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'Exploring the experience of simultaneous individual and group
coaching of female leaders in a multinational organisation'

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Abstract

Organisations face a constant requirement to develop leaders who are equipped to lead effectively in a highly volatile and uncertain environment. Executive Coaching is increasingly being used as a way to develop leaders, however very little is known about the impact of using simultaneous individual and group coaching to address organisational issues.

This case study is situated within GSK, a large multinational organisation in the healthcare sector, and concerns how combined individual and group coaching was used to address an organisational priority – that of the development and progression of female leaders. The study sought to explore how the simultaneous use of individual and group coaching was experienced by female leaders. Qualitative research was conducted from an interpretivist and social constructionist perspective using case study methodology. Semi-structured interviews enabled the collection of data from female participants who participated in coaching, their coaches and members of the Steering Team who were organisationally responsible for the initiative. The data were subsequently analysed using thematic analysis.

The findings identify the perceived value gained from the individual coaching by the female leaders who cited many developmental benefits including increased self-esteem, self-leadership and self-awareness. Additionally, the individual coaching enabled highly specific and personal development ranging from strategic and transformational changes to pragmatic ways to become more effective leaders. Group coaching enabled connection to others, a shared sense of identity and a safe environment in which to develop. The group sessions enabled the women to cover topics they would not have done on their own and to benefit from feedback from the other participants. The findings also bring to light the synergistic value of experiencing both individual coaching and group coaching simultaneously – having both types amplified the impact of the coaching enabling sustainable changes and development to occur. The combined coaching approach demonstrated considerable utility as a development mechanism for the organisation as it had the power to impact a broad range of stakeholders in different ways and through the ripple effect created in the organisation.

A framework for a combined coaching approach highlights the key factors required for organisational success, along with recommendations as to the transferability of the mechanism to other situations and organisational settings. The study contributes to understanding the potential of combined individual and group coaching, female leader

development in a large, complex multinational organisation and the combined experience as a development mechanism for organisations. The implications of this research expand knowledge on the extant literature on individual and group coaching within organisations and female leader development.

Keywords: executive coaching, group coaching, coaching in organisations, executive women, female leaders

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Chapter One: Introduction

1.1 Research focus

The original drive for this research arose from wondering if combined individual and group coaching could be a powerful development mechanism for organisations facing high levels of uncertainty and change. As a way of developing leaders coaching is growing and increasingly individual coaching is being studied within the academic and practitioner domains. However, very little is understood from theoretical or evidential perspectives about group coaching and even less about the experience of utilising a combination of individual and group coaching simultaneously, as a development mechanism within an organisational setting. This research is concerned with exploring what happens when an organisation uses both individual, i.e. dyadic, coaching and group coaching to support the development of a cohort of leaders within a global company. The context within which the research takes place is GlaxoSmithKline (GSK), the multinational healthcare organisation and the people being coached are female leaders. This chapter introduces the context of the study and sets out the rationale for research in the field of coaching in organisations. The aims and objectives of the research are identified and the boundaries of the study are delineated. My personal and professional interests provide readers with the reflexive context which forms a thread running through the whole thesis. The structure of the study is then summarised to aid navigation of the thesis.

1.2 Research context

Over the last twenty years there has been an exponential growth in the use of coaching in organisations – the CIPD 2011 report on Coaching found that 82% of organisations in the UK were using coaching as part of their leadership development interventions (CIPD, 2011). Pillans in her 2014 report on coaching for the Corporate Research Forum reveals that coaching in organisations has increased by 53% over the previous three years (Pillans, 2014). The International Coach Federation's 2016 Global Coaching Study also reports an increase in fees, hours worked, number of clients and revenues over the past twelve months and predicts this trend will continue (ICF and PWC, 2016). There has been a wealth of studies documenting the experience of leaders receiving individual coaching within organisational settings (Cerni et al., 2010; de Haan and Duckworth, 2013; Feldman and Lankau, 2005; Goldsmith et al., 2012; Passmore and Fillery-Travis, 2011; Grant et al., 2010). As the field of coaching grows as a recognised development mechanism, other forms of coaching are increasingly being utilised by organisations. According to the 2016 Ridler

Report (a UK industry based bi-annual survey) team coaching and group coaching are key modalities increasing in popularity. The report also identifies that organisational sponsors, individuals in organisations who are responsible for buying coaching, predict further increases in usage of both forms of coaching. Academic research has yet to explore fully these growing areas; in particular there is a paucity of research addressing group coaching beyond, in the main, studies concerning how it has been used to support business school programmes (Kets de Vries, 2014; Ward et al., 2014; Florent-Treacy, 2009). Research is required to build on the work by Brown and Grant (2010) to examine the simultaneous use of individual and group coaching over an extended period of time as a development mechanism for organisations – a gap this research hopes to fill.

Meta-analyses of coaching have demonstrated that coaching does support the development of leaders (de Haan et al., 2013a; Grant et al., 2010) and these studies are ensuring the increased use of coaching as a development mechanism for leaders within organisations. The concept of the 'war for talent' (Chambers et al., 1998) served to alert many organisations to the need for strategies to deal with the predicted gap in supply of leaders and their capacity to reach the top echelons of large organisations. Consequently many organisations deployed a 'make and buy' strategy (Cappelli, 2009) – developing internal leadership talent and then recruiting from outside the organisation to fill gaps in top level leadership positions (Scroggins et al., 2010). These approaches require an organisation to operate a leadership development strategy that delivers sufficient quantities of leadership talent of the appropriate quality, to be able to fill the 'leadership pipeline' (Charan et al., 2010). Any gaps in leadership positions are then met by recruiting from outside the organisation, an expensive solution and one that carries significant risk in terms of cultural fit, longevity and effectiveness (Fernández-Aráoz et al., 2009).

Organisations are therefore very keen to find appropriate and effective ways of developing their talent and are investing in coaching as a means to accelerate the development of leaders (Hunt and Weintraub, 2006; Hawkins, 2012; Clutterbuck and Megginson, 2005). The potential of individual and group coaching as development mechanisms for cohorts of leaders and to address specific organisational issues is just beginning to be recognised with the advent of research that demonstrates the learning can transfer from individuals to groups (Swart and Harcup, 2013). As a mechanism for organisational change, coaching can still be deemed as relatively new and rare, although this is gradually changing as more organisations are recognising the extent to which coaching supports organisational change in a highly effective manner (Grant, 2014c).

Group coaching is a communal mechanism that has been used to support development through relationships and interactions with others (Kets de Vries, 2005). Reviews on group coaching (Brown and Grant, 2010; Kets de Vries, 2014; Ward et al., 2014) have pointed to the need for further research into this 'under-utilised' area of coaching as a means of enabling change in organisations. Individual coaching has been shown to support the development of self-efficacy in areas such as self-confidence, self-reliance and assertiveness (Leimon et al, 2011), which are frequently highlighted by female leaders as areas for development (Ibarra, 2010). However, there is a paucity of research that looks at how the two modalities of individual and group coaching can be used simultaneously to support the development of leaders in organisations (Brown and Grant, 2010). In particular, research into how this combined coaching approach is experienced by female leaders in their development is a clear gap in the current academic knowledge.

This case study research is situated within GSK, the multinational pharmaceutical organisation (see Appendix One for company information) and focuses specifically on how combined individual and group coaching can be used to address the issue of gender imbalance at senior leadership levels. GSK is a highly professional, science based organisation and recruits graduates, MBAs and scientists with PhDs into GSK in an approximately equal gender ratio. However, in some parts of the organisation – Research and Development, IT and Global Manufacturing and Supply for example, female leaders are significantly outnumbered by their male colleagues and internal analyses show that women are tending to reside at lower managerial levels, rather than progressing to more senior leadership levels which their male counterparts are doing. Consequently, the number of female leaders diminishes significantly at leadership levels above manager level. This is a situation that the organisation wanted to address as talented women were not getting promoted and therefore limited in their contribution. This was in contradiction to the company's values and the situation was a real concern especially when the current GSK Chairman, Sir Philip Hampton, became the Government appointed champion of female executives on Boards following on from Lord Davies. Consequently this area of gender imbalance required further analyses and organisational attention. At first glance the company may appear to have a relatively even gender balance at the very top level of leadership, however, at the Divisional President minus one level, the gender split in 2013 was 18% female and 82% male and at the Divisional President minus two level it was 22% female and 78% male. The organisation is keen to address this gender imbalance for many reasons, not least of which is that the lack of women in senior positions has been found to

have a negative impact at both a financial and organisational level of performance (Desvaux et al., 2008; Vinnicombe et al., 2015). A targeted internal programme, Accelerating Difference (AD), has been introduced to the organisation with the expressed intention of accelerating the development of female leaders in order to increase the ratio of female leaders at all levels. AD comprises three streams: coaching (both individual and group), sponsorship and dialogues. This research focuses on the coaching stream of AD and looks at the experience of utilising both individual and group coaching, simultaneously, for female leaders as a development mechanism. Multiple perspectives are included in the research: those of the female leaders who were coached; the coaches who coached the female leaders and the Steering Group members who led and managed the AD programme. This study provides insights into the fields of dyadic executive coaching, group coaching and coaching in organisations. The multi-cultural backgrounds and operating context of the participants provide additional opportunities for contributions to the body of knowledge on coaching.

1.3 Research aims and objectives

The aim of this study is to consider the question: What is the experience of simultaneously using individual and group coaching as a development mechanism for female leaders in a multinational organisation? The purpose is to make an original contribution to knowledge in this area through empirical research that uses a case study approach applied to female leaders in a multinational organisation. The findings from this study will also inform future coaching research and practice.

The specific research objectives are to:

1. Critically review and analyse literature on studies and concepts that already exist and identify the methodological approaches that have been applied to date, on individual and group coaching interventions within organisations
2. Explore and evaluate the experience of female leaders' participation in individual and group coaching as part of the Accelerating Difference development programme
3. Make an original contribution to the theoretical and professional knowledge base of the simultaneous use of individual and group coaching in organisations
4. Create a knowledge base for organisations about utilising the combination of individual and group coaching and evaluate the utility of this approach as a development mechanism

1.4 Literature and definitions

There are three key threads of literature that are central to this study: individual, specifically executive coaching; group coaching and the use of coaching in organisations. Whilst the case study is concerned with the application of coaching with female leaders, the subject of gender is deliberately limited to the coaching of women in organisations so as to keep this particular study focused and relevant. The literature review draws on aspects of psychology, organisation development, philosophy and business as being important areas for the study.

1.4.1 Executive coaching

Executive coaching situates coaching in an organisational setting – public, private or not-for-profit (Western, 2012) working with middle to senior managers who fit the general term of executive. According to the Association of Professional Executive Coaches and Supervisors (APECS), executive coaching differs from other forms of coaching in that it is primarily concerned with the development of the executive in the context of the needs of the organisation (APECS, 2016). In executive coaching the relevant parties are the client, who is the person being coached, and the customer which is the organisation that is paying for the coaching and is looking for organisational benefits as well as individual growth from the coaching (Kilburg, 2000; Edwards et al., 2016; Jones et al., 2015). Organisations have been increasingly using coaching as a targeted way of supporting executive development and of enhancing performance (Gormley and van Nieuwerburgh, 2014; Wasylyshyn et al., 2012; Passmore and Fillery-Travis, 2011).

While the majority of research concerning executive coaching has been conducted without specific regard to gender (Grant et al., 2010), in recent years some studies have focused on coaching female leaders (Beeson and Valerio, 2012; Elston and Boniwell, 2011; Skinner, 2014; Leimon et al., 2011). These studies demonstrate how coaching is being used to support the development of female leaders, though they focus on individual coaching, and do not cover the use of group coaching. This is a gap in the current research literature that this study is seeking to fill.

1.4.2 Group coaching

Coaching in organisations tends to be in an individual or dyadic format (Ward, 2008) therefore the resultant research tends to be based on this format as opposed to group coaching (Garvey et al., 2014). This is despite group-based development interventions being used successfully in organisations for many years (Brown and Harvey, 2011; Schein,

1969). Whilst a few contemporary studies focus on how group coaching is used to support business school programmes (Kets de Vries, 2014; Ward et al., 2014; Florent-Treacy, 2009) there is a paucity of research dedicated specifically to group coaching in organisational settings. Much research exists concerning team coaching and occasionally in some studies the term 'team coaching' has been found to be occasionally used interchangeably with group coaching (Wageman, 2001; Hackman and Wageman, 2005; Vaartjes, 2005). This is not the case in this research where group coaching is used deliberately and distinctly from team coaching. This research is only concerned with group coaching with the focus on the development of group members, as the women are not in teams and there is no task or collective goal to be achieved. The paucity in group coaching research creates a gap in knowledge and literature concerning the experience of using individual coaching and group coaching simultaneously, a gap this research study aims to address.

1.4.3 Use of coaching in organisations

Most of the literature that considers the use of executive coaching in organisations demonstrates that it is increasingly seen as a key strategy aimed at building leaders' capacity for leadership in complex and changing times (Grant, 2014c; Jones et al., 2015). The organisation development and leadership development literature sheds some light on the progressive increase in the use of coaching as part of a blended learning approach (Bryant, 2016). In his study of integrated leadership development programmes, Coates (2013) concludes that deploying 'a combination of 360 feedback, experiential learning, peer feedback, reflection and one-to-one coaching is the ideal combination.' He stresses the importance of having a high level of coaching at each step 'from dyadic through group/team coaching and possibly peer/co-coaching' (Coates, 2013, p. 43).

Increasingly the spotlight is turning to this broader application of how coaching can be used at an organisational level to support the responses many organisations require to the challenging economic environment (Ben-Hur et al., 2012). In his mixed method study, Grant (2014) found that executive coaching in times of organisational change can be successful and beneficial and identified the importance of individual and organisational goal alignment in supporting organisational change through coaching (Grant, 2014c). Thus whilst the effectiveness of coaching interventions on organisations may appear to be positive, further research in the area of how coaching can be utilised in complex, multinational organisations facing unprecedented scope and velocity of change, is to be welcomed (Grant, 2014c).

1.4.4 Application to a specific issue: female leader development

The context of the research study situates the use of individual and group coaching and female leader development within GSK. Increasingly it has been recognised that female leaders are under-represented starting at middle levels of organisations and this becomes more pronounced at senior and board levels (Sealy and Vinnicombe, 2013; Vinnicombe et al., 2013; Ferreira, 2010). Organisations have been increasingly looking at how they can better develop their female leaders (Ely et al., 2011; Ibarra et al., 2013; Vinnicombe et al., 2013). Recent research has confirmed and supported the role of executive coaching in helping women with various aspects of their performance, satisfaction and well being in organisations (Elston and Boniwell, 2011; Galuk, 2009; Leimon et al., 2011; Skinner, 2014). The literature on gender and specifically on career development in organisations is vast and theoretically robust (Doherty and Manfredi, 2010) and space precludes inclusion in this study, therefore the boundaries of the study are drawn to include gender with specific regard to coaching and the role it plays in female development.

