at any moment during the coaching process what the survey will contain. As a result of this design, whether or not the client you are working with completes the survey, there will be no impact on the quality of your interaction with the client you coached.

What are the possible benefits of taking part?

By participating you will be in a position to contribute to a better understanding of effective coaching behaviours. You will receive a summary of the key findings of the report once the research is completed, as well as regular updates about the progress of the research, including the next prototype of the feedback instrument.

Will what the executives report in this study be kept confidential?

All information collected about your coaching will be kept strictly confidential. Data will be anonymised by attributing a code name to each executive participating in the research. Confidentiality, privacy and anonymity will be ensured in the collection, storage and publication of research material. Research data will be kept securely at all times. Laptops and other devices will be encrypted. Data will be stored in Google Drive, for which the University has a security agreement. Data generated by the study will be retained in accordance with the University's policy on Academic Integrity: the data generated in the course of the research will be kept securely in paper or online form for a period of ten years after the completion of a research project.

What should I do if I want to take part?

To take part in the research, confirm your interest by sending me an email at helenes@helseiconsulting.com. You will then complete a consent form that will be included in the response you will receive from the researcher.

What will happen to the results of the research study?

The result of the research will be used to produce a thesis, as part of the completion requirements of a Doctorate of Coaching and Mentoring at Oxford Brookes.

Who is organising and funding the research?

I am conducting the research as a student at Oxford Brookes University, Faculty of Business. This research is self-funded.

Who has reviewed the study?

This research has been approved by the University Research Ethics Committee, Oxford Brookes University.

Contact for further information

For further information, feel free to contact the researcher Hélène Seiler, DMC Student, Faculty of Business at 15005120@brookes.ac.uk. Should you have any concerns about the way in which the study has been conducted, please contact the Chair of the University Research Ethics Committee on ethics@brookes.ac.uk.

In addition, please note that the research study is supervised by Dr Christian Ehrlich, Senior Lecturer (cehrlich@brookes.ac.uk) and Dr Adrian Myers, Senior Lecturer (amyers@brookes.ac.uk)

Thank you very much for having taken the time to read the information sheet.

Hélène Seiler
September 2017
helenes@helseiconsulting.com
+447493039066

Appendix VII:

Coach referee for survey: consent form

CONSENT FORM

Full title of Project: Assessing the executive coach behaviours: development of a feedback instrument for clients

Name, position and contact address of Researcher:

Hélène Seiler, Student, Doctorate of Coaching and Mentoring
Faculty of Business, Oxford Brookes University
N202, Wheatley Campus
Gipsy Lane
Oxford, OX30BP

Please initial box

1. I confirm that I have read and understand the information sheet for the above study and have had the opportunity to ask questions. ☐

2. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time, without giving reason. ☐

3. I agree to take part in the above study. ☐

Name of Participant	Date	Signature
Name of Researcher	Date	Signature

Appendix VIII:
Survey participant: research advertisement

I am pleased to be able to tell you about a research project being undertaken by Hélène Seiler, a fellow executive coach, who is currently a Doctoral student in Coaching and Mentoring at Oxford Brookes University. The aim of her research, which has been approved by ____, is to build an instrument that clients of coaching will be able to use to give behavioural feedback to their coach during coaching sessions. You are invited to participate in this research during your coaching process. Participation involves two online surveys: one now and one at the end of your coaching process. In total this will take 20 minutes of your time. By agreeing to participate you can contribute to the coaching profession's understanding and knowledge about effective coaching behaviours. Participation is entirely voluntary, and you can interrupt your participation at any time without any impact on the quality of your coaching experience. If you are interested please send an email directly to Hélène Seiler, the researcher: helenes@helseiconsulting.com, who will send you the link to the first survey.

Appendix IX:
Survey participant: information sheet

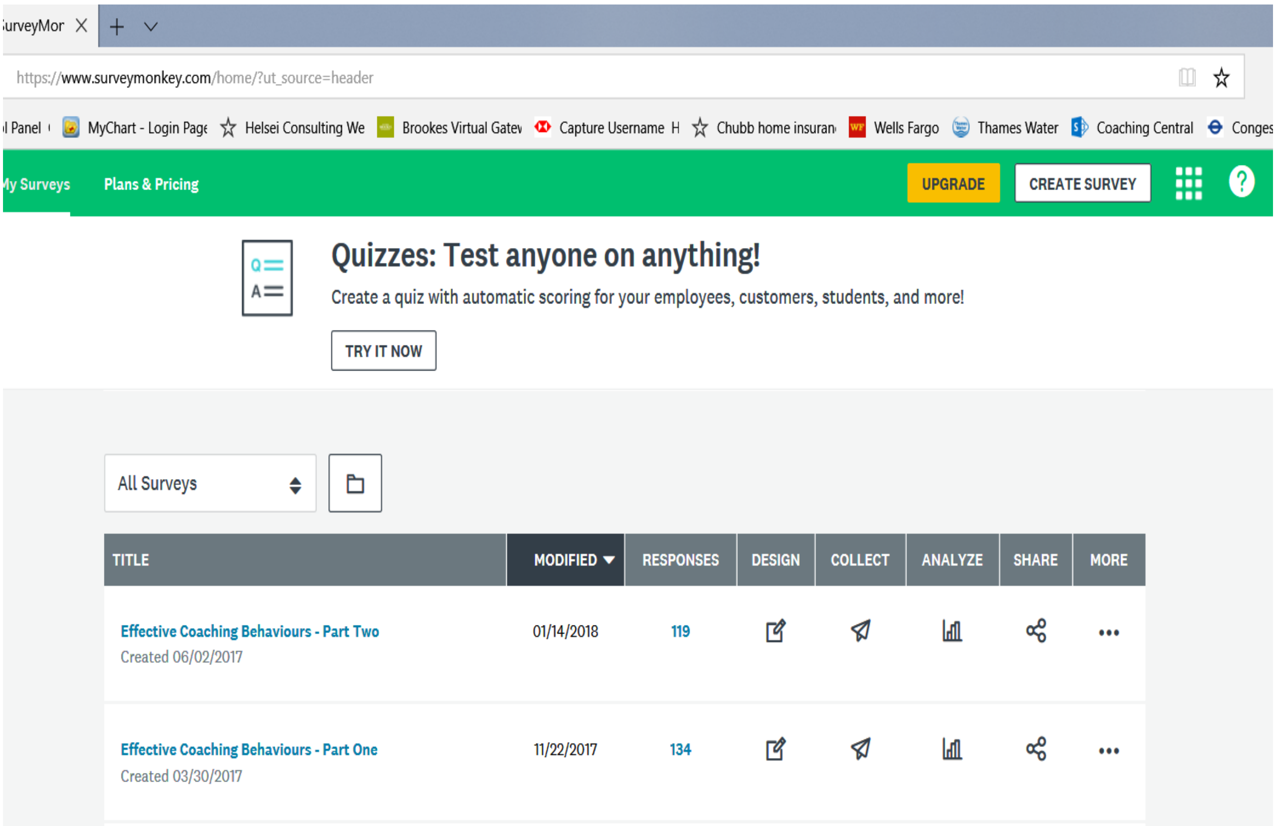
Please see first questionnaire in Appendix XII