1.5 Personal and professional interest

My personal interest in executive coaching has been honed over many years working in organisations. Through my employment with GSK, I have had the opportunity to experience significant organisational changes – including the formation of GSK through the merger of SmithKline Beecham with GlaxoWellcome; and the wholesale change brought about by the appointment of Sir Andrew Witty as Chief Executive in 2008. Through my roles in Leadership and Organisation Development I have been party to the design and introduction of many initiatives aimed at supporting individuals and the organisation to better lead the 100,000-employee company that is GSK. My interest in executive coaching in organisations stems from this deep immersion in organisational dynamics and leadership development.

In 2014, I was asked to create the coaching stream of Accelerating Difference, comprising individual and group coaching. In this way, the organisation has a way of giving its female leaders the benefit of individual development through coaching (Grant, 2014c), coupled with the benefit of learning from others, networking and being supported more broadly (Kets de Vries, 2005). This stream provided the specific focus of this research exploring the use of individual and group coaching simultaneously as a development mechanism.

As Devereux (1967) suggests, the choice of research topic can often have personal significance for the researcher, whether this is conscious or not. As my career has been, to a great extent, focused on the development of leaders as well as the development of

organisations, this topic has great personal significance to me. The context of the study and my role as Head of Coaching has caused me to be an insider researcher (Unluer, 2012) and I have had to pay close attention to potential biases as a result. As such, reflexivity is a necessary and important part of this research study and is specifically addressed in Chapter Three: Methodology and brought in again in Chapter Eight: Conclusions and Recommendations. The utility of coaching as a lever for organisational, as well as individual change and growth and as a way of targeting specific organisation development issues is extremely pertinent to GSK, and I believe, many other organisations.

1.6 Research design and methodology

The extant research regarding the simultaneous use of individual and group coaching as a development mechanism is limited, thereby creating the opportunity for original research in this area. Executive coaching and coaching in organisations have been identified as areas of increasing importance (Bachkirova and Cox, 2007; Salter and Gannon, 2015; de Haan and Duckworth, 2013; Hawkins, 2012). The qualitative approach is consistent with the ontological stance of social constructionism and the epistemological stance of interpretivist (Bryman and Bell, 2015). The research design reflects these philosophical underpinnings and carries this coherence through to the choice of methodology – that of case study. Case study has been chosen because the area being studied is within a finite and defined area and exists within a defined population (Gray, 2013). The data analysis method chosen is thematic analysis as this enables the data to be looked at in several different ways, and although it lacks a clearly specified series of procedures, the flexibility of thematic analysis has been highly effective in dealing with nuances occurring in original research (Bryman and Bell, 2015). The study focuses on the experiences of the research participants in line with the social constructionist and interpretivist stance of the study, it is focused on exploring in detail how the participants experienced both types of coaching and of interpreting these experiences at a thematic level. Given the highly positivist stance of the organisation in which the study took place, there was organisational pressure to identify the difference that coaching makes, rather than exploring the experiences of the participants and reporting these. However, the deliberate choice was made to stay true to the ontological and epistemological perspectives of the study, which is reflected in the methodological choices in data collection, analyses and reporting of semi structured interviews, thematic analyses and descriptive reporting. In this way, the study does not include an evaluative review of the coaching as this would be outside the boundaries of the research.

1.7 Thesis overview

This thesis comprises eight chapters which broadly follow the established and recognised process in social science research – firstly setting out the territory and current thinking around the subject under study. This is followed by the research design describing the underpinning ontological and epistemological perspectives that inform the research design. The data collection and analysis process are described and the findings are presented and then discussed. The thesis culminates in conclusions, drawn from the study and recommendations for further research opportunities are made. The contribution to the field of knowledge, methodological contribution and practice impact are demonstrated, and the limitations of the study and opportunities for future research highlighted.

Chapter One sets out the context of the research along with the theoretical background and the overview of the research.

Chapter Two reviews the current research and literature covering the research area. The literature review shows the current thinking on executive coaching, group coaching and the use of coaching as an organisational intervention.

Chapter Three sets out the research methodology and the underpinning philosophical assumptions and perspectives. It lays out the overall research design including ontological and epistemological stances, the methodological choices made and the ethical considerations and organisational limitations and based on these, describes the data collection and analyses methods deployed in the study.

Chapter Four is the first of three chapters that sets out the findings. This chapter presents the findings in relation to the experience of the female leaders of participating in both individual and group coaching.

Chapter Five is the second chapter that sets out the findings in relation to the synergies of simultaneous individual and group coaching.

Chapter Six is the final chapter of findings and reports on the use of simultaneous individual and group coaching as a development mechanism for organisations.

Chapter Seven is the discussion chapter where the findings are elevated and discussed at a conceptual level. The findings are discussed in relation to the relevant theoretical underpinnings and extant literature.

Chapter Eight offers some conclusions on the research and identifies the 'modest' contribution that the study has made to knowledge (Trafford and Leshem, 2008). Limitations to the research are identified as well as suggestions and recommendations for further research opportunities.

Chapter Two: Literature review

The objective of this chapter is to give the context of the theory and existing thinking on coaching, group coaching and coaching in organisations so that the current level of knowledge can be critically analysed. This chapter reviews the literature on studies and concepts that already exist and identifies the methodological approaches that have been applied to date. It includes research from coaching, leadership development, organisation development, management and psychology. The review involved examining journal articles, past theses of doctoral students and books. Journals included the International Journal of Evidence-based Coaching and Mentoring, the International Coaching Psychology Review, Organizational Dynamics, Gender, Work and Organization, the Journal of Counselling Psychology, Harvard Business Review and the Leadership Quarterly, amongst others.

2.1 Executive coaching

Many papers have provided various definitions of coaching and have attempted to understand what constitutes coaching (Passmore and Fillery-Travis, 2011). A number of authors (Garvey et al., 2014; O'Connor and Lages, 2007) suggest that coaching has its origins in ancient Greece and that an early forerunner of the coaching conversation was the Socratic form of questioning. The first published study that reported on coaching was by Gorby in 1937 and reported on coaching's impact on manufacturing (Gorby, 1937). While this study was limited in its methods and did not specifically cover executive coaching, it could be considered a 'marker signalling the potential of coaching as a force for good within organisations' (Passmore and Fillery-Travis, 2011, p. 70; Kimsey-House et al., 1998). The 1990s saw the exponential growth of research and practice in executive coaching with studies by Kilburg (1996) and Whitmore (1992) and the emergence of coaching models such as the GROW model and approaches including co-active coaching (Kimsey-House et al., 1998). Later writers such as Stern (2004) and Lowman (2005) came back to the idea that coaching could be considered as a potential force for change in organisations.

2.1.1 Definition of executive coaching

Executive coaching can be distinguished from the more broadly applied term of coaching through the organisational context in which it occurs – public, private or not-for-profit (Western, 2012) working with middle to senior managers who comprise the executive population. The definition of coaching that is most aligned from a philosophical basis for

this study is that proffered by Passmore and Fillery-Travis (2011) which identifies coaching as:

'a Socratic based future focussed dialogue between a facilitator (coach) and a participant (coachee/client), where the facilitator uses open questions, active listening, summarises and reflections which are aimed at stimulating the self-awareness and personal responsibility of the participant' (Passmore and Fillery-Travis, 2011, p. 74).

The definition by Cox and Bachkirova (2014), whilst not specifically mentioning the organisation, does acknowledge other stakeholders and states that coaching is:

'a human development process that involves structured, focused interaction and the use of appropriate strategies, tools and techniques to promote desirable and sustainable change for the benefit of the client and potentially for other stakeholders' (Cox et al., 2014b, p. 1).

The distinguishing factor of executive coaching appears to be the acknowledgement that the coaching is not purely for the individual's benefit, but for the organisation's benefit as well, as in the definition put forward by Axmith (2004) who described executive coaching as 'a catalyst for personal growth and corporate change' (Axmith, 2004). Executive coaching aims to grow the effectiveness of leaders and the performance of organisations (Nelson and Hogan, 2009) by connecting the people (talented employees) and the how (leadership development) with organisational goals and strategies (Wood and Gordon, 2009). Coaching has also been reported as causing organisational change indirectly because it enables business leaders to become self-aware and to obtain a deeper understanding of the effects of their language and actions (Sherman and Freas, 2004). The 2012 ICF study demonstrated that 70% of coachees report an improvement in job performance, 72% in communication skills, and 61% in business management. 86% reported a positive return on investment and 96% indicated that they would repeat the coaching process. Executive coaching is also used as a way of supporting leaders through developing resilience and workplace well being (Grant, 2009). In a rare, randomised controlled study, Grant, Curtayne and Burton (2009) found that not only did resilience, workplace well being and goal attainment all increase, at the same time, levels of stress and depression decreased (Grant et al., 2009).

Executive coaching is also used as an intervention by organisations as it is flexible and individually tailored to meet specific needs, and can thus support leaders with differing

styles and requirements (Wasylyshyn et al., 2012). However, there have been challenges to the concept of executive coaching, particularly early in the development of the field. For example, Tobias (1996) suggested that executive coaching was just a repackaging of techniques and activities borrowed from other disciplines including psychology, counselling, consulting and learning.

2.1.2 Why executive coaching is used

In their desire to build leadership capability, organisations are increasingly turning to executive coaching as a development mechanism based on the growing body of evidence of its effectiveness (Passmore and Rehman, 2012a). Adult learning theory underpins the use of coaching in organisations (Cox et al., 2014b) with the most widely used aspect being Kolb's (1984) experiential learning theory (ELT). Kolb defines learning as 'the process whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of experience. Knowledge results from the combination of grasping and transforming experience...' (Kolb, 2014, p. 41). The four stages of the learning cycle are concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualisation, and active experimentation. Argyris (1991) has developed learning theory by formulating the 'double loop' analogy. He argues that 'double loop learning' consists of asking yourself questions and then testing them – effectively this occurs at the third stage of Kolb's cycle whereby adults learn to apply their hypotheses and theories to new conditions (Argyris and Schön, 1992). It has been suggested that an individualised coaching process can support and enhance the learning process described by Kolb (1984) as coaching creates a sense of personal responsibility of the learning and stimulates the double loop learning described by Argyris (1991), as the coachee is encouraged to reflect on their situation through questions from the coach (Passmore and Rehman, 2012b). The importance of the coachee understanding their learning style is matched by the need for the coach to understand their own learning style preferences to ensure the success of the executive coaching assignment (Turesky and Gallagher, 2011).

Organisations are concerned with change especially at the individual executive level and how to achieve it. Kets de Vries (2013) claims that there are two types of change that occur in coaching – gradual change that occurs in a linear, predictable manner and quantum change, that is sudden discontinuous change. These are not mutually exclusive and the gradual change is largely under conscious control with individuals obtaining information, considering advantages and disadvantages and then making choices about actions. Quantum change, in comparison, may be viewed as a more dramatic experience whereby the person arrives at a sudden insight or finds a truth (Hayes et al., 2007). These tipping

points (Gladwell, 2006) do not tend to come out of the blue, but are frequently the result of hours of thought, reflection and preparation through coaching sessions (Kets de Vries, 2013). In the same study, Kets de Vries (2013) identifies that it is the time created through the scheduled coaching sessions that facilitate the opportunity for reflection, discussion and choice making and these enable both types of change to occur.

2.1.3 Impact of executive coaching

The evidence base for the positive impact of executive coaching is growing as more studies explore different aspects of coaching concerning organisational leadership. A meta analysis study by Sonesh et al. (2015), showed that coaching had a significant positive effect on coachee behavioural change, suggesting that coaching is effective in improving coachee leadership skills, job performance and skills development. Moreover, coaching significantly improved coachees' personal and work-related attitudes, including 'improvement in coachee self-efficacy, motivation to transfer coached skills to the job, stress reduction and commitment to the organisation' (Sonesh et al., 2015, p. 86). Work-related attitudes such as self-efficacy, commitment to the organisation and satisfaction are strong predictors of improved job performance (Grant and Greene, 2004; Anderson et al., 2008a; Bandura, 1997).

In a study specifically focused on transformational leadership, Cerni, Curtis and Colmar (2010) found that coaching appears to be effective since it deeply engages leaders in thinking, reflecting, analysis and practice thereby providing initial evidence that changing information-processing styles can influence leadership style (Cerni et al., 2010). Cognitive outcomes are important in changing the ways coachees approach their work and promote behavioural change and ultimately, contribute to improved job performance (Sy et al., 2006; Goleman, 2001). In their meta-analytic study, Theeboom et al. (2014) found that coaching has significant positive effects on performance and skills, well-being, coping, work attitudes and goal directed self-regulation. They conclude that coaching is an effective tool for improving the functioning of individuals in organisations (Theeboom et al., 2014). They also note that a greater number of coaching sessions does not necessarily result in stronger positive effects. The authors speculate on whether this is a spurious correlation or, more likely, that as the coaching is positioned as 'solution focused coaching', the types of issues brought to coaching do not require extensive analysis in order to create solutions (Theeboom et al., 2014; Grant and O'Connor, 2010). However, executive coaching has not always been universally accepted as a positive intervention. Berglas (2002) identified that where coaches do not have rigorous psychological training they can actually do more harm

than good, pointing strongly to the need for increased standards of expertise and capability within the profession (Berglas, 2002).

2.1.4 The coaching relationship

The coaching relationship, between coachee and coach, has been shown to be very important and necessary for coaching to be effective (Gyllensten and Palmer, 2007; Grant, 2014b). Trust is identified as a key constituent on which the relationship is dependent and can be improved by transparency, as it enables the coachee to be open, even about personal limitations and difficulties. In the same study, confidentiality was also cited as being an important factor in developing trust and Gyllensten and Palmer (2007) suggest that it is important to highlight the limitations of confidentiality as the organisation may demand feedback regarding the coachees' development. Transparency was cited as being very helpful in supporting the coachee to feel fully included in the coaching process – an important factor in ensuring a positive coaching relationship (de Haan et al., 2013b). McGovern (2001) found that a major factor in the success of executive coaching is support from the organisation, particularly the line manager and in this involvement ripples of impact are created that go beyond the coaching transaction in the system (McGovern et al., 2001). In their 'clock tower' model of coaching evaluation, Lawrence and Whyte (2014) highlight how the coaching relationship plays a contributory role when considering holistically the design of the coaching intervention, the organisational context and design and the effectiveness of the coaching.