Appendix X:
Survey participant: consent form

Please see first questionnaire in Appendix XIII

Appendix XI:

Screenshot of Survey Monkey control panel



Appendix XII:
First questionnaire

Effective Coaching Behaviours - Part One

1. General Information about the survey and confirmation of consent to participate

Thank you for your interest in this research study. My name is Helene Seiler, and I am conducting this research as part of a Doctorate of Coaching and Mentoring at Oxford Brookes University. Before you start completing this survey, please review the information below to decide if you want to take part the research.

The aim of the study is to explore which behaviours of executive coaches contribute the most to effective coaching from the perspective of clients of coaching. This research will lead to the development of a feedback instrument containing these behaviours. Clients of coaching will be able to use this instrument during a coaching session to give feedback to their coach, thus increasing the quality of coaching.

Why have I been invited to participate? You coach volunteered to be support this research and sent you an email about the opportunity to participate in it.

Do I have to participate? No, it is entirely voluntary. No-one other than the researcher will know whether you have decided to take part or not. Your participation or non-participation will have no impact on your coaching experience. If you decide to participate you are still free to withdraw at any time and without giving a reason.

What will happen to me if I participate? You will be asked to complete two online surveys. The first one now and the second one at the end of the coaching process. Today's survey will take about 5 minutes to complete and will cover your way of thinking about yourself. The second survey will take about 25 minutes to complete, and you will receive another link to complete it at the end of your coaching process. The second survey will be about the coaching behaviours you have observed from your coach and your perception about the effectiveness of your coaching process, including your level of goal achievement. In addition, you will have the opportunity, if this is relevant to your coaching process and if you wish so, to invite co-workers to anonymously offer their own perception about your level of goal achievement. The information collected and the results of both surveys will remain completely confidential and will be seen only by the researcher.

What are the possible benefits of participating? By participating you will contribute to a better understanding of effective coaching behaviours and to building a feedback instrument for clients of coaching. In addition, as you reply to the questions, you might get useful insights about the way you think about yourself (first survey) and how you respond to and use coaching (second survey). Upon request, you will receive the key results of the study, including the feedback instrument.

Will what I say in this study be kept confidential? Yes, information about individual participants will be kept strictly confidential. Data will be anonymised and kept securely at all times.

What will happen to the results of the research study? The result of the research will be used to produce a thesis, as part of the completion requirements of a Doctorate of Coaching and Mentoring at Oxford Brookes University. The feedback instrument and other findings might be published.

Who is organising and funding the research? I am conducting the research as a student of Oxford Brookes University and the research is self-funded.

This research has been approved by the University Research Ethics Committee, Oxford Brookes University.

Contact for further information:

1

Helene Seiler, DCM student, 15005120@brookes.ac.uk. If you have any concerns about the way in which the study has been conducted, contact the Chair of the University Research Ethics Committee at ethics@brookes.ac.uk. The research study is supervised by Dr. Christian Eh

1. I confirm that I have read the information provided above and that I have had he opportunity to ask questions by contacting the researcher. I understand that my participation is voluntary and I am free to withdraw at any time, without giving reason. I agree to take part in the study.

- ◯ YES
- ◯ NO

2

Effective Coaching Behaviours - Part One

2. General Information about you and your coaching process

Thank you for agreeing to participate in the study. Coaching researchers rely on people like you to improve theory and practice. Please complete this information section as accurately as you can. This will insure that I send you the second survey at the right time, that I accurately match your two surveys and that I properly contextualise your responses.

2. What is your gender?

3. How many years of working experience do you have in total?

4. Which of the following job title best describe your current position?

- Manager or Senior Manager
- Director, Vice President or Partner
- Senior Vice President or Managing Director
- Other (please specify)

5. Which country is currently your main place of work?

6. What is the month and year during which your coaching process will most likely be completed? If you do not know leave blank.

7. Do you know, even approximately, how many coaching sessions you will receive? If yes, please indidate the number of sessions in the box below.

3

8. Have you ever been coached before?

- Yes
- No

9. Have you received or are you currently receiving another form of personalised leadership or career development support (ex: mentoring)?

- Yes
- No

10. What do you expect from your upcoming coaching sessions? If you don't know leave blank.

11. What is the email address you want me to use to send you the second survey?

Effective Coaching Behaviours - Part One

3. Your way of thinking about yourself

The following questions are about your way of thinking about yourself and there are no right or wrong responses. Making an honest assessment about your way of thinking about yourself will most likely enhance your coaching experience. Your response to these questions will help me understand better in what ways the coaching process may benefit you.

12. Please indicate to what extent you agree or disagree with the following statements

	Strongly disagree	Moderately disagree	Slightly disagree	Slightly agree	Moderately agree	Strongly agree
I don't often think about my thoughts	○	○	○	○	○	○
I rarely spend time in self-reflection	○	○	○	○	○	○
I frequently examine my feelings	○	○	○	○	○	○
I don't really think about why I behave in the way that I do	○	○	○	○	○	○
I frequently take time to reflect on my thoughts	○	○	○	○	○	○
I often think about the way I feel about things	○	○	○	○	○	○
I am not really interested in analysing my behaviour	○	○	○	○	○	○
Is it important for me to evaluate the things that I do	○	○	○	○	○	○
I am very interested in examining what I think about	○	○	○	○	○	○
It is important for me to try and understand what my feelings mean	○	○	○	○	○	○
I have a definite need to understand the way my mind works	○	○	○	○	○	○
It is important for me to understand how my thoughts arise	○	○	○	○	○	○

	Strongly disagree	Moderately disagree	Slightly disagree	Slightly agree	Moderately agree	Strongly agree
I am usually aware of my thoughts	○	○	○	○	○	○
I am often confused about the way I really feel about things	○	○	○	○	○	○
I usually have a very good idea why I've behaved in a certain way	○	○	○	○	○	○
I am often aware that I'm having a feeling, but I often don't quite know what it is	○	○	○	○	○	○
My behaviour often puzzles me	○	○	○	○	○	○
Thinking about my thoughts makes me more confused	○	○	○	○	○	○
Often, I find it difficult to make sense of the way I think about things	○	○	○	○	○	○
I usually know why I feel the way I do	○	○	○	○	○	○

6

Effective Coaching Behaviours - Part One

4. Thank you and next steps

Thank you very much for completing the first part of the survey. In the month following the end of your coaching process, you will receive another survey about your coaching experience. Please click on NEXT to move to the last page and validate your survey.