2.1.5 Importance of other dyadic relationships

Many organisations, including GSK, have adopted the leadership development framework, developed by McCall (2010) that sets out the ideal ratio of development as being 70% self directed or on-the-job learning, 20% development through relationships and 10% through formal training interventions. Within the 20% relationship-based development options, coaching, mentoring and sponsorship are the most common (Bryant, 2016). Given the current paucity of direct research on the simultaneous use of individual and group coaching, it is important to acknowledge the parallels between coaching and other dyadic and group interventions. Several papers discuss the boundaries between coaching and counselling (Bachkirova and Cox, 2004; Passmore and Gibbes, 2007) and acknowledge that there is value in utilising the research in counselling to aid understanding of coaching. In a 2009 study, Coutu and Kauffman identified the overlaps between consulting, coaching and therapy and this has been adapted to incorporate how this is represented in organisations

(Table 2.1). The following model serves to demonstrate the common ground between the three relationships, as represented within GSK.

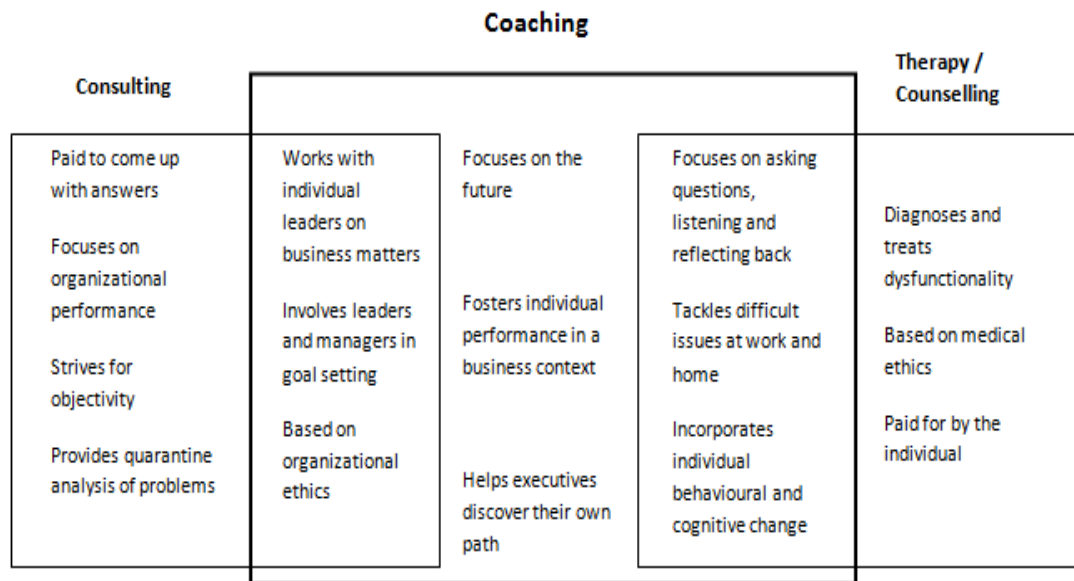


Figure 2.1 Coaching in relation to consulting and therapy/counselling as applied in the GSK context (adapted from Coutu and Kauffman, 2009)

In an organisational setting, mentoring is also commonly factored into the relationship equation as well as training (Mitchell et al., 2015). However, mentoring may be seen to differ from coaching in the key sense that in mentoring there is generally a hierarchical relationship which often connotes advanced relevant experience, as well as more seniority in terms of power, on behalf of the mentor (Megginson and Clutterbuck, 2004). The definition referred to by Megginson and Clutterbuck states that mentoring tends to be off-line help by one person to another in making significant transitions in knowledge, work or thinking (Clutterbuck and Megginson, 1999), although this is descriptive rather than the product of evidenced based research. Another definition is offered by Grant and Cavanagh (2004 p.5) who see mentoring as 'the transfer of domain specific personalized knowledge from a more experienced mentor to a less experienced protégé'. In a systematic review of the literature, D'Abate et al. (2003) sought to clarify the constructs in common use – including coaching, mentoring, apprenticeship and action learning. The review noted that some authors considered mentoring and coaching to be the same (Sperry, 1993) and this is supported by later work (Law, 2013; Garvey et al., 2014), although the majority of authors identify differences between the two constructs (Gray, 1988; Salter and Gannon, 2015). The main differences appear to be the seniority and perceived power differential that this

implies in a mentoring relationship, the content that is imparted in mentoring but not in coaching, the focus in mentoring on career progression and the length of the relationship – mentoring relationships tending to last for many years, as opposed to coaching relationships which generally tend to cover a number of months, rather than years (Downey, 2002; Rogers, 2012). These studies imply that the older and wiser mentors will be passing on their advice and also that they may be able to act as a patron to the mentee (Rogers, 2012).

2.1.6 Coaching to support female leader development

It is important to explore the context for the development of women leaders and review the literature dedicated to coaching female executives. The Davies report (2011) set the target of having 25% female board directors for organisations in the year 2015. A recent report on the progress of women on boards (Sealy and Vinnicombe, 2013), states that the number of women holding FTSE 100 board seats was 169, an increase of 28 on the 2011 figures. The overall percentage of female-held board directorships was 17.3%, an uplift of 2.3% on 2012's figure. However, despite occasional peaks of 44% of new appointments being female, this rate had dropped back to 26% at the end of 2013 (Sealy and Vinnicombe, 2013). Thus there is still a considerable gap to reach the Lord Davies target of 25% and there is concern that complacency may be setting in.

These statistics demonstrate that despite multi-national corporations' widespread adoption of policies prohibiting sex discrimination, they have failed to close the gender gap, suggesting that there are complex and varied barriers to women's advancement (Vinnicombe et al., 2013). In line with the ontological stance of this study, gender is understood as a social construction, a socially produced binary division and distinction between women and men, and masculinities and femininities (Acker, 1992). Organisation research has moved from a focus of intentional exclusion to so-called 'second generation' forms of gender bias (Ibarra et al., 2013). This second generation gender bias comprises powerful but subtle and often invisible barriers for women – often arising from patterns of interaction, cultural assumptions and organisational structures that inadvertently favour men. Second generational bias comprises a paucity of role models for women, gendered career paths and gendered work, women's lack of access to networks and sponsors and a series of double binds (Ibarra et al., 2013). As Ibarra et al. (2013) state:

'learning to become a successful leader is like learning any complex skill: it rarely comes naturally and usually takes a lot of practice. Successful transitions into

senior management roles involve shedding previously effective professional identities and developing new, more fitting ones' (Ibarra et al., 2013, p. 8).

Additionally, rather than undoing gender (Butler, 2004), it is suggested that gender undergoes processes of being re-done or done differently (Mavin and Grandy, 2013) as women move into spaces and ways of operating previously associated with men and the performance of masculinities. From an overtly social constructionist perspective, research by Mavin et al. (2014) concerning elite women leaders and their reflections on careers, found that 'gender can be done well and differently against sex category through simultaneous, multiple enactments of femininity and masculinity' (Mavin et al., 2014, p. 4). The gender binary, femininities and masculinities and management can begin to become decoupled (Billing, 2011) as women manoeuvre between the behaviours expected of women and those expected of men in becoming leaders (O'Neill and O'Reilly, 2010). However, as Mavin (2014) identifies, there is a key contradiction in that in order for gender not to become an issue, the women have to have 'a significant awareness and understanding of gender' (Mavin et al., 2014, p. 7).

Central to the suggestions that Ibarra et al. (2013) proffer for organisations as to how to combat this second generation bias is the notion of the need for leaders to internalise a leadership identity and develop a sense of purpose. Ways in which this can practically be addressed, suggested by Ibarra et al. (2013) and Carnes et al. (2015), include educating everyone about the idea of second generation bias to help address some of the unconscious biases that have become embedded in organisations; creating safe 'identity workspaces' and upholding the importance of developing leadership purpose. In the upper echelons of organisations, women are scarce and visibility and scrutiny of female leaders is heightened, therefore it is critical to create a safe space for learning, experimentation and community (Ibarra et al., 2013). 'Identity workspaces' refers to these safe places where women can receive feedback and interpret the messages they are receiving from the (often) male dominated work environment. Coaching sessions and ongoing relationships are the prime example of these safe places but they may include women's development programmes or peer support groups.

The importance of role models and the demographic context are highlighted as being instrumental in women's work identity development (Sealy and Singh, 2010). By building on Ibarra's (1999) and Gibson's (2003) work they posit that role models are needed for identity construction (Sealy and Singh, 2010). Central to this is Gibson's (2003) work on the

cognitive and structural aspects of role modelling and Ibarra's work on how behavioural role models guide the development of provisional selves, imperative for constructing a leadership identity. Sealy and Singh (2010) argue that the combination of organisational demographics, i.e. the relatively low number of senior women which causes reduced availability of role models, and work identity formation, are key explanatory factors behind the lack of career progression for women. Increasingly coaching is seen as a successful strategy for organisations seeking to accelerate the development of female leaders (Beeson and Valerio, 2012; Skinner, 2014; Elston and Boniwell, 2011; Leimon et al., 2011).

There has been a limited number of studies on coaching efficacy as a leadership development initiative for women leaders, as recognised in Grant's (2009) annotated bibliography of workplace, executive and life coaching research between 1937 and 2008. Much of the available research is specific to an organisational context based in the US or Australia (Benavides, 2008; Galuk, 2009; Skinner, 2014). Galuk (2009) utilised a phenomenological study to explore what coaching was like for female executives. Skinner's research (2012) used constructivist grounded theory to explore Australian women's experience of coaching. Some studies incorporating a UK perspective are Leimon et al.'s (2011) mixed methods study which focused on senior UK female leaders and Broughton and Miller's (2009) international study. More recent research by De-Valle (2014) looked at executive women's experiences of coaching and mentoring using interpretive phenomenological analysis and found that coaching has the potential to deliver an organisational legacy and to encourage relational leadership (De-Valle, 2014). Additionally, in a study utilising heuristic methodology, Worth (2012) examines coaching women towards authenticity. However, despite these more recent and illuminating studies, Passmore and Fillery-Travis's (2011) recommendations for further studies looking specifically at coaching and the issue of gender still remain valid.

2.2 Group coaching

Whilst organisations have been increasingly using coaching as a targeted way of supporting executive development and enhancing performance (Feldman and Lankau, 2005) one criticism of coaching research that could be levied is the extent to which the focus appears to be mainly on the individual or dyadic format (Ward, 2008) with relatively scant attention paid to group coaching. The dyadic approach has also been criticised for failing to take into account systemic factors which are at the core of the coaching process (O'Neill, 2000; Wheelan, 2003). This is despite group interventions being used successfully in organisations

for many years (Brown and Harvey, 2011; Schein, 1969). The majority of recent research on group coaching is necessarily very limited in its relevancy as it is descriptive and opinion based, as opposed to research led and evidence based. The most widely published work has tended to focus on how it is used to support business school programmes (Kets de Vries, 2014; Ward et al., 2014; Passmore and Fillery-Travis, 2011). The work by Kets de Vries (2014) is particularly descriptive and conjectural in nature, and whilst informative, it is not consistently based on solid research principles, therefore limiting the trustworthiness of the view on group coaching. The territory of group coaching is also further muddied by the tendency of researchers to use the term team coaching interchangeably with group coaching (Kets de Vries, 2005). Hackman and Wageman's (2005) theory of team coaching helps to identify some of the similarities and differences between group and team coaching and for many researchers (Hawkins, 2014; Ward et al., 2014; Hackman and Wageman, 2005) there are significant differences between group and team coaching. The focus for this study is on group coaching therefore it is necessary to look in detail at what constitutes group coaching, the relevant literature to date on this concept as well as the influence that team coaching and other research may have had in this domain.

2.2.1 Definition of group coaching

For the purpose of this study, group coaching is defined as coaching a group of individuals from a similar population with the aim of growth and development and who are not working together towards a common goal. Brown and Grant (2010) also cite the important difference between dyadic coaching and group coaching being the requirement of the coach to be able to understand and manage group dynamics and group-based dialogue techniques. Kets de Vries (2005) and Ward (2008) work with group coaching comprising individuals from many organisations attending a business school programme, who do not know each other prior to the one day group coaching event. Part of the challenge with group coaching has been the extent to which accounts of what constitutes group coaching vary quite significantly. In some cases, group coaching focuses on coaching individuals on their own goals within a group setting (Brown and Grant, 2010). Another approach focuses primarily on the development of the individual within the group, while using input from other stakeholders (Ward, 2008).

The definition reported by Grant and Brown (2010) suggests that the difference between team coaching and group coaching lies in the purpose for which they are working together – so for team coaching the team is working closely together towards a defined and mutually accountable goal (Bloisi et al., 2003). Grant and Brown (2010) then cite group

coaching as 'a broader category that relates to any group of individuals, including but not limited to teams, whether participants are working together towards specific goals or not' (Brown and Grant, 2010, p. 31). Equally, this broader description encompasses teams, and presumably team leaders in the category of group coaching but does not address the complexities and impact on group dynamics that having the team leader present may have on the group (Wageman et al., 2008). The features of the teams, the focus of the interventions and the conditions required, all point to a very specific form of coaching – team coaching, which is markedly different from group coaching which does not have the task outcome focus, does not have interdependent and differentiated roles and does not collectively manage relationships with the larger social system. As such, while the term 'group' is often used to label the broader team in the Hackman and Wageman (2005) paper, in this research, the two are distinct and different and the term group is applicable, and team not.

2.2.2 Group coaching research

The most prolific reporting of group coaching in recent literature appears to be the work of Kets de Vries (1992, 2005, 2007, 2010, 2011, 2014), Ward (2008, 2014) and Florent-Treacy (2009) all concerning the INSEAD Business School programme. This work is extremely limited in its generalisability due to the very specific case study nature of the reports as it is an in-programme intervention. Many participants are brought together for the purpose of a leadership development programme, from multiple organisations with the programme constituting the specific context. As the context is in-programme and therefore very specific, whilst some elements of findings may be transferrable, the relevancy of these reports is necessarily limited. It is within this context and with this strong caveat that the work is cited. This group coaching work has a deliberately psychodynamic perspective and has been used to support an executive development programme over many years. It utilises coaching from external coaches, peer coaching and learned coaching skills (Kets de Vries, 2014). In this specific form of group coaching, Kets de Vries applies a clinical paradigm and states that it is used as:

'a conceptual framework to promote insight and change, people are made aware of a whole other world that may not yet be part of their conscious awareness. Looking through this clinical lens helps us discover a world of fantasy, dreams and daydreams, all representing forces that create another reality' (Kets de Vries, 2014, p. 86).