Effective Coaching Behaviours - Part One

5. Thank you

Please click on DONE to validate your survey. I wish you all the best with your coaching process. Should you have any question or concern, feel free to contact me at helenes@helseiconsulting.com. Best regards, Helene

Appendix XIII:
Second questionnaire

Introduction

Thank you for your continued interest in this research study. My name is Helene Seiler, and I am conducting this research as part of a Doctorate of Coaching and Mentoring at Oxford Brookes University. As you might remember, the aim of the study is to explore which behaviours of executive coaches contribute the most to effective coaching, from the perspective of clients of coaching. This is the second and final survey I am sending to you.

* 1. What is your email address? This information is critical to match your first and second surveys.

* 2. Have you completed all your coaching sessions?

- Yes
- No
- Not sure

Next steps of your coaching process

* 3. How many coaching sessions have you received so far?

- ◯ 1 or 2 coaching sessions
- ◯ 3 coaching sessions or more
- ◯ I have not had any coaching session yet

Next Steps of your Coaching Process

* 4. Approximately how many additional months do you think your coaching process will last?

- One month or less
- More than one month
- Not sure

Let's get back in touch

Thank you. It looks like it is too soon to complete the second survey.

* 5. May I contact you again at the end of the coaching process to send you the second survey?

◯ Yes - On the next page please click DONE so that I can contact you again

◯ No

Your coaching sessions

Thank you. I am going to ask you questions about your coaching sessions. After establishing how many sessions and hours of coaching you received, I will ask you to review a list of behaviours that you have noticed from your coach during your coaching sessions. Then, I will ask to review a list of statements about what happened during and as a result of the coaching sessions. Finally, and only if this is possible for you, I will ask if you are willing to share the name of one or more co-workers who might be in a position to describe one change they have observed in you as a result of your coaching sessions.

6. Approximately how many coaching sessions have you received since you started the coaching process?

7. Approximately how many hours have you spent in conversation with your coach?

The behaviours of your coach during your coaching sessions

In this section, I will ask you to describe the behaviours of your coach by looking at the list below. For each of the behaviours listed, please indicate if you agree that you noticed this behaviour. Do not worry if you have not noticed a particular behaviour from your coach. At this stage I am only making hypotheses about which behaviours might be important for effective coaching. It is only after analysing the responses from all the survey participants that I will have further insights about what is important.

8. During my coaching sessions, I noticed that

	Strongly disagree	Moderately disagree	Slightly disagree	Slightly agree	Moderately agree	Strongly agree
My coach actively listened to me (for example by asking questions for clarification or summarizing what I said)	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
My coach acknowledged my emotions when discussing a topic	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
My coach offered periods of silent reflection	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
My coach stayed non judgemental	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
My coach was responsive to my needs	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
My coach stayed open minded to what I said	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
My coach showed positive regard (for example through comments, tone of voice, body language)	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
My coach was supportive (for example through comments, tone of voice or body language)	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
My coach invited me to work together when I presented issues	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

	Strongly disagree	Moderately disagree	Slightly disagree	Slightly agree	Moderately agree	Strongly agree
My coach invited me to explore unintended consequences of my actions						
My coach invited me to explore together how cultural differences might impact our discussions about my issue						
My coach invited me to explore how my working environment influences me						
Using the information I shared, my coach made new connections and surfaced patterns or recurrent themes about me						
My coach stepped into my world, using my vocabulary and metaphors						
My coach encouraged me to think about possible unconscious motives for my actions						
My coach invited me to recognize and explore assumptions I might have						
My coach invited me to explore gaps between my current and desired situation						
My coach invited me to discuss new behaviours I could engage in						
My coach encouraged me to be aware of my own experience and behaviours during the coaching session						
My coach picked up on what I did not say and asked me about it						

	Strongly disagree	Moderately disagree	Slightly disagree	Slightly agree	Moderately agree	Strongly agree
My coach invited me to reflect on the alignment between my goals and the goals of my organisation	○	○	○	○	○	○
My coach invited me to state my personal vision for my role in my organisation	○	○	○	○	○	○
My coach invited me to explore how I typically approach change	○	○	○	○	○	○
When unable to provide expertise, my coach acknowledged it	○	○	○	○	○	○
When I requested advice, my coach checked first if this is what I really needed and then invited me to reflect on my request	○	○	○	○	○	○
When shifting from inquiry to advisory mode, my coach made it explicit	○	○	○	○	○	○
My coach invited me to share my feelings about a topic	○	○	○	○	○	○
My coach was prepared to share a point of view when I really needed advice	○	○	○	○	○	○
My coach communicated authentically, transparently, honestly	○	○	○	○	○	○
When I presented an issue, my coach neither over-reacted nor stayed overly neutral	○	○	○	○	○	○
My coach did not display too much familiarity nor stayed overly distant with me	○	○	○	○	○	○
My coach used examples from his/her own life story to illustrate a point I made	○	○	○	○	○	○

	Strongly disagree	Moderately disagree	Slightly disagree	Slightly agree	Moderately agree	Strongly agree
My coach expressed complex ideas simply	○	○	○	○	○	○
When I expressed concerns about confidentiality , my coach invited me to discuss these concerns	○	○	○	○	○	○
My coach checked if his/her understanding of my organisation was sufficient to discuss the issues I presented	○	○	○	○	○	○
My coach asked questions about my organisation to better understand the issues I presented	○	○	○	○	○	○
My coach encouraged me to check to what extent my strengths match the needs of my organisation	○	○	○	○	○	○
My coach invited me to reflect on whether my organisation's culture enables or hampers my development goals	○	○	○	○	○	○
My coach used examples from coaching engagements in other organisations to broaden my perspective on a situation	○	○	○	○	○	○

Your own experience during and after the coaching sessions

Now I will ask you to review a list of statements about what happened during and as a result of the coaching sessions. Please let me know to what extent you agree with each statements. Do not worry if you find that you don't agree with some statements. Each coaching process is unique and addresses different needs.

9. Thinking back about my coaching process, I believe that

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
My coach and I agreed about the steps to be taken to reach my goals	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
My coach and I both felt confident about the usefulness of our coaching sessions	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
I believe my coach liked me	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
I had doubts about what we were trying to accomplish	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
I was confident in my coach's ability to help me	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
My coach and I were working toward mutually agreed upon goals	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
I felt that my coach appreciated me	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
We agreed on what was important for me to work on	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
My coach and I trusted each other	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
My coach and I had different ideas on what my development needs were	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
We established a good understanding of the kind of changes that would be good for me and/or others	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
I believe the way we worked with my development needs was correct	○	○	○	○	○
I was able to see the ordinary in new ways	○	○	○	○	○
I saw my old ideas under a new light	○	○	○	○	○
I obtained unexpected insights	○	○	○	○	○
I made connections that I had not thought of before	○	○	○	○	○
I found things that surprised me	○	○	○	○	○
I clarified a vague idea that I had	○	○	○	○	○
I plan to follow-up on interesting associations between topics and ideas that I had	○	○	○	○	○

Goal Setting

* 10. Did you have at least one developmental goal you worked on during your coaching sessions, where progress would be observable by others? Two examples of goals where progress is observable by others are: "improve my delegation skills" or "improve my executive presence". One example of a goal where progress is not observable by others is: "learned more about my strengths".

- ◯ Yes
- ◯ No
- ◯ Not sure

Your most important coaching goal

11. In one short sentence, please choose and describe one development goal you worked on with your coach, where progress is observable by others. Remember two examples from the previous page: "improve my delegation skills" or "improve my executive presence".

12. To what extent do you agree with the following statement: I believe that I have made good progress towards my goal?

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Agree
- Strongly agree

Asking co-workers about your level of goal achievement

Research shows that, in order to measure the level of progress on a goal that is observable by others, it is useful to ask co-workers about their perspective. I would be interested in inviting some of your co-workers to offer their perspective, if this is possible in the context of your coaching. If this is possible, let me know if you are willing to share the email address of some of your co-workers. The responses of your co-workers will remain completely confidential.

* 13. Are you interested to invite co-workers to participate in the survey?

- ◯ It is not possible to share co-workers' names in the context of my coaching
- ◯ Yes, I have trusted co-workers who know about my development goal and would likely participate
- ◯ No, I would prefer not to involve co-workers at this stage

Email addresses of co-workers

Please think about up to 5 co-workers who are aware of your goal and may already have given you some feedback about your level of achievement. We will send to each of the co-workers you have nominated a survey link with just one question about their observations on your goal progress. They will have a chance to review the research topic and process and decide if they want to participate. Should they decide to participate, it will take each of them less than 2 minutes to complete the survey. If you are comfortable sharing their email address now, so that I can invite them on your behalf, please do so now. If you prefer to ask them personally, please leave the page blank. I will give you the survey link so that you can send it to them.

14. If convenient to you now, please enter below the email address of your co-workers. You can enter as many co-workers as you would like, up to 5 co-workers. If you leave the page blank, I will send you the survey link so that you can share it with your co-workers after you have made the request to them

Co-worker 1

Co-worker 2

Co-worker 3

Co-worker 4

Co-worker 5

Thank you

Thank you for participating in the survey. Once I have received your survey as well as those of the other study participants, I will conduct statistical analyses to better understand how the behaviours of the coaches involved in the study relate to the experience of clients like you involved in the study. This will allow me to identify which coaching behaviours contribute the most to effective coaching. These behaviours will be presented in the form of a behavioural instrument helping clients to give feedback to their coach.
Let me know if you would be interested to receive the instrument once the research is completed.
At the end, don't forget to click on DONE to validate your survey.
Should you have any question or concern about your survey experience, feel free to contact me at helenes@helseiconsulting.com.
Best regards,
Helene Seiler

15. Would you like to receive a copy of the behavioural instrument once the research is completed?
Don't forget to click on DONE to validate your survey.

◯ Yes

◯ No

Appendix XIV:
Extracts of focus group transcripts

Online focus group

Extract of a transcript

W., I think provided reinsurance is probably important, in some cases – as I believe in you in your future etc. I have to provide you reassurance in order that you try new things to develop your potential

M. So you would be put that on the left – you are back Helene

Helene I am back

W., we have really moved forward Helene

Helene You don't need me – I think I can go have dinner

[laugh]

W. Maybe one element – Helene – we had quite a conversation Helene about accepting me as is – saying that it is actually more than that because as a coachee you expect that your coach actually believes in your potential not that as you are, but also you as you can be

Helene OK

W. So as a person in development

Helene Perfect – we are almost there – we have got a few more

M. Perhaps not trying too hard is already contained. In the congruence

W. Yes, Agreed

Bach and the body language as well, it's really included

M. Yeah

W. Same with reinforced description

M. Yes also contained

W. It is contained

W. I cannot see the whole slide

Helene Is this better?

[ya]

M. Ask how the session is going – I tend to find this important

Helene Do we put it on the left?