For Kets de Vries (2014), the clinical lens consists of a number of premises: that rationality is an illusion, that everyone has blind spots, that the past is the lens through which we can understand the present and shape the future, that to gain a better understanding of ourselves and others we need to identify recurring patterns from the past, and that emotions and motivations shape and determine our personality. Kets de Vries (2014) also advocates the use of the iceberg metaphor for work in groups as it highlights the overt and covert interpersonal dynamics that affect group work. In addition, he posits that the coach must be the 'safe container' for the 'emotional and cognitive debris' brought out by the work such that participants will be able to fully experience themselves and where the intolerable is tolerated (Kets de Vries, 2014, p. 86). He also identifies two dynamics that occur simultaneously in group interventions: firstly the dynamic processes applicable to the person who is currently being discussed, and secondly there are also 'cloud issues' in the room – something that he terms 'themes that the group as a whole bring to the table, and are floating as if in a cloud' (Kets de Vries, 2014, p. 88). These insights are delivered, however, at the expense of a clear appraisal of the aforementioned limitations with the context of the group coaching taking place.

Alternate approaches to group coaching focus on coaching individuals outside of the group environment while concurrently coaching the group as a whole (Anderson et al., 2008b). From reviewing the emerging group coaching literature (Kets de Vries, 2005; Anderson et al., 2008b; Ward, 2008) a 'long list of purported benefits of group coaching' is reported by Brown and Grant (2010 p.33) and includes, but is not limited to, the understanding of and self regulation of acceptable group behaviours, development of trust and support within the group, increased emotional intelligence and the prevention of organisational silo formation. However, as Brown and Grant (2010) acknowledge, much of the reported benefits are anecdotal and there appears to be little outcome research on the effects of group coaching. The literature also cites one of the key benefits of group coaching as being the systems-level thinking that it engenders (O'Neill, 2000; Paige, 2002). From a systemic perspective the argument for group coaching appears compelling as it deals with not only the individual goal attainment, but the cognition and affect within the overall organisational system (Kets de Vries, 2005). Some researchers have focused on external coaches who come into the organisation to provide coaching services to groups (Anderson et al., 2008b; Diedrich, 2001; Ward, 2008). These accounts do not distinguish between coaches who are external to the organisation and those who are employed internally within the organisation to deliver equivalent coaching services to the groups (Goldsmith et

al., 2000). In contrast, Hackman and Wageman (2005) have described the internal coach as being the behaviour or acts of leadership conducted by the formal team leader, as distinct from a person employed by the same organisation acting in the role of internal coach.

In their quantitative outcome study on coaching effectiveness, Muhlberger and Traut-Mattausch (2015) compare dyadic and group coaching in reducing procrastination. Their findings highlighted the increased achievement of individual goals through having either individual or group coaching, as compared to no coaching. Interestingly, participants in dyadic coaching had a higher increase in goal commitment and showed more goal reflection and higher intrinsic goal motivation as compared to the participants in group coaching (Mühlberger and Traut-Mattausch, 2015). However, advantages of group coaching were also identified including the ability of participants to use the knowledge and experience of the other members of the group to jointly develop solutions and to gain feedback (Mühlberger and Traut-Mattausch, 2015). However, whilst Muhlberger and Traut-Mattausch's study is evidence based, it is highly specific and influenced by the context in which it is situated, namely studying under-graduates in a university setting, thereby limiting the generalisability of the results to other situations and contexts. Furthermore, group coaching has been shown to enable learning through peer experiences and to provide support from others who are in the same situation (Nicholas and Twaddle, 2008).

2.2.3 Group therapy and its relationship to group coaching

Coaching has drawn on many long established professional traditions and for group coaching it has drawn on the psychotherapeutic tradition (Ward et al., 2014). The term group therapy refers to work carried out with clients in small groups and can utilise any form of therapy, including cognitive behavioural therapy but is usually applied to psychodynamic group therapy (Ward et al., 2014). One of the distinctions between clients in therapy and coaching work is the clinical nature of the work required (Britten, 2015). For coaching clients or coachees, they are essentially well and are seeking to develop themselves in some way – be it performance, career or personal effectiveness. Kets de Vries (2015) and Britten (2015) argue that utilising approaches and practices that underpin the long history of group work in the psychotherapeutic field are equally valid in the coaching field (Ward et al., 2014; de Vries, 2015). The role of the unconscious is central to the psychodynamic approach and it has been argued that this is relevant not only to therapeutic work, but is pervasive in coaching (Turner, 2010). Many researchers, e.g. Kilburg (2000), Florent-Treacy (2009), have demonstrated the importance of unconscious processes at work in coaching. Kilburg (2000) argues that psychodynamic theory is useful

not only for psychologists but for coaches and Laske (2007) looks beyond the purely behavioural forms of development that coaching engenders .

Florent-Treacy (2009) has examined executives in 'an identity laboratory' – a process that utilises participants' narratives to examine their ways of thinking and meaning making. The study concludes that the underpinning methodology and theories used in group psychotherapy can be adapted to create an identity laboratory experience for executives. However, the highly de-contextualised nature of this learning experience requires caution regarding transferability of the findings to broader organisational contexts. Group therapy meta-analysis investigation demonstrates the efficacy of the intervention with different types of cases ranging from mild addictions to more deep rooted psychological disorders (Stead and Lancaster, 2005). Group approaches are found to be at least as effective as individual therapy for many issues including anger management, substance abuse and depression, for example (McDermut et al., 2001). More recently, group coaching has become a major component of health coaching and has been found to be a mechanism to support people with a long-term condition to make lifestyle changes (Whitley, 2013). Group coaching may be seen to be different from other group interventions in that it supports setting professional, personal and potentially business goals and developing actions plans (Britton, 2010).

2.2.4 Use of groups in organisational settings

Groups have been used as development mechanisms in organisations in various forms; however, one group intervention with psychological roots that has been utilised in organisational settings is that of the T-Group and is based on Lewin's work at the Research Center for Group Dynamics at MIT. The first T-Groups were offered in 1947 and were aimed at finding better methods to provide people with greater insights into their own attitudes and values (Highhouse, 2002). Experiences in T-Groups appeared to deliver observable behaviour changes as well as personality changes including increased self-awareness, and increased congruence, unconditional positive regard and empathy toward each other (Culbert et al., 1968). However, there are differing views as to the changes that occurred after T-Groups with House (1967), in his review of literature, concluding that while change usually happened after T-Groups, the change may be harmful or detrimental to the organisation or the individual due to the anxiety that accompanies the experience (House, 1967). Other studies have shown significant changes in subjects' ability to be more independent and self supporting, more sensitive to the needs of others and their own needs and feelings and more accepting of aggression (Cooper and Mangham, 1971).

Highhouse (2002) hypothesises that the T-Group has a 'more subtle influence on modern techniques considered to be mainstream management' – both formal and informal team building and 360 degree feedback techniques. He cites the mechanism used to deliver 360 feedback – i.e. coaching, and the difference between perception and reality that underpins this – is the principle that guided T-Group work in providing insights into a person's behaviour and the impact it has on others (Highhouse, 2002).

2.2.5 Combined individual and group coaching

Studies comprising both individual and group coaching are rare because there is limited evidence of them being adopted as simultaneous interventions. Where there is literature this is based on a few studies which have very distinctive contexts which may limit the transferability of their insights. The research by Kets de Vries (2004), Ward (2008, 2014) and Florent-Treacy (2009), focused on the INSEAD Executive Development Programme, and has involved combined group coaching and individual coaching. Whilst being widely published, the research is limited in relevancy by the highly specific context in which the observations take place. The studies highlighted that having a combination of a day of group coaching and follow-up individual coaching is empirically effective and receives high degrees of appreciation at its conclusion (Ward et al., 2014). However, this example of a combined intervention is limited as it comprises only one day of group coaching followed by one or two individual sessions in very close proximity (within the same week). Whilst the research by Florent-Treacy (2009) covers group coaching over a longer period of time, the individual coaching takes the form of written narrative work which is then discussed with a coach. As such these multiple accounts of the combination of the two types of coaching are very specific, they are extremely limited in their transferability of learning to longer-term interventions such as the current research study. The longer-term study of group and individual one-to-one conversational coaching appears to be a significant gap in the body of knowledge of coaching in organisations and as such, the current study is well positioned to fill this gap.

2.3 Coaching for organisational development

The previous sections have identified the growing literature on executive coaching and how individual and group coaching have been deployed to support the development of leaders in organisations. However, it is important to look at the literature on coaching from the organisational perspective in order to fully situate the research study being reported here. Several authors (Clutterbuck, 2007; de Vries, 2005; Hunt and Weintraub, 2006) provide

descriptions of their organisation's approaches to group and individual coaching rather than undertake ethically informed research on the interventions. Specifically this section focuses on the literature on coaching and leadership development interventions, organisational culture, organisation development and organisation change and confirms the need for further research in this area.

2.3.1 Coaching as a leadership development intervention

Coaching as a specific leadership development intervention has been studied extensively – one example of outcome research is the study by Kampa-Kokesch (2002) that used the multi-factor leadership questionnaire to assess the impact of coaching on leadership behaviour. The results suggested that coaching has a positive impact on leadership behaviour with increased scores on charismatic behaviour, impact on followers and inspiration action (Kampa-Kokesch and White, 2002). An example of outcome research using a multi-rater feedback instrument with over 400 managers found that executives who worked with a coach showed improvements in performance as rated by their direct reports and their supervisors (Smither et al., 2003). Leadership development literature sheds some light on the progressive increase in using coaching as part of a blended learning approach. In his study of integrated leadership development programmes, Coates (2013) concludes that deploying 'a combination of 360 feedback, experiential learning, peer feedback, reflection and one-to-one coaching is the ideal combination' (Coates, 2013, p. 43). He stresses the importance of having a high level of coaching at each step – 'from dyadic through group/team coaching and possibly peer/co-coaching' (Coates, 2013, p. 43). His study concurs with previous studies (Ladyshewsky, 2007; Weiss and Molinaro, 2006) on the importance of the alignment of the leadership development programme with organisational strategy in developing competency. This is in addition to having coaching as one of the components that add value to each other (Weiss and Molinaro, 2006).

Bryant (2016) identifies three dimensions for high impact leadership development: the learning context, the moment of learning and the depth of learning. The learning context refers to the proximity of the learning context to the learner's daily work with the ends of the dimension labelled in-context and de-contextual learning. Moments of learning refers to the proximity of the moment of learning to the event or experience – whether it is reflective after the experience or in action as work is happening – the dimensions are called reflective learning or in the moment learning (Bryant and Svalgaard, 2016). Depth of learning refers to the cognitive factors that inhibit learning – this can be learning that concerns easy to fix problems – called surface learning. These are in contrast to in-depth

learning that is directed at unconscious patterns of behaviour that are embedded, concern identity and are uncomfortable to change (Bryant and Svalgaard, 2016). They apply these dimensions to three leadership development tools and practices: diagnostic tools (psychometric instruments, 360 degree feedback), experiential and action learning and coaching and therapy. Bryant and Svalgaard (2016) found that coaching as an intervention is often sustained over time and that regardless of the specific approach taken creates a safer place to learn and reflect on the real work context. This safe environment allows for in-depth learning which is reflective rather than in the moment.

Bryant and Svalgaard (2016) identify challenges for organisations seeking to develop leaders as the leadership context becomes more complex, ambiguous and constantly changing. They hypothesise that in complex situations, 'at the very moment when it might be most impactful, learning is most likely to go into the background and become retrospective' (Bryant and Svalgaard, 2016, p. 8). They cite mindfulness practices as being one significant way in which leaders can learn from reflecting in the moment. In conclusion, they recognise that attention must be placed on the interplay between all three dimensions to enable optimum effectiveness in leadership development and they recommend an integrated or portfolio approach to leadership development that includes leadership coaching – both individual and collective.

Many organisations have included systemic awareness as a necessary requirement for their leaders and for organisational learning (Scharmer, 2009; Senge, 2006). These organisational learning theorists argue that the group itself becomes a microcosm of the organisational environment, and that individual and group performance improves due to extended awareness, accountability and shared alignment obtained through dialogic processes (Senge, 2006; Scharmer, 2009; Schein, 2003).

2.3.2 Coaching as organisation development

Group work has also had a long history within the organisational development (OD) school of practice and thought and OD has at its heart the group and group dynamics which form the central point of intervention (Lewin, 1947). Further work by Schein over many decades has centred on group processes – beyond a set of techniques he views it as a philosophy, and an attitude about the process of helping groups, communities and individuals. His perspective is that the primary role of the group process consultant is to help the human system to help itself (Schein, 1999). He makes a distinction between group process consultation and consultant as expert and the consultant as diagnostician. Schein refers to

his type of process consulting as 'facilitation' rather than group coaching – he terms the work that process consultants do with individuals 'coaching'. Schein explicitly defines coaching as being a subset of consulting with the coach moving between the stages of expert, diagnostician and process consultant, as required (Schein, 1999).

This presents the view that group coaching could be the same as group process consulting or group facilitation. Brown and Grant (2009) report on the debate citing the breadth of theories that group facilitation, like coaching, draws upon: action research (Lewin, 1947), double loop learning (Argyris, 1991), action learning (Revans, 1982), process consulting (Schein, 1999), and the concept of the learning organisation (Senge and Suzuki, 1994). Clutterbuck (2007) has attempted to draw a distinction between facilitation and coaching when applied to a team setting. He views the coach as being more active as a member of the team, providing feedback and creating a 'separate space where the team can collaborate in seeking understanding of the issues' (Clutterbuck, 2007, p. 101). In his view, the facilitator is detached from the team and focused on the team process. However, as Brown and Grant observe, 'Although some clarity on distinguishing between the roles of coach and facilitator is achieved here, a level of overlap and ambiguity still remains' (Brown and Grant, 2010, p. 37).