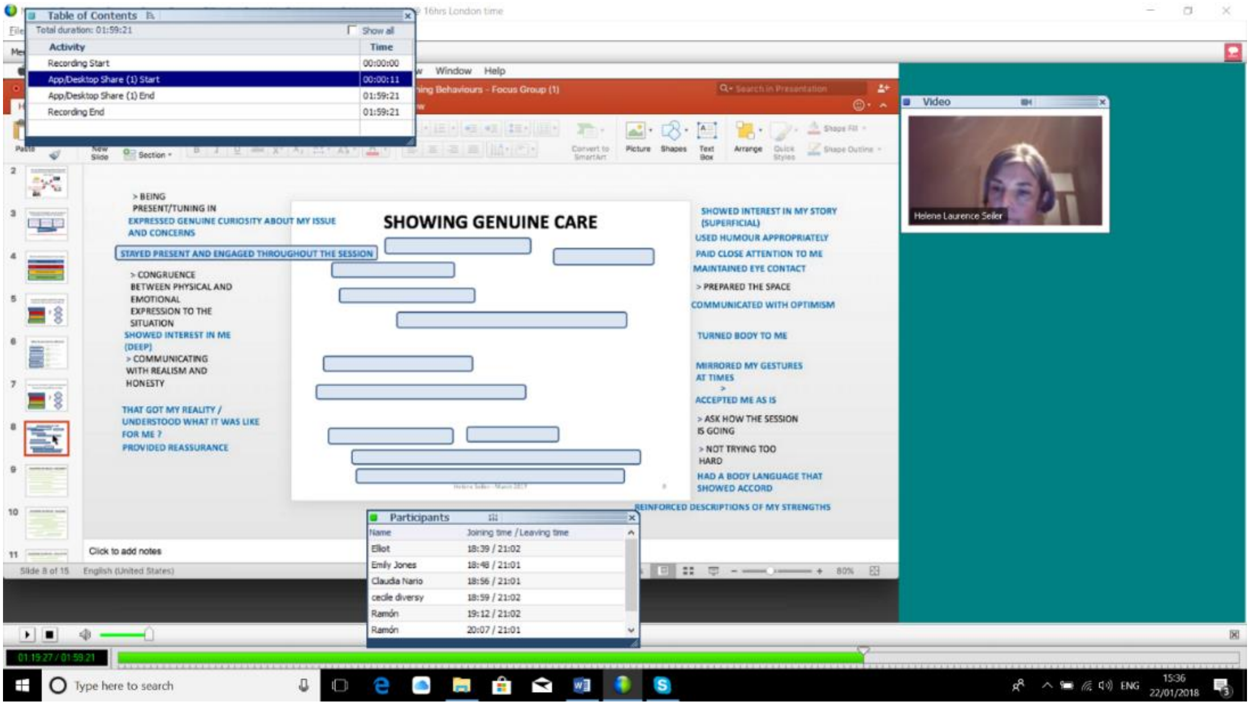
M. for some reason – we left it for the end – I would put it on the right

Helene OK – what do the others think?

B., I think a session can be incredibly effective without asking how it is going so I'd agree with Mozart

[agreements]

Screenshot of a webinar



Extract 2: face-to-face focus group

Extract of a transcript

Helene So anything written in a clunky way – anything you remember your coach was doing and that really challenged you

P3_1 So that's missing

Helene So missing yeah – anything I remember my coach doing this several times – and that really forced me to sort of – go out of my comfort zone –

P3_2 I wonder if there isn't a bit of testing and experimentation – and checking back on that testing and experimentation?

Helene OK…

P4_2 or I wonder if that maybe fits somewhere else or…

Helene It could be – let me check – it could be in the goal section – let me see – there is one here that says encouraged informed experimentation to help me develop – but it's not exactly what you said – it just anchors – but it's not processing

Multiple Participants Yeah

Helene So I think you were more referring to the fact that maybe you had heu homework and you did it and then you wanted to discuss about it – and the coach asking you learnings from that experience

P_1 Yeah

Helene Would the behaviour be asked me about my learnings from an experiment – is that what you mean?

P_1 Ya – I guess – ya -probably the closest –

P_4 Here, what my coach did is pointing out recurrent themes in my thinking – not behaviours but my thinking

Helene OK – shall we just change the word

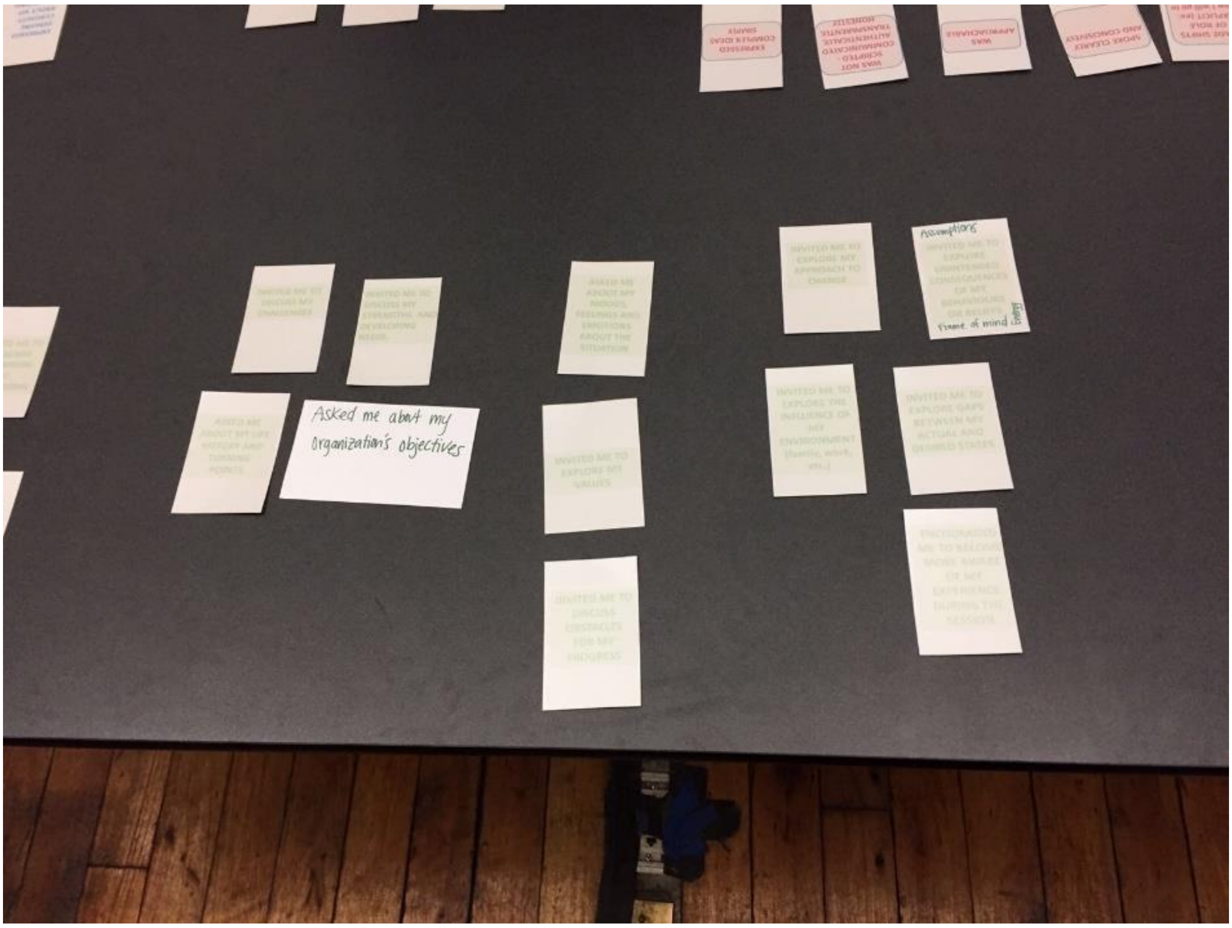
P_4 Well, for some people behaviour may work

Multiple Participants OK

Helene Behaviours and Thinking both

P_4 Make it reactions to … or am I complicating things – but thinking could be the same …and behaviours

<u>Pictures of behaviour cards on a table</u>



Appendix XV:

Extract of a coding spreadsheet

	A	B	C	D
1	NAME	DATA EXTRACT	FIRST ROUNDCODE	FIRST ROUND CODE 2
20	B.	but there would have been times she would ask me if this is really what is going to make me happy – and if what I, how I am struggling how I am trying to behave, I am trying to achieve within my organisation is really what I wanted myself long term and we discussed these kinds of things quite helpfully	**CHALLENGE**	**MENTORING**
21	B.	example she would identify behaviours which I hadn't understood – so I would talk through an example – and she would do sometimes one thing and sometimes the other – she might help to understand and even challenge the legitimacy of the behaviour that somebody else is showing towards me – and that would be in a way increasing my insight in my confidence	**CHALLENGE**	**OUTCOMES**
22	P2_1	challenged me to explore possibilities and then derive firm actions to move forward these possibilities	**CHALLENGE**	**OUTCOMES**
23	W.	sometimes if you want to get some insights, you need to take the client outside the current reality	**CHALLENGE**	**OUTCOMES**
24	B.	she would on occasion reflect back what she was hearing – which might be just a reflection of what I had actually said – or it might be identification of patterns – hum – and sometimes those patterns would come across to me – as gentle challenge – is this really the way you want to be	**CHALLENGE**	**SEING PATTERNS**
25	P2_3	help me understand is not challenging enough – I think for me that I am trying to focus is that if it's challenging me – I think there are too many soft words – like if you are going to challenge me I want you to be head on	**CHALLENGE**	**STRAIGHT VS. SOFT TALK**
26	P2_2	give me feedback and challenge my thinking – that's why we are hiring this person	**CHALLENGE**	**STRAIGHT VS. SOFT TALK**
27	B.	recognise and explore my assumptions – there is a challenge in all of this	**CHALLENGE**	
		the element of it that is difficult is picking up the assumptions, things like		

Appendix XVI:
Multiple regression: Working Alliance Inventory

ANOVA[a]

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	1482.967	6	247.161	7.089	.000[b]
	Residual	3451.865	99	34.867		
	Total	4934.831	105			

a. Dependent Variable: Working Alliance Inventory

b. Predictors: (Constant), ExecCoachBehaviourScale21, Coach Exp Dummy, Approximately how many hours have you spent in conversation with your coach?, Number of Years of Professional Experience, Sex Dummy, Self Reflection And Insight Scale

Model Summary[b]

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.548[a]	.301	.258	5.90486

a. Predictors: (Constant), ExecCoachBehaviourScale21, Coach Exp Dummy, Approximately how many hours have you spent in conversation with your coach?, Number of Years of Professional Experience, Sex Dummy, Self Reflection And Insight Scale

b. Dependent Variable: Working Alliance Inventory

Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	95.0% Confidence Interval for B		Correlations			Collinearity Statistics	
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Lower Bound	Upper Bound	Zero-order	Partial	Part	Tolerance	VIF
1	(Constant)	20.788	6.015		3.456	.001	8.853	32.723					
	Number of Years of Professional Experience	.120	.076	.139	1.581	.117	-.031	.271	.028	.157	.133	.912	1.097
	Approximately how many hours have you spent in conversation with your coach?	.454	.239	.170	1.899	.060	-.020	.929	.191	.188	.160	.886	1.128
	CoachExpDummy	.242	1.379	.016	.176	.861	-2.494	2.978	-.012	.018	.015	.876	1.142
	SexDummy	-.181	1.253	-.013	-.145	.885	-2.667	2.305	.010	-.015	-.012	.887	1.128
	SelfReflectionAndInsightScale	.036	.046	.070	.784	.435	-.055	.127	.111	.079	.066	.885	1.130
	ExecCoachBehaviourScale21	.204	.035	.504	5.751	.000	.134	.274	.510	.500	.483	.920	1.087

a. Dependent Variable: WorkingAllianceInventory

Appendix XVII:
Multiple regression: Serendipity Quotient

ANOVA[a]

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	794.911	6	132.485	8.025	.000[b]
	Residual	1634.495	99	16.510		
	Total	2429.406	105			

a. Dependent Variable: Serendipity Quotient

b. Predictors: (Constant), ExecCoachBehaviourScale21, Coach Exp Dummy, Approximately how many hours have you spent in conversation with your coach?, Number of Years of Professional Experience, Sex Dummy, Self Reflection And Insight Scale

Model Summary[b]

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.572[a]	.327	.286	4.06326

a. Predictors: (Constant), ExecCoachBehaviourScale21, Coach Exp Dummy, Approximately how many hours have you spent in conversation with your coach?, Number of Years of Professional Experience, Sex Dummy, Self Reflection And Insight Scale

b. Dependent Variable: Serendipity Quotient

Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients			95.0% Confidence Interval for B		Correlations			Collinearity Statistics	
		B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.	Lower Bound	Upper Bound	Zero-order	Partial	Part	Tolerance	VIF
1	(Constant)	8.815	4.139		2.130	.036	.602	17.027					
	Number of Years of Professional Experience	.036	.052	.059	.681	.497	-.068	.140	-.072	.068	.056	.912	1.097
	Approximately how many hours have you spent in conversation with your coach?	.219	.165	.117	1.333	.186	-.107	.546	.162	.133	.110	.886	1.128
	CoachExpDummy	.792	.949	.074	.835	.406	-1.090	2.675	.026	.084	.069	.876	1.142
	SexDummy	.761	.862	.077	.883	.379	-.949	2.472	.100	.088	.073	.887	1.128
	SelfReflectionAndInsightScale	.000	.032	.001	.010	.992	-.062	.063	.075	.001	.001	.885	1.130
	ExecCoachBehaviourScale21	.155	.024	.545	6.344	.000	.106	.203	.555	.538	.523	.920	1.087