Bushe and Marshak (2009) identify what constitutes organisation development (OD) – citing traditional OD as being diagnostic OD and based on the traditional, objectivist perspective requiring data to be gathered as a form of diagnosis – 'the organisation exists as an entity that needs examination prior to prescribing remedies' (Bushe and Marshak, 2009, p.350). As such, diagnosis is needed and even viewed as the precursor 'for informed and effective organisation development and change' (Cronshaw and McCulloch, 2008, p. 89). They also state that virtually all of the early formulations of OD are based on positivist open systems theory and, as such, organisations are assessed against standards for 'healthy' organisations and prescribed interventions based on 'objective' diagnosis. Bushe and Marshak (2009) challenge these foundations as being the only form of OD and introduce what they term dialogic OD practices. The practices most clearly operating from a different stance from diagnostic OD are the appreciative inquiry approaches (Cooperrider et al., 1995). Rather than attempting to diagnose and manage change levers, appreciative inquiry seeks to generate new ideas that will result in self-organising change (Bushe and Kassam, 2005). Search conferences and future search are additional OD interventions designed to enable large groups to self-organise and co-construct their futures and the

actions they wish to take to achieve them (Weisbord and Janoff, 2010; Bunker and Alban, 2005). In the dialogic model of OD, change processes involve 'confronting, engaging or otherwise raising consciousness about alternative perspectives (paradigms, schemas, mindsets, social realities, etc.) leading to new syntheses, perspectives or outcomes' (Bushe and Marshak, 2009, p. 356). In this way, the descriptions of change processes are broadly similar to processes involved in group coaching (Clutterbuck, 2007; Hawkins, 2014). From these examples, it can be seen that the previous ontological perspectives that might have been cited as key differences between organisation development and group or systemic coaching are becoming blurred with the growth of dialogic OD methodologies and perspectives (Marshak and Bushe, 2009).

2.4 Summary of literature review

It is apparent from this body of literature that coaching has grown in stature and depth as a development mechanism over time (see Figure 2.2 Literature Review Focus below).

Coaching has a sound theoretical base in the form of adult development and leadership development and has drawn successfully from other therapeutic and organisational bodies of knowledge and theory. Studies have demonstrated how coaching has progressed from being purely an individual intervention to what constitutes group coaching and how coaching interventions have been successfully deployed in organisational settings.

However, currently the literature is reliant on a limited number of studies based on the same contexts, educational programmes in the case of Kets de Vries and Ward, without full consideration of the limitations of this context for group and individual coaching. The nature of work in groups has a long history drawing on both therapeutic and other organisational disciplines to influence how group coaching is used today. However, despite drawing upon related disciplines of leadership development, organisation development and therapy, there remains an obvious gap in the literature examining simultaneous individual and group coaching, and exploring the complementarity of utilising this combined coaching approach. When considering the current organisational issue of female leader development, it is evident that individual coaching has been deployed successfully. However, there is a lack of extant literature and empirical research that covers how combined coaching can support female leader development. This study aims to address this by looking specifically at the experience of female leaders having both individual and group coaching concurrently, from a variety of perspectives – from the individual coachee, from the coach and from the organisational perspective.

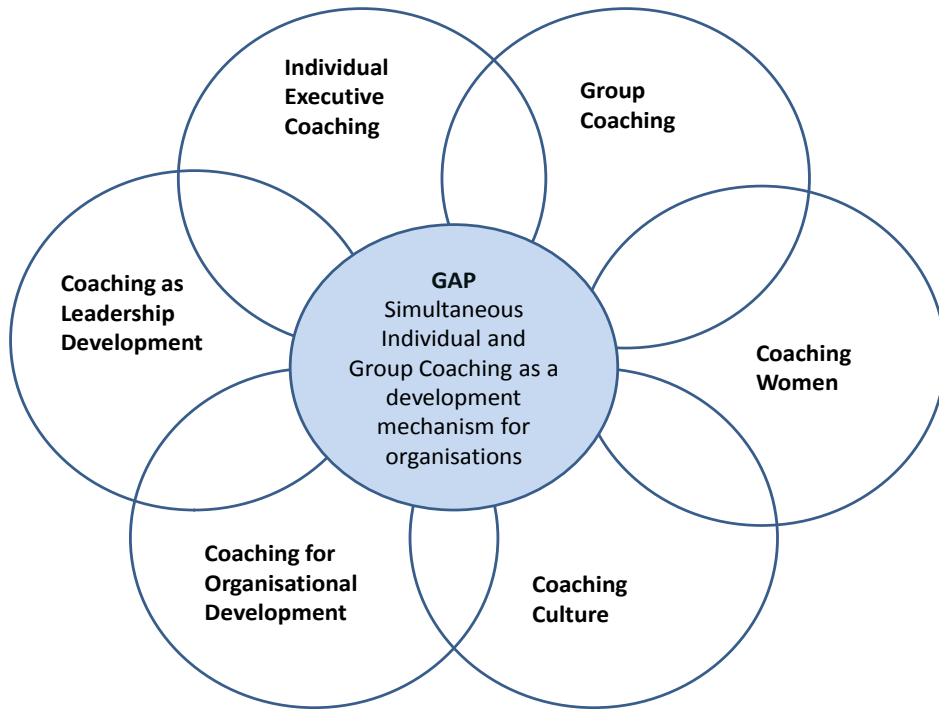


Figure 2.2 Literature Review Focus

Chapter Three: Methodology

The objective for this chapter is to present the research design for the exploration of the experience of simultaneous individual and group coaching of female leaders in a multinational organisation. Choices relating to the philosophical considerations of the research approach – the ontological and epistemological perspectives – are presented and the rationale for the selected research methods explained. Alternative options considered and reasons for rejection are noted, along with the justification for the appropriateness of the selected approaches. Other factors that contributed to the research design choices are explored, including those of context and accessibility, the practical experience of conducting the qualitative research and timing of the data collection. The dual role, as researcher and employee of the organisation studied, is also explored along with issues of credibility and dependability (Lincoln and Guba, 1990). These issues are discussed and the choices made are justified and, in this way, coherence within the study is demonstrated.

3.1 Ontological and epistemological assumptions

This section clarifies how my own worldview assumptions have influenced the decisions regarding the approach and methodology chosen for the research (Creswell, 2014). As Crotty (1998) posits, the starting point for researchers has to be their epistemological perspective when deciding what areas of knowledge are legitimate to explore in answering their research question. The study adopts an ontological stance that is social constructionist and, as such, considers that there are multiple realities which are constructed through social interaction – there is no one 'reality'. The ontological stance of social constructionism (Burr, 2015) holds the belief that it is through dialogue and interaction that things become meaningful – constructs such as beliefs, emotions, values and morals only exist in ways that we can make sense of because we have a language for this experience (Burr, 2015). In this way, reality does not exist independently of how we choose to make sense of it – we are interpreting from our interactions and making meaning from that interpretation.

My worldview concurs with many of the assumptions that are generally thought to be the foundations of social constructionism. These include a critical stance toward taken-for-granted knowledge and historical and cultural specificity – our view of the world will be impacted by where in the world we are, what culture we are living in and what culture we were brought up in (Burr, 2015). Social constructionism also holds the belief that knowledge is constructed between people – that as people interact, a shared meaning is

constructed between them which is not objective, but rather an observation of the social processes that go on between them (Burr, 2015; Cunliffe, 2008). In this way, each participant in the study has experienced the coaching and the initiative differently according to their own worldview, their cultural heritage and their beliefs and values. They have then constructed their own meaning from this when in dialogue with the researcher (Cunliffe, 2008). In this study, the individual coaching sessions, whereby a coachee has a conversation with a coach, could be viewed as one way in which each individual makes sense of the world.

The term micro social constructionism (Burr, 2015) refers to the reality that is created through everyday discourse and therefore could be said to describe the processes taking place within individual coaching sessions. As such, it could be argued that the group coaching sessions may have been more influenced by the macro social constructionism perspective as this is related to social structures, social relations and social norms and practices (Burr, 2015). As the group coaching sessions comprised conversations between groups of individuals who came from the same organisation, who had the same gender and who were participants on the same programme, an argument could be made for there being some relevance of this perspective to the assumptions of the research. However, power is at the centre of macro social constructionists' concerns and forms the dominant aspect of attention, and while this was one aspect of interest for the group coaching sessions in the research, it was not the only aspect of interest. Attempts have been made to synthesise the two approaches of macro and micro to ensure they are not seen as mutually exclusive (Burkitt, 1999; Butt and Burr, 2004) and this is the approach taken in the research.

The unit of analysis for the study was the coaching stream of the AD programme, comprising multiple perspectives from female leaders being coached, the coaches and members of the Steering Team of the AD initiative. Given this context, social constructionism as an ontological stance allowed exploration to sufficient depth where much knowledge remained tacit, much remained silent and participants' meanings and actions were located in larger social structures and discourses of which they may have been unaware (Alvesson and Sköldbberg, 2009).

The epistemological stance for the study is interpretivism – *people* are being studied, as opposed to machines, and as such they are interpreting their world. The people within the case study are interpreting their world according to the meaning they give to their multiple

roles – as coachees, employees, leaders, managers, mothers, daughters etc. Each individual interprets the interaction with others according to their own perspective – so each coaching session or steering team meeting is interpreted differently by each person and each person acts out their role in accordance with this interpretation (Saunders et al., 2011). This interpretive approach demands that an empathic stance is taken during the research process as the challenge is to enter the social world of the research subjects to gain a perspective from their point of view (Saunders et al., 2011). In effect this becomes the researcher interpreting the participants' interpretation that the subject is making of the interaction (Romanyshyn and Anderson, 2007). This 'hermeneutic circle' is an infinite process as meaning is constructed, interpreted and reconstructed as interaction continues (Gadamer, 1989).

3.2 Considerations of research design – methodological approach

A qualitative research design was selected as the research is concerned with the human experience and the meaning of this experience rather than measuring or quantifying outputs which is consistent with my social constructionist worldview. The research study was situated within one organisation – that of GSK, a large, multinational healthcare company. In order to study analytically the experiences of having group and individual coaching from multiple perspectives – that of female leaders being coached, the coaches and the Steering Team members – the methodological approach required that people interviewed were able to construct meaning from their experiences and then to relate this to me as researcher. In turn, through the process of asking questions, listening to the responses and asking further questions, meaning was constructed between us as to their individual experiences. Through interviewing 15 female leaders, two coaches and two Steering Team members, meaning was further constructed through comparison of their responses.

The methodology also required the context of the participants to be viewed as a factor in the experience – 18 interviewees were employees of the same organisation, GSK and one coach was contracted to work with GSK on a regular basis. Given the need for a methodology that was qualitative, interpretive, social constructionist and context inclusive, a case study (Stake, 1995) was chosen as the methodology and thematic analysis (Gray, 2013) as the analytical method. A review of the literature reveals that there are two seminal proponents of case study research: Robert Yin (1993, 1994, 2014) and Robert Stake (1995). Yin (1993, 1994) tends to favour both qualitative and quantitative approaches to

case study research whilst Stake (1995) extends an approach which is more qualitative in nature. Table 3.1 shows the summarised comparative elements of case study (Appleton, 2002) with additions to reflect Yin’s (2014) inclusion of the relativist perspective.

Comparative elements of case study	Yin	Stake
<i>Definition of a case</i>	A case is a contemporary single unit, phenomena or issue of study. An object of study, sometimes referred to as a unit of analysis (Yin, 1993, pg 10).	A case is an object of study. The case is a specific, a complex, functioning thing’... each case is an integrated system’ and has a boundary and working parts’ (Stake, 1995, pg 2).
<i>Types of case study design</i>	The case study design can be single (either holistic or embedded) or multiple, as well as descriptive, exploratory or explanatory (Yin, 1993).	Three types of case study design: intrinsic, instrumental or collective (Stake, 1994, 1995).
<i>Rationale for method</i>	Suitable for the study of: ‘how’ and ‘why’ questions Contemporary issue(s) or unit(s) In real life settings Where there is no researcher control Using multiple sources of data For qualitative and quantitative approaches.	Suitable for the study of: Contemporary issue(s) or unit(s) In real life settings Where there is no researcher control Using multiple sources of data Focusing on qualitative inquiry To construct an in-depth understanding of a single case/issue or multiple cases.
<i>Paradigmatic orientation</i>	Positivism and postpositivism (Yin, 1994), relativism (Yin, 2014).	Interpretivism, constructivism.
<i>Sampling approach</i>	Replication logic. Potential for literal replication or theoretical replication.	Purposive sampling.
<i>Use/location of theory</i>	Case study should ideally be guided by theoretical propositions. Through the use of ‘analytic generalisation’ case study results may be generalised to an existing theory.	Theory may emerge through the case study, but there is no insistence on theory development.
<i>Time</i>	A great deal of time is needed for the intensive and detailed study of the case.	A great deal of time is needed for the intensive and detailed study of the case.

Table 3.1 Case Study: A comparison of the perspectives of Robert Yin and Robert Stake (Based on Appleton, 2002 and updated to include Yin’s application from a relativist perspective, summarised from Yin, 1993, 1994, 2014; Stake, 1994, 1995)

Case study methodology has been used broadly across many disciplines and for a variety of purposes (Guba and Lincoln, 1994) – and on close examination, the methodology fulfilled the criteria required for my research study. Case studies are rich, empirical descriptions of particular occurrences of phenomena within their real life context and are frequently used when the boundaries between phenomena and context are not clearly evident; and where a variety of data sources are used (Yin, 2014). Stake (1994, pg 237) defines case study by

stating that it 'is both the process of learning about the case and the product of our learning' and as such, is closely aligned to my worldview. Other definitions conclude that it can be both a process of enquiry in the act of studying a case and the end product in terms of a case study or case report (Sandelowski, 1996). What most researchers agree on is that case study concerns a unique and defined social entity as unit of analysis, e.g. an individual, an organisation, an industry or an event (Huberman and Miles, 2002). As such, my research setting being the coaching stream of AD, and set within the organisation GSK, case study seemed an appropriate methodology.

As not much is known about the simultaneous use of individual and group coaching, case study is particularly appropriate (Appleton, 2002) since the purpose of the study was to take an intensive and detailed examination of the experience of having individual and group coaching from multiple perspectives and the intricacies and complexities of this phenomenon. It appears that Stake's approach (1995, pg 99) emanates from a constructionist epistemology: 'the belief that knowledge is constructed rather than discovered' and the belief that research enquiry can never be value free. For Stake 'no aspects of knowledge are purely of the external world, devoid of human construction' (Stake, 1995, pg 100). Some elements which are integral to a constructionist perspective appeared to be missing from Yin's (1993, 1994) approach – the importance of tacit knowledge and intuitive processes in data collection and analyses (Appleton, 2002). I have adopted an approach which is consistent with my social constructionist assumptions and have therefore followed Stake's (1995) instrumental approach.

Establishing boundaries for my case study was imperative to prevent the case from being too broad or the topic too extensive with too many objectives for one study. Stake (1995) suggests that placing boundaries on a case can prevent this 'explosion' occurring and that binding the case is essential. The identification of the unit of analysis is vital and suggestions on how to bind the case include by time and place (Creswell et al., 2003), by time and activity (Stake, 1995), and by definition and context (Miles and Huberman, 1994). As such, for this research study the boundaries include who to interview – the female leaders who were participants, coaches and Steering Team members of the Accelerating Difference (AD) initiative; the cohort to be studied – Cohort One; and the organisation – GSK, to which 18 of the interviewees were employed and one coach was contracted. Cohort One refers to the female participants who received coaching during 2013 and 2014. The activity boundary is that they are participants who took part in both individual

coaching sessions and group coaching sessions. In this way, the case study has suitable boundaries to ensure it is not too broad for one study and they indicate the breadth and depth of the study and not simply the sample to be included within it (Baxter and Jack, 2008).

Stake (1995) identifies three different types of case study: intrinsic, instrumental and collective (Stake, 1995). The instrumental case study is appropriate for this study as it is used when 'a particular case is examined to provide insight into an issue or refinement of theory' (Stake, 1994, pg 237). In this instance the case is the methodology used to explore an issue, rather than the case being the primary focus in itself – and is thus appropriate for this study. This research study examines how individual and group coaching is experienced by female leaders in a large, multinational organisation, from multiple perspectives – female leaders being coached, coaches and Steering Team members who designed and implemented AD. The research participants are all studied in their 'real life' contexts as they have all participated in the AD programme, and the research is concerned with the process and phenomenon of two coaching methods. It is instrumental because the study is attempting to further the knowledge and understanding of the experience of having both types of coaching simultaneously, and the utility of this as an organisational process and developmental initiative, whilst reporting on the development of the leaders themselves. The inclusion of coaches and the line managers as research participants in the study serves to add depth and weight to the case study and reinforce the instrumental nature of the case study design (Stake, 1995). Figure 3.1 below shows the key components of the Accelerating Difference initiative.

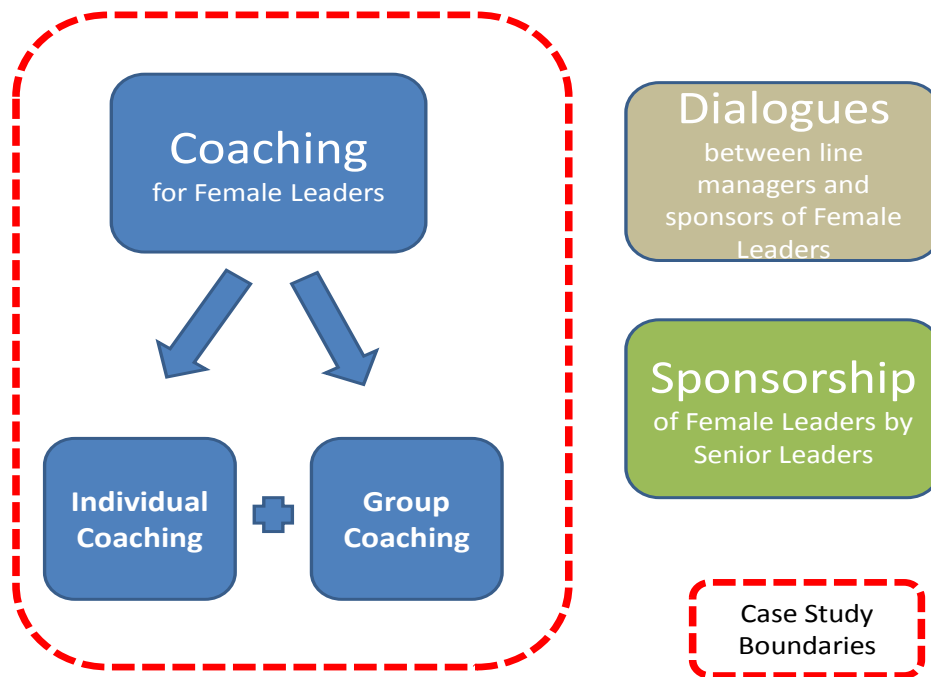


Figure 3.1 Key components of the Accelerating Difference initiative showing the Case Study Boundaries

3.2.1 Individual coaching

Job Plus Coaches (JPCs) coached 14 of the 15 female leaders, the other had an external Executive Coach. JPCs are line managers who have a 'day job' within GSK for which they are paid and, in addition, they have successfully completed the Job Plus Coaching programme, which is an internally run initiative to train leaders on coaching skills. They have passed the evaluation and assessment process which ensures they reach a sufficient standard to have their own clients who are other employees and therefore internal to GSK. Additionally, the JPCs have also attended professional supervision on a regular basis with professionally trained and accredited Supervisors. The coachee, who had an approved GSK external Executive Coach, did so because she was just about to start having coaching with an executive coach when she was invited to be a participant on the programme. Consequently the Executive Coach was treated the same as the JPCs in terms of briefings, the number of sessions delivered and the length of the coaching sessions.

Each female leader had received a maximum of 12 individual coaching sessions and the one-to-one coaching sessions were conducted either in person, by Live Meeting via

webcams or by telephone. The location for the coaching sessions was determined by each coach and coachee – and scheduling of these was the responsibility of the coachee.

3.2.2 Group coaching

For the Group Coaching a small team of External Executive Coaches was selected by the Coaching Centre of Excellence to lead the group coaching sessions. The criteria used to select the coaches were: the coach was already an approved GSK External Executive Coach, the coach had significant group coaching experience and the coach had demonstrated capability and interest in working in the area of female leadership development. The external Group Coaches were partnered with either an internal GSK JPC, or an Internal Executive Coach. The decision to pair an internal and an external coach was made so that each group would have the benefit of an experienced coach who was viewed as 'objective' because of being external to GSK and one coach who fully understood the context in which the female participants were operating.

Each female leader also attended a maximum of six Group Coaching sessions facilitated by either an Internal and an External Executive Coach or an External Executive Coach and an internal JPC. The six sessions were spread over fourteen months and between five and seven female leaders were assigned to each group based on geographical location. Each group coaching session was approximately four hours in length and for the majority of participants was conducted face to face. The exception to this occurred where flight times to attend a group coaching session were more than three hours so for cost and time reasons they were treated differently. These female leaders were assigned to a group which met for two days, face to face and then had five virtual, Live Meeting webcam based group sessions spread over 14 months, and then another two days face to face as a closing meeting.

3.2.3 Discounted research methodologies

Other research methodologies were considered but were discounted because they did not provide the coherence in approach, epistemology and methodology required. I explored the possibility of using constructivist grounded theory (Charmaz, 2014) as this was very enticing as it provided the inductive, constructionist approach which allows for the researcher to really explore the phenomenon in detail, as well as developing a meaningful theory (Gray, 2013). However, as my unit of analyses was the coaching stream of the AD initiative and my research aim was to explore the simultaneous use of individual and group coaching as a development mechanism, case study was more appropriate. Typically in case

study methodology a variety of data sources are included (Stake, 1995) and therefore interviewing not only the female participants but some coaches and line managers was imperative. Having this broader base of data within the specific context of one organisation meant that a case study approach with thematic analyses was a more appropriate methodology to adopt for the research study.

Heuristics as a methodology was also considered as it is a qualitative approach that addresses the internal search through which one discovers the meaning of experience – the self of the researcher is present throughout the process (Moustakas, 1990). It was discounted as a methodology because it fails to consider the context, politics or other human enterprises or explain the meaning of the experience (Moustakas, 1990). Action learning was considered as a potential methodology as the study is situated in one organisation and uses an emergent inquiry process to attempt to resolve organisational issues by integrating new and existing organisational knowledge (Shani and Pasmore, 1985). Whilst many aspects of action learning would be considered congruent with the research study, the approach was rejected as this study is a retrospective one, based on actions that have previously taken place and it is the meaning that is made from the experience as reflected on by the participants that is central to the study. As such, the concurrent and iterative nature of action learning was rejected as a suitable methodology for the study.

3.3 Selection of study participants

The sampling approach taken is coherent with the qualitative nature of the research in that the sample size is small and is selected purposefully on the basis that they are information-rich cases (Gray, 2013). The selection of participants was restricted to a finite group of female leaders who participated in the first cohort of the AD programme, their coaches and the members of the Steering Team. The Steering Team was set up to lead the design and implementation of the AD Programme and it comprised representatives from the Coaching CoE, Leadership Development and representatives from each business division taking part – Consumer Healthcare, Global Manufacturing and Supply and Core Business Services. Figure 3.2 shows the Operating Model of GSK at the time of the research study and highlights the businesses which took part in Cohort One for Accelerating Difference.

GSK Operating Model 2013

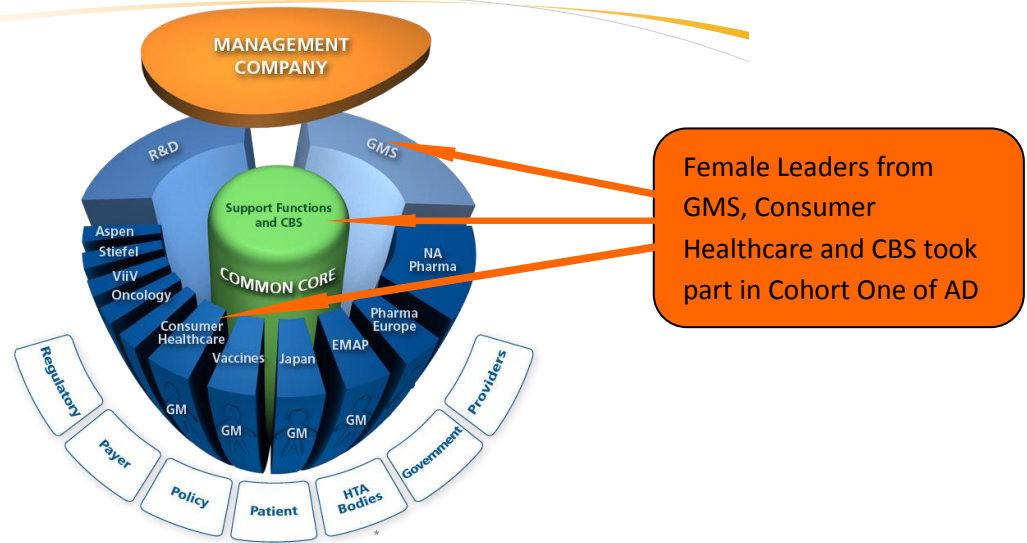


Figure 3.2 GSK Operating Model 2013 – Internal Resource Slide 2013

Participants of the AD Programme were all female leaders who had been nominated to go through the development by their line manager and their Human Resources Business Leader (HRBL). Nominations were sought from each of the three participating business divisions – Global Manufacturing and Supply (GMS), Consumer Healthcare and Core Business Services (CBS) (see Figure 3.2 for the operating structure of GSK.) The criteria against which they were nominated were:

1. Future potential: the participant has the potential to progress at least two levels within the organisation as a leader
2. Ambition: the participant actively wants to progress her career and to take advantage of the development opportunities offered to her
3. Personal circumstances: the participant has the personal circumstances that enable her to participate in development opportunities and to progress in the organisation

Line managers and HRBLs were responsible for identifying whether the female leaders possessed the potential to progress in the organisation. Through conversations with the individuals, the line managers also assessed whether they had the ambition to progress their career and also the personal circumstances to take advantage of the development opportunities being offered as part of the initiative. In this instance, personal circumstances were defined as being able to take time to attend coaching sessions and to travel to group

sessions where appropriate and to fit work around the coaching as necessary. The grade range of participants was not stipulated and the resulting nominations ranged from Grade 7, Junior Manager, to Grade 3 Vice President. Figure 3.3 shows the grade structure for GSK.

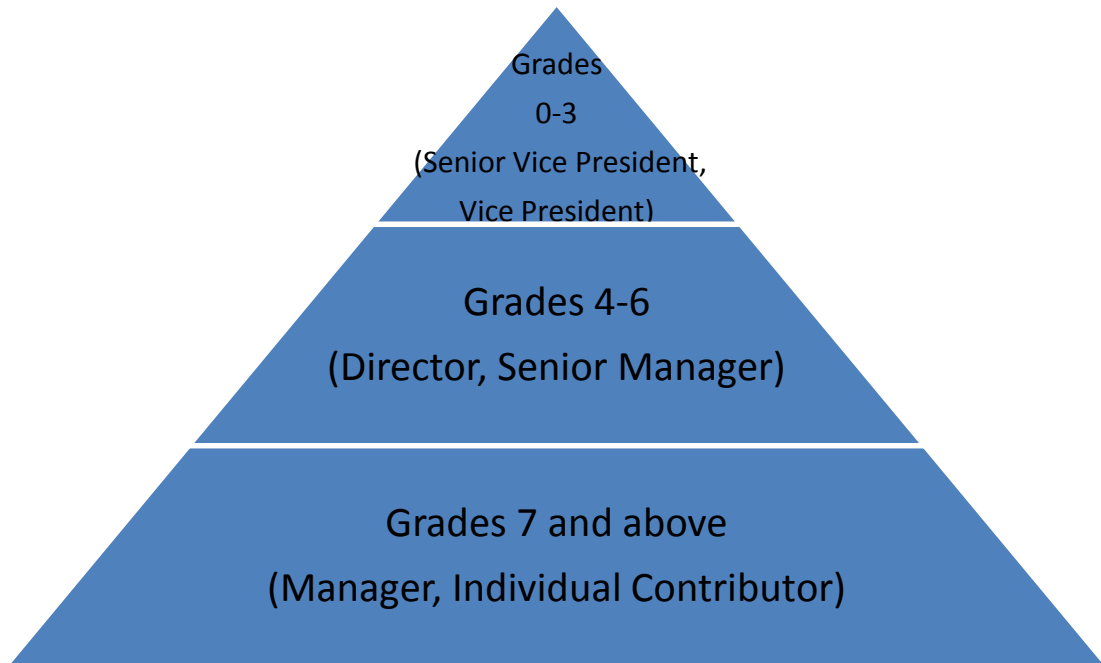


Figure 3.3: Grade Structure for GSK 2014

In total, 118 female leaders participated in Cohort One from 20 countries. Female AD participants who had completed at least six individual coaching sessions and at least three group coaching sessions (or the intensive sessions) were invited to participate in the research study by the Head of the Talent, Leadership and Organisation Development Centre of Excellence (TL&OD CoE). This department had overall responsibility for the AD Programme. Leaders responded to her and were selected to become participants by virtue of meeting the criteria and being the first 15 leaders to respond to the invitation. To ensure the depth and perspective of the study, other sources of information were solicited by inviting the coaches and Steering Team members to participate in the research. See Figure 3.4 for the purposive sample of study participants.