a. Dependent Variable: SerendipityQuotient

Appendix XVIII:
Mediation effects: Working Alliance Inventory

Mediation effects of the Working Alliance Inventory

Sample
Size: 107

****
OUTCOME VARIABLE:
Working Alliance Inventory

Model Summary

R	R-sq	MSE	F	df1	df2	p
.5095	.2596	35.1289	36.8156	1.0000	105.0000	.0000

Model

	coeff	se	t	p	LLCI	ULCI
constant	28.6791	3.6996	7.7519	.0000	21.3434	36.0147
EXCBOS	.2061	.0340	6.0676	.0000	.1388	.2735

****
OUTCOME VARIABLE:
Serendipity Quotient

Model Summary

R	R-sq	MSE	F	df1	df2	p
.6752	.4559	12.8308	43.5723	2.0000	104.0000	.0000

Model

	coeff	se	t	p	LLCI	ULCI
constant	2.1148	2.8036	.7543	.4524	-3.4449	7.6745
EXCBOS	.0931	.0239	3.9021	.0002	.0458	.1404
Working Al	.3131	.0590	5.3089	.0000	.1962	.4301

************************** TOTAL EFFECT MODEL ****************************
OUTCOME VARIABLE:
Serendipity Quotient

Model Summary

R	R-sq	MSE	F	df1	df2	p
.5554	.3085	16.1528	46.8342	1.0000	105.0000	.0000

Model

	coeff	se	t	p	LLCI	ULCI
constant	11.0947	2.5087	4.4225	.0000	6.1204	16.0690
EXCBOS	.1576	.0230	6.8436	.0000	.1120	.2033

************** TOTAL, DIRECT, AND INDIRECT EFFECTS OF X ON Y **************

Total effect of X on Y

Effect	se	t	p	LLCI	ULCI	c_ps	c_cs
.1576	.0230	6.8436	.0000	.1120	.2033	.0328	.5554

Direct effect of X on Y

Effect	se	t	p	LLCI	ULCI	c'_ps	c'_cs
.0931	.0239	3.9021	.0002	.0458	.1404	.0194	.3280

Indirect effect(s) of X on Y:

	Effect	BootSE	BootLLCI	BootULCI
Working Al	.0645	.0197	.0312	.1079

Partially standardized indirect effect(s) of X on Y:

	Effect	BootSE	BootLLCI	BootULCI
Working Al	.0134	.0038	.0070	.0221

Completely standardized indirect effect(s) of X on Y:

	Effect	BootSE	BootLLCI	BootULCI
Working Al	.2274	.0607	.1151	.3552

*********************** ANALYSIS NOTES AND ERRORS ************************

Level of confidence for all confidence intervals in output:
95.0000

Number of bootstrap samples for percentile bootstrap confidence intervals:
5000

Appendix XIX:
Multiple regression: Goal attainment

Model Summary[b]

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.346[a]	.120	.087	.676

a. Predictors: (Constant), Serendipity Quotient, ExecCoachBehaviourScale21, Working Alliance Inventory
b. Dependent Variable: To what extent do you agree with the following statement: I believe that I have made good progress towards my goal?

ANOVA[a]

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	4.970	3	1.657	3.622	.017[b]
	Residual	36.590	80	.457		
	Total	41.560	83			

a. Dependent Variable: To what extent do you agree with the following statement: I believe that I have made good progress towards my goal?
b. Predictors: (Constant), Serendipity Quotient, ExecCoachBehaviourScale21, Working Alliance Inventory

Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		95.0% Confidence Interval for B		Correlations			Collinearity Statistics	
		B	Std. Error	Beta	Sig.	Lower Bound	Upper Bound	Zero-order	Partial	Part	Tolerance	VIF
1	(Constant)	2.762	.600		.000	1.569	3.956					
	ExecCoachBehaviourScale21	-.007	.005	-.169	.200	-.018	.004	.080	-.143	-.136	.646	1.548
	WorkingAllianceInventory	.019	.014	.188	.174	-.009	.048	.271	.151	.144	.583	1.717
	SerendipityQuotient	.041	.021	.276	.056	-.001	.082	.297	.212	.203	.544	1.838

a. Dependent Variable: To what extent do you agree with the following statement: I believe that I have made good progress towards my goal?

Appendix XX:
Hierarchical regression: Working Alliance Inventory

Hierarchical Regression of the Working Alliance – Step 1 21-instrument plus Self-reflection and Insight Scale – Step 2: interaction term (IEBEHAVSRIS = zscore of 21-instrument multiplied by Z-score of Self-reflection and Insight Scale)

Both models are significant. However, the difference is not significant, indicating that there is no moderation effect.

ANOVA[a]

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	1297.562	2	648.781	18.314	.000[b]
	Residual	3684.268	104	35.426		
	Total	4981.830	106			
2	Regression	1339.277	3	446.426	12.624	.000[c]
	Residual	3642.553	103	35.365		
	Total	4981.830	106			

a. Dependent Variable: Working Alliance Inventory

b. Predictors: (Constant), Self Reflection And Insight Scale, ExecCoachBehaviourScale21

c. Predictors: (Constant), Self Reflection And Insight Scale, ExecCoachBehaviourScale21, IEBEHAVSRIS

Model Summary[c]

					Change Statistics				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1	.510[a]	.260	.246	5.95195	.260	18.314	2	104	.000
2	.518[b]	.269	.248	5.94681	.008	1.180	1	103	.280

a. Predictors: (Constant), Self Reflection And Insight Scale, ExecCoachBehaviourScale21

b. Predictors: (Constant), Self Reflection AndI nsight Scale, ExecCoachBehaviourScale21, IEBEHAVSRIS

c. Dependent Variable: Working Alliance Inventory

Appendix XXI:
Hierarchical regression: Serendipity Quotient

Hierarchical Regression of the Serendipity Quotient – Step 1 21-instrument plus Self-reflection and Insight Scale – Step 2: interaction term (IEBEHAVSRIS = zscore of 21-instrument multiplied by Z-score of Self-reflection and Insight Scale)

Both models are significant. However, the difference is not significant, indicating that there is no moderation effect.