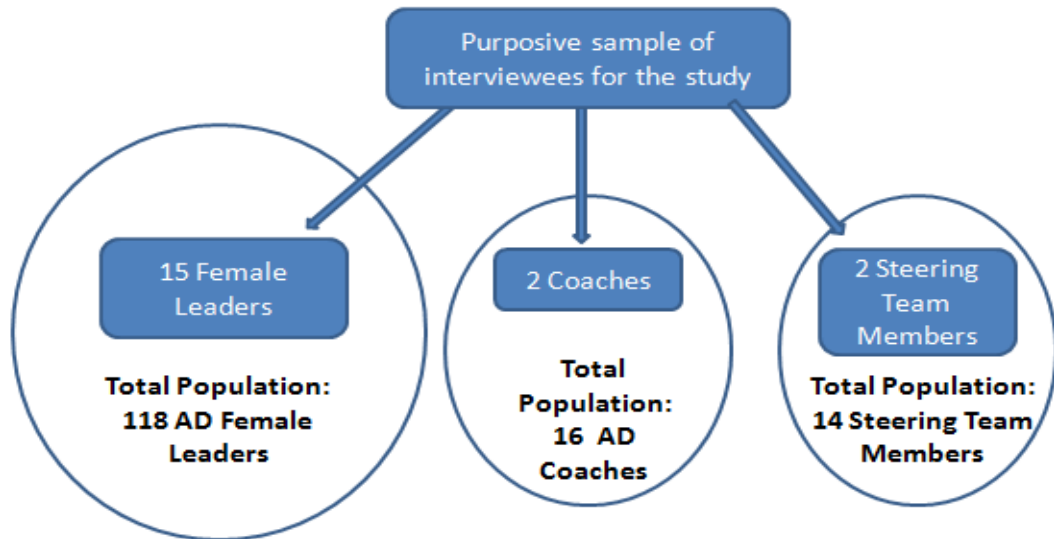


Figure 3.4 Purposive sample of study participants

Code Name	Role	Business Division	Location	Grade	Time in role	Time with GSK	Country of Origin	Age	Recorded
Paula	Global Production System	GMS	Mexico	5	6 months	7 years	Mexico	35 - 44	No
Patricia	Business Unit Director, Mass	CH	Poland	4	2 months	13 years	Poland	35 - 44	No
Penny	IT Manager	CBS	UK	6	3 years	7 years	UK	25 - 34	Yes
Phoebe	Director, Global Insights	CH	US	4	2 years	5 years	US	45 - 54	Yes
Prunella	Strategy and Business Development Director	GMS	UK	4	1 year	15 years	American parents, born in Sweden	45 - 54	Yes
Patience	SNOP Director, European	GMS	UK	5	18 months	4 years	Poland	45 - 54	Yes
Petra	Supply Strategy Director	GMS	Singapore	4	9 months	2 years	Chinese, born in Australia	35 - 44	Yes
Pam	Category Manager, Wellness	CH	New	7	9 months	4 years	Slovenia	35 - 44	Yes
Pricilla	Senior Brand Manager,	CH	US	6	10 months	9 years	Bulgaria	25 - 34	No
Pippa	Therapy Supply Chain Director	GMS	UK	5	15 months	6 years	UK	25 - 34	Yes
Padma	Supply Chain Manager	GMS	Pakistan	6	1 year	8 years	Pakistan	25 - 34	Yes
Paloma	Supply and Logistics Lead	GMS	UK		18 months	14 years	UK	35 - 44	Yes
Peta	European Packaging	GMS	UK	5	4 years	17 years (1	UK	35 - 44	Yes
Peggy	Therapy Supply Chain Director	GMS	UK	5	1 year	8 years	UK	25 - 34	Yes
Pauline	GPS Lead	GMS	UK	5	2 years	18 years	UK	35 - 44	Yes
Sarah	OD Business Lead	TL&OD	UK	4	4 years	15 years	UK	45 - 54	Yes
Sue	Leadership Development Head	TL&OD	UK	3	5 years	5 years	UK	55 plus	No
Cathy	OD Consultant	TL&OD	UK	5	5 years	20 years	UK	45 - 54	Yes
Chris	Executive Coach	External	UK	N/A	6 years	N/A	UK	55 plus	Yes

Table 3.2 Profile of Interviewees

The invitations to participate were sent out by the Head of the TL&OD CoE (see Appendix Two) to ensure a consistent protocol in the process of data collection. All research participants signed Consent Forms (Appendix Three) to ensure they understood the process, confidentiality, time commitment and support they would receive as part of participating in the research study. See Table 3.2 for further demographic details of interviewees. The names of the participants have been changed so that all female leader participants have a name starting with the letter P. All Steering Team members have a name starting with the letter S and all coaches have a name beginning with the letter C.

3.3.1 Access

Approval from GSK to interview research participants was gained in writing from an organisational perspective (see Appendix Four). Full access to research participants was agreed as they are employees, for as long as they remain in employment within the organisation.

3.4 Data collection methods

As the research was concerned with exploring the experience of having individual and group coaching, the data collection method that is most congruent with this is interviewing (Creswell, 2014). The study is concerned with the meaning each person constructed of their experience and in order to do this, a form of interaction between researcher and participants was required (Seidman, 2013).

3.4.1 Semi-structured interviews

The data are, necessarily, highly personalised – each person had their own experiences, their own reflections on those experiences and will seek to construct meaning out of that experience and will additionally construct meaning through the process of conversation about that experience. As Vygotsky suggests, every word people use telling their story is a microcosm of their consciousness (Vygotsky et al., 2012). As such, semi-structured interviews, which are non-standardized in nature and which can be adapted to suit the individual situation of each participant, were deemed the appropriate data collection vehicle (Seidman, 2013). As the participants comprised different nationalities (see Table 3.2) it was also necessary to adapt the language and to have freedom to explain terminology to ensure understanding. The use of semi-structured interviews also allowed the order of the questions to be changed as required – so that respondents were not repeating answers that they had made in previous questions. Further, semi-structured interviews also enabled probing questions to be asked and for additional questions to be posed as a consequence of some answers given to questions – these could not be

anticipated prior to the interviews taking place. Given the nature of the research enquiry, it was essential to have the ability to probe further for meaning and understanding, to ensure the subjective nature of the topics were expressed in detail (Seidman, 2013).

The research design required AD participants who have completed the AD programme in 2013 - 2014, to take part in two in-depth interviews each lasting approximately an hour to an hour and a half across two stages. The interviews were conducted either in person, via webcam or over the telephone as I am based in the UK and participants are based in the UK, US, Singapore, Pakistan, China, Mexico, Belgium, Poland and New Zealand. Consent was gained from each participant prior to being interviewed and signed consent forms were collected from each participant (Appendix Three). Whilst there is no definitive answer to the question how many qualitative interviews is enough – Baker and Edwards (2012) have observed that the amount can vary between six and 100, depending on the nature of the questions to be asked and the nature of the respondents (Baker and Edwards, 2012). As the purpose of the interviews was to understand the perspectives of different stakeholders involved in the individual and group coaching, a sample of 15 female leaders, two coaches and two Steering Team Members was judged to be appropriate according to best practice in interviewing (Baker and Edwards, 2012). The interviews were conducted either face to face, via telephone or via webcam – the use of these various modalities was needs-driven given the global nature of the interviews and the time and distance differences between interviewer and interviewee. Interviewing via telephone and face to face as interview mechanisms do not result in any significant differences (Sturges and Hanrahan, 2004). It was also felt that telephone interviewing or via Skype could also overcome any lack of willingness to make time for meeting face to face (King and Horrocks, 2010).

The interview questions were developed according to best practice in qualitative interviewing (Seidman, 2013) and included open-ended, non-directive questions which enabled inductive and exploratory responses and further questions to be asked. In addition, my experience, role and professional practice informed the nuance of the questions to ensure they were pertinent and focused on eliciting participants' responses in a full and open way (Seidman, 2013). As such there was unavoidably an element of bias to the questions, however this was reduced as much as possible (Bryman and Bell, 2015). The questions formed the AD Participant Interview and a pilot interview was conducted to ensure appropriate questions were asked and the research objectives met (Baker and Edwards, 2012). Revisions were then made to the interview and the AD Participant Interview, First Interview Schedule was developed (See Appendix Five). This interview

explored the female leaders' experiences of individual and group coaching and their reflections of the overall experience of the AD initiative. Additionally, the interviews explored how the two types of coaching impacted on AD female leaders' work and lives outside of work and sought to explore any organisational aspects of context surrounding the coaching that may have affected their experience, such as line manager involvement. This semi-structured approach allowed the questions to be delivered through a conversational and relatively informal approach (Eriksson and Kovalainen, 2008). This approach to data collection has been used consistently in both individual and group coaching studies, as it is appropriate for eliciting information in a manner that is congruent with the experience being studied (Grant et al., 2010).

3.4.2 Stages of interviews

The interviewing approach was conducted in four stages and the analysis conducted after each stage. Figure 3.5 shows the interview stages and the analysis process.

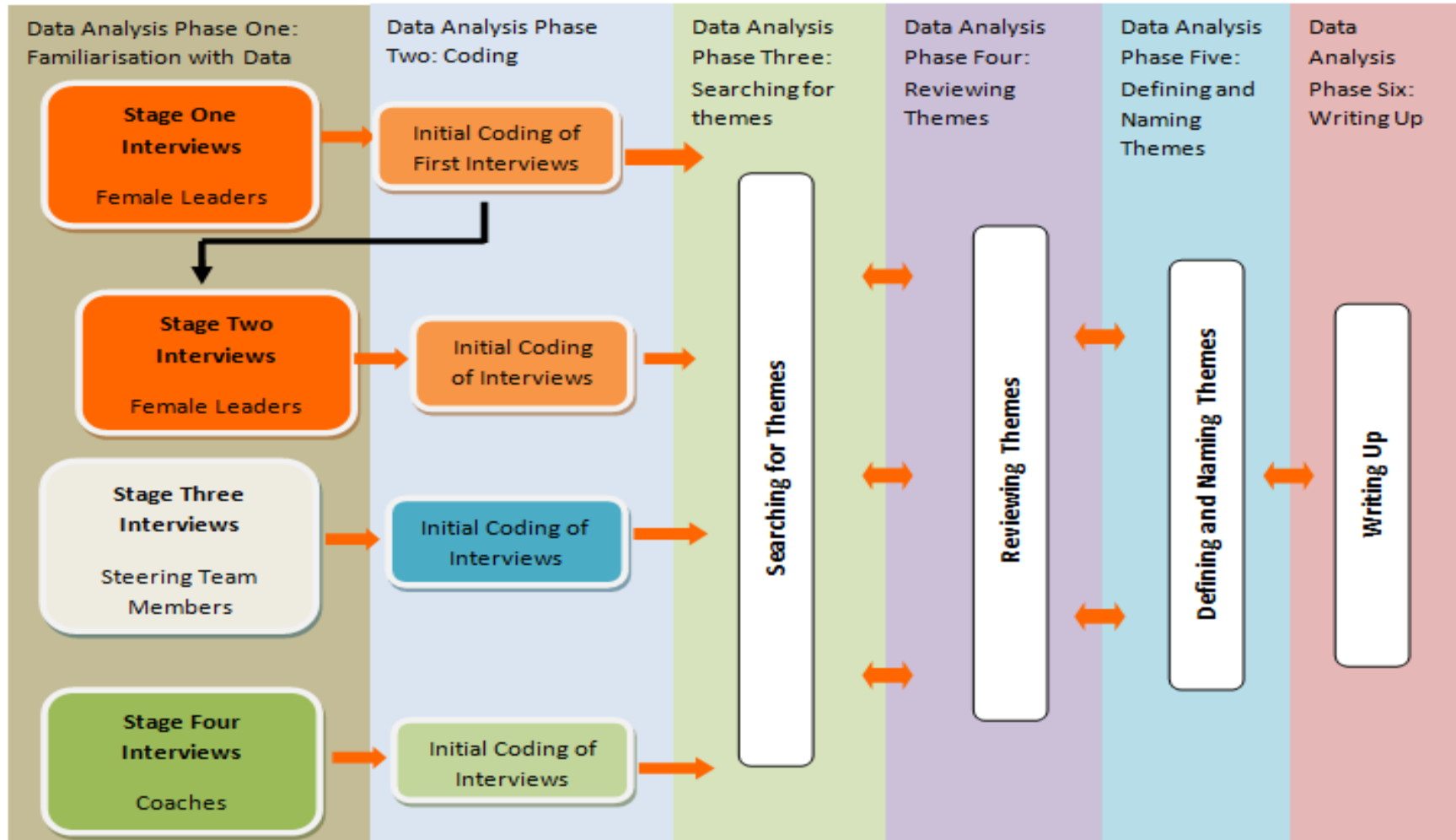


Figure 3.5: Stages of interviewing and phases of data analysis

Stage 1 Interviews – Fifteen female leaders who participated in Cohort One of AD were interviewed approximately three to four months following completion of the programme. They experienced both individual coaching and attended at least four out of the six group coaching sessions. Following these interviews, initial thematic coding (Buetow, 2010) was conducted resulting in the identification of several key themes that warranted further exploration and enquiry. These formed the basis for the AD Participant Second Interview Schedule (Appendix Six) and for the subsequent interview developed for the coaches and Steering Team members. These interview schedules were piloted prior to being used with female leaders, coaches and Steering Team members.

Stage Two Interviews – The female leaders were interviewed for a second time, approximately eight to nine months after completion of the coaching, which was approximately five months after participating in their first interview. These interviews followed the AD Participant Second Interview Schedule (Appendix Six) and the leaders were asked to reflect on their experience of participating in the individual and group coaching looking back after eight to nine months. The second interviews also explored in more depth the areas and themes identified from the first interviews. These second interviews contained questions that were open and general, as well as some questions that could be considered leading. The purpose of these questions was to check the reliability of the responses as well as deepening the exploration into specific areas of interest (Kvale and Brinkmann, 2009).

Stage Three Interviews – A sample of two members of the Steering Team were interviewed using the Steering Team and Coaches Interview Schedule (Appendix Seven). These interview questions were piloted with one Steering Team member before being finalised and used with two, different Steering Team members. The purpose of these Stage Three interviews was to gain another perspective on the research unit of analysis – that of the coaching stream of the AD initiative. The focus of these interview questions was the organisational impact and experience of the two types of coaching and how these were used as developmental mechanisms in the organisation. Previous research into coaching and organisations informed the choice and direction of questions (Bond and Seneque, 2012).