ANOVA[a]

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	757.016	2	378.508	23.217	.000[b]
	Residual	1695.527	104	16.303		
	Total	2452.543	106			
2	Regression	760.667	3	253.556	15.436	.000[c]
	Residual	1691.876	103	16.426		
	Total	2452.543	106			

a. Dependent Variable: Serendipity Quotient

b. Predictors: (Constant), Self Reflection And Insight Scale, ExecCoachBehaviourScale21

c. Predictors: (Constant), Self Reflection And Insight Scale, ExecCoachBehaviourScale21, IEBEHAVSRIS

Model Summary[c]

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics				
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1	.556[a]	.309	.295	4.03772	.309	23.217	2	104	.000
2	.557[b]	.310	.290	4.05290	.001	.222	1	103	.638

a. Predictors: (Constant), Self Reflection And Insight Scale, ExecCoachBehaviourScale21

b. Predictors: (Constant), Self Reflection And Insight Scale, ExecCoachBehaviourScale21, IEBEHAVSRIS

c. Dependent Variable: Serendipity Quotient

Appendix XXII:

Multiple regression of the two components on the Working Alliance Inventory

The model is significant. Components 1 and 2 both have a significant, unique contribution.

Model Summary[b]

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.560[a]	.313	.264	5.88123

a. Predictors: (Constant), Component Two, Coach Exp Dummy, Approximately how many hours have you spent in conversation with your coach?, Number of Years of Professional Experience, Self Reflection And Insight Scale, Sex Dummy, Component One

b. Dependent Variable: WorkingAllianceInventory

ANOVA[a]

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	1545.122	7	220.732	6.382	.000[b]
	Residual	3389.709	98	34.589		
	Total	4934.831	105			

a. Dependent Variable: Working Alliance Inventory

b. Predictors: (Constant), Component Two, Coach Exp Dummy, Approximately how many hours have you spent in conversation with your coach?, Number of Years of Professional Experience, Self Reflection And Insight Scale, Sex Dummy, Component One

Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients			95.0% Confidence Interval for B		Correlations			Collinearity Statistics	
		B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.	Lower Bound	Upper Bound	Zero-order	Partial	Part	Tolerance	VIF
1	(Constant)	16.867	6.667		2.530	.013	3.637	30.097					
	Number of Years of Professional Experience	.119	.076	.138	1.574	.119	-.031	.270	.028	.157	.132	.912	1.097
	Approximately how many hours have you spent in conversation with your coach?	.463	.238	.173	1.944	.055	-.010	.936	.191	.193	.163	.886	1.129
	CoachExpDummy	.264	1.373	.017	.192	.848	-2.461	2.990	-.012	.019	.016	.876	1.142
	SexDummy	-.327	1.253	-.023	-.261	.794	-2.813	2.158	.010	-.026	-.022	.880	1.136
	SelfReflectionAndInsightScale	.031	.046	.061	.683	.496	-.060	.122	.111	.069	.057	.880	1.136
	FactorOne	.139	.060	.263	2.330	.022	.021	.258	.469	.229	.195	.552	1.812
	FactorTwo	.392	.144	.306	2.711	.008	.105	.678	.479	.264	.227	.549	1.820

a. Dependent Variable: WorkingAllianceInventory

Appendix XXIII:

Multiple regression of the two components on the Serendipity Quotient

The model is significant. Only Factor 1 has a unique significant contribution.

Model Summary[b]

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.587[a]	.344	.297	4.03183

a. Predictors: (Constant), Component Two, Coach Exp Dummy, Approximately how many hours have you spent in conversation with your coach?, Number of Years of Professional Experience, Self Reflection And Insight Scale, Sex Dummy, Component One

b. Dependent Variable: Serendipity Quotient

ANOVA[a]

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	836.352	7	119.479	7.350	.000[b]
	Residual	1593.054	98	16.256		
	Total	2429.406	105			

a. Dependent Variable: Serendipity Quotient

b. Predictors: (Constant), ComponentTwo, Coach Exp Dummy, Approximately how many hours have you spent in conversation with your coach?, Number of Years of Professional Experience, Self Reflection And Insight Scale, Sex Dummy, Component One

Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	95.0% Confidence Interval for B		Correlations			Collinearity Statistics	
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Lower Bound	Upper Bound	Zero-order	Partial	Part	Tolerance	VIF
1	(Constant)	12.016	4.570		2.629	.010	2.946	21.086					
	Number of Years of Professional Experience	.037	.052	.060	.703	.484	-.067	.140	-.072	.071	.058	.912	1.097
	Approximately how many hours have you spent in conversation with your coach?	.212	.163	.113	1.298	.197	-.112	.536	.162	.130	.106	.886	1.129
	CoachExpDummy	.774	.941	.072	.822	.413	-1.094	2.643	.026	.083	.067	.876	1.142
	SexDummy	.880	.859	.089	1.025	.308	-.824	2.584	.100	.103	.084	.880	1.136
	SelfReflectionAndInsightScale	.004	.031	.012	.132	.895	-.058	.067	.075	.013	.011	.880	1.136
	FactorOne	.208	.041	.558	5.066	.000	.126	.289	.570	.456	.414	.552	1.812
	FactorTwo	.001	.099	.002	.015	.988	-.195	.198	.381	.001	.001	.549	1.820

a. Dependent Variable: SerendipityQuotient

Appendix XXIV:

Multiple regression of the two components on the goal attainment measure

The model is not significant.

Model Summary[b]

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.266[a]	.071	-.016	.713

a. Predictors: (Constant), Component Two, Coach Exp Dummy, Approximately how many hours have you spent in conversation with your coach?, Number of Years of Professional Experience, Self Reflection And Insight Scale, Sex Dummy, Component One

b. Dependent Variable: To what extent do you agree with the following statement: I believe that I have made good progress towards my goal?

ANOVA[a]

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	2.914	7	.416	.819	.575[b]
	Residual	38.145	75	.509		
	Total	41.059	82			

a. Dependent Variable: To what extent do you agree with the following statement: I believe that I have made good progress towards my goal?

b. Predictors: (Constant), Component Two, Coach Exp Dummy, Approximately how many hours have you spent in conversation with your coach?, Number of Years of Professional Experience, Self Reflection And Insight Scale, Sex Dummy, Component One