Stage Four Interviews – A sample of two Coaches was interviewed using the Steering Team member and Coach Interview Schedule (Appendix Seven). These interview questions were piloted with one Coach before being finalised and used with two, different Coaches. One

Coach had two individual clients who were female leaders on AD and both Coaches were Group Coaches on AD. The purpose of these Stage Four interviews was to gain another perspective on the initial themes that were reported by the AD participants in the Stage One interviews. Including Coaches in the research added a further perspective to both the individual and group coaching experience and were a further source of data for the research content, thereby deepening the richness of the data (Stake, 1995; Grant et al., 2010).

The interviews ranged in time taken from the shortest being 40 minutes to the longest being nearly 90 minutes long. Some interviewees were very keen to describe their experiences in great detail, resulting in very few prompts being required from the interviewer. Others were more taciturn and appeared to want to respond more to questions, rather than talk freely about the experience. As such, various open-ended questions and prompts were deployed to ensure as rich a picture of their experience as possible was gathered and that suited the exploratory nature of the study (Saunders et al., 2011).

3.5 Data analysis process and how data will be presented

In line with the social constructionist stance, the methodology for data analyses is inductive to maintain congruence. I therefore chose thematic analysis as my data analysis methodology as this allowed the identification and analysis of patterns and themes across the data set (Braun and Clarke, 2006). Thematic analysis is a highly flexible method of data analysis (Bryman and Bell, 2015) which was appropriate to be used across the qualitative data collected from different categories of participants: female leaders, coaches and members of the Steering Team. It is a method of data analysis that is particularly suited to the study as it is sufficiently flexible to allow the spectrum of the patterns of experience of both individual and group to be explored, separately and together to access any complementarity and synergistic effects.

Care was taken to ensure a consistent and rigorous approach was taken and the process for conducting thematic analysis used in the research study had Six Phases, see Figure 3.4 above (Braun et al., 2014; Braun and Clarke, 2006). This process is widely accepted as the standard for conducting rigorous research using this method and it was very useful in bringing structure to the data analysis stage of the research study (Braun et al., 2014). However, the impression that the numbered step approach gives is that it was linear in

nature; in actuality, and in keeping with Braun et al.(2006), analysis was recursive rather than linear.

3.5.1 Phases of data analysis

Phase One: Familiarisation with the data: as I transcribed the interviews myself, my immersion in the data to become intimately familiar with it began as soon as the interviews commenced. Notes of the conversations were captured through touch typing whilst interviewing the participants, in addition to recordings of the conversations being made. The purpose of recording was to ensure that what was spoken by the interviewee was captured, and writing notes was a precaution against any technology interruptions to the recordings, and allowed additional data to be captured. The notes were taken via typing which ensured they were legible, as opposed to hand written as my typing is faster, more accurate and more importantly, more legible than my writing, especially when written at speed. Capturing conversations in this manner is standard practice in GSK for coaches carrying out data collection for 360 degree feedback exercises. To ensure this did not negatively impact the conversational flow, permission to type whilst listening was requested, and gained, from each interviewee, for both face-to-face and phone/Skype interviews. In this way, the combined note taking and audio taping during the interviews were following best practice in data collection (Halcomb and Davidson, 2006). See Table 3.2 for details on which interviews were recorded.

In a couple of interviews, the interviewees requested they not be recorded and on a few occasions the connection quality and consistency via Live Meeting precluded the recording of the interview. In these cases I checked what I was capturing in my notes, pausing and checking with the interviewee to validate content captured and data accuracy. The typed up interviews were sent out to the study participants for them to verify the accuracy of what was captured as Cresswell (2014) recommends. They were invited to make tracked changes and to return the documents so that these updated accounts could be used for analysis. In this way, any mistakes made in transcription or capturing of the responses could be rectified. Most returned them unchanged with the exception of one female participant who was Polish, who wanted to correct her English grammar. I reassured her that the transcript was about capturing what was said in conversation, and not about grammatical accuracy. The interviews were then read and re-read and notes made on the transcripts. Memos were also written to capture ideas and thoughts as analysis progressed through the transcripts (Charmaz, 2014). The interviews were listened to several times as hearing the spoken words added to my conceptual understanding of what was discussed

(Rubin and Rubin, 2011). The female leaders' first interviews were transcribed and coded first, then the second interview protocol was developed. The second interviews were conducted with female leaders and transcribed and some were coded. The Steering Team member and Coaches interviews were then conducted, and transcribed and then coded.

Phase Two: Coding: my first pass at coding involved generating shorthand titles for the processes I had captured from the interview transcripts. Codes were not purely descriptive, but captured both a semantic and a conceptual reading of the data (Braun et al., 2014). This first pass resulted in the generation of numerous initial codes (see Appendix Eight for an example of an interview transcript with initial coding) and it was relatively easy to collate codes based on recurrence and while this was informative I was careful also to ensure that single occurrences that appeared important were also captured (Buetow, 2010). I then collated all these initial codes, along with the relevant data extracts. In analysing the interviews at a deeper level by listening to them repeatedly and by reviewing the written transcripts, I tried to identify what was salient in them. Saliency can be considered a key element of thematic analysis (Buetow, 2010) and Buetow (2010, p.123) and highlights the importance of every single code as they may be important and transferable to other settings. Whilst single codes can be important they cannot by definition be called thematic (Buetow, 2010, p. 123). For Buetow (2010, p.124) 'the concept of importance is widely agreed for evaluating qualitative research, yet its meaning is elusive'. He goes on to elaborate on saliency analysis that 'findings are important when they are new and advance understanding, are useful in addressing real world problems, or do both' (Buetow, 2010, p. 124). In my analysis, saliency was constructed as what stood out for me as a researcher – what people said, how they said it and how it was expressed. I 'listened' to the meaning, even though I was often reading the transcripts, in a way it was a matter in hermeneutic terms of letting the text speak (McLeod, 2011). The inherent principles of the hermeneutic cycle (McLeod, 2011) came into focus for me as I read, re-read and listened again to the interviews. My constructionist perspective meant that there is a process of meaning making, of construction on my behalf which is not limited to description and explanation but requires the interpretation of data, to make meaning. I was very conscious during this phase of the research about my filters, my perspectives in interpreting the data – this is discussed more in the reflexivity section below. I chose not to make a distinction between the data from the first interviews and the second interviews. The first interviews allowed for cathartic download, the second were more focused and targeted on areas identified in first interviews. Taking a less linear or chronological

approach was more consistent in a social constructionist approach because my whole engagement with the data was a meaning making process.

Phase Three: Searching for themes: this phase required a constant movement between the data at a close level and then standing back and taking a more conceptual stance. The codes were actively constructed, according to the constructionist perspective – not hidden in the data waiting to be uncovered (Clarke and Braun, 2013). Detailed first maps were drawn capturing the codes and the potential links or connections between them (see Appendix Nine). In this way, themes emerged from the data as the occurrence and connection between codes became apparent. Themes such as 'self-confidence', 'identity' or in some cases, 'in vivo' codes such as 'feeling I am not alone' merged and care was taken to cover latent as well as overt themes by constant re-reading and interpretation (Boyatzis, 1998).

Phase Four: Reviewing themes: this phase required me to reflect on the themes from a perspective of being coherent in themselves, as well as telling a convincing and compelling story (Braun et al., 2014). In this phase the relationships between themes were examined and analysed and, where appropriate, themes were discarded. This was necessarily a recursive activity – going between the detail and the holistic perspective of what the different interviews, and sources of interviews was revealing to me. This activity was captured through drawing and redrawing maps (see Appendix Ten, Second Analyses Map).

Phase Five: Defining and naming themes: in this phase each theme was written about in a detailed analysis and the questions 'what story does this theme tell and how does this theme fit into the overall story about the data?' (Braun et al., 2014) was addressed. This phase was concerned with identifying the real essence of each theme and ensuring that it was constructed in a concise and informative way. This allowed for the combining of themes when the essence of what was being said could be seen to concur with another theme, allowing other themes to emerge and become prominent when reviewed from different angles. For example, the theme of 'giving back' was constructed from two original codes – running sessions for my team, and sharing knowledge further – in this way the two granular individual themes were superseded to make one theme which captured the essence of what was being said and done by the female leaders, that of giving back whether it was to their colleagues, their organisation or the wider community.

Phase Six: Writing up: in this phase all the strands of the data collection and analysis were synthesised and a narrative constructed which depicted my interpretation of the experience of simultaneous individual and group coaching. Staying close to the data through the use of quotes ensured that the more conceptual themes were connected and grounded in the spoken word of the interviewees. Concurrently, the conceptual and theoretical interpretation of the data was brought in to ensure academic rigour and to signpost any modest contributions to knowledge that emerged (Trafford and Leshem, 2008).

3.6 Validity

Validity in qualitative research conducted from an interpretivist stance comprises credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability (Lincoln and Guba, 1990). From my social constructionist stance the issue of internal validity – the question of how far the constructions of the researcher are grounded in the constructions of those being researched (Flick, 2009) – becomes one and the same thing as the construction of meaning is made between the social interaction of the participant and the researcher through conversation and dialogue during the interview process.

In accordance with Lincoln and Guba (1994) credibility has been strengthened by my making a conscious effort to establish confidence in the accuracy of interpretation. Attention has been paid to the authenticity relating to the analysis and interpretation of meanings and experiences as recounted by participants. The difference and variety of participant voices, their ethnicity and mother tongues has been taken into account to ensure that the data, as well the interpretation of findings from the data, are as authentic as possible. I have maintained practices that are honest, open, empathetic, sensitive, respectful and engaging – which have been identified as being important to trustworthiness and authenticity (Davies and Dodd, 2002).

The question of how much one can generalise from the research is also brought into question when the unit of analysis is one, i.e. the Coaching element of the Accelerating Difference Programme and whereby the context of the case study is paramount. Lincoln and Guba (1994) describe generalizations as assets of enduring value that are context free – by definition, a case study based on a purposive sample is inherently not context free as in the research study, the context is GSK. Therefore a more appropriate mechanism for assessing validity and rigour becomes transferability (Shenton, 2004). Transferability refers to the degree to which the findings from one study may be transferred to another context

(Bryman and Bell, 2015). If the results from this case study are able to be used to explain or illuminate happenings in another context, attention must be paid to comparing the two contexts for similarity. For example, any conclusions or theories developed as an output of this research may potentially be transferred to another multinational organisation. However, thick descriptions would need to be composed to provide sufficient information and evidence so that judgements can be made as to the appropriateness of the transferability of the research (Eisenhardt and Graebner, 2007) – for example one pharmaceutical organisation on the face of things may look very similar to another but on closer inspection the context, and therefore the transferability of findings, may not be appropriate. In order to increase the potential for transferability, rich descriptions of the context and the outcomes of the research study are included, optimizing as much as possible the transferability of the findings (Shenton, 2004).

Dependability has been maximised through the assiduous accounting of the processes used in each stage of the study and through the use of audit trails through the data (Skrtic, 1985). Accounts have been kept to ensure that checks can be made as to when interviews took place, how they were transcribed, if they were recorded (see Table 3.2) and that appropriate interview codes were applied to protect confidentiality and anonymity as promised in the ethical approach. Each interviewee was given a code name which was used in the typed up transcripts; the code names were kept in a file that was password protected so that only the researcher could access it.

Confirmability has been demonstrated through asking participants to read the transcripts to ensure accuracy and the documenting of any changes made so that the data are confirmed by participants, not just by the researcher. This has also been paid attention via the recursive cycling among the case data, emerging theory and existing literature (Eisenhardt and Graebner, 2007), as evidenced by the initial codes, then the identification of themes and the ultimate names of themes, such as the theme of identity, or amplification effect. In this way dependability and confirmability have been optimised increasing the usefulness and trustworthiness of the study (Skrtic, 1985).

3.7 Reflexivity

The issue of reflexivity is highly pertinent and apposite for this study. In order for the reader of this research study to understand the work it is imperative that my role as researcher be put in context as an 'insider researcher' (Unluer, 2012). My research has involved me researching people in the organisation that I work for – GSK; therefore I am an

insider researcher. I am not a line manager or a coach of the people who I have interviewed, although I have a facilitative interest in its success through my role in coaching.

To avoid issues of dependency, a third party, the SVP of Talent, Leadership and Organisation Development Centre of Excellence, invited the female leaders, coaches and line managers to participate in the research study (see Appendix Two for the invitation). She ensured that the participants were very clear that participation was entirely voluntary and that declining to take part, or taking part, would in no way impact their development, career or progression within the organisation. This was reiterated on the Participant Information Sheet (PIS) (see Appendix Eleven for the Female Leader PIS, and Appendix Twelve for the Steering Team Member and Coaches PIS). Additionally, it was stressed that the researcher's role in conducting this study was purely for personal development as part of her development plan and was not being conducted for GSK's purpose or benefit. This precaution was taken to ensure standards of good practice when doing research in one's own organisation (Butler, 2003).

Further steps were taken in the research design to ensure there was no dependency between participants and myself. As such, interviews with participants only happened after they had completed the programme and none of the participants, whether they were female leaders, coaches or Steering Team members, had any direct relationship with me, save being employees of GSK and being known by reputation. The invitation and the participant information sheet overtly reassures participants that participation is entirely voluntary and steps were taken to ensure that no inadvertent coercion took place (Butler, 2003).

Potential issues of validity due to my insider researcher status were examined and thought through with reference to relevant literature on this subject (Butler, 2003). I was aware of potential pitfalls of insider research including that my role, blended with personal involvement and proximity, could potentially challenge validity (Le Gallais, 2008). My role of insider researcher was to ensure that I retained objectivity but with an informed perspective on the complexities and specifics of terminology that an outside researcher could not possibly know. GSK is an extremely complex organisation operating in a highly regulated industry, pharmaceuticals, as well as in the consumer goods industry. GSK is notorious for acronyms and terminology that takes years for people to get to know and is

constantly changing. Therefore I viewed my insider status as being necessary to fully understand the in-depth nature of the experiences which the participants recalled.

My stance as a researcher is interpretivist which means I am not separate from the research but an integral part of it (Coghlan and Brannick, 2014) and as such the insider perspective may advance knowledge by providing a unique view of an organisation that traditional research would not uncover. I found that being able to speak the same insider language, understanding the organisational values, and recognising the formal and informal power structures was invaluable in conducting the research (Unluer, 2012). My experience of working in GSK for several years meant that I appreciated the significance of critical events that have occurred or are referred to, and I was able to act freely without attracting attention or suspicion, an important factor given the potentially personal nature of the interview questions I was asking (Harding, 2009).

My insider researcher status also meant that I could be reflexive within the study with relative ease – for example, when I needed to increase the number of participant interviews to ensure a broad source of data input, I was able to gain access and support for the interviews quickly and easily which facilitated the research process (Brannick and Coghlan, 2007; Dwyer and Buckle, 2009). This ensured continuity of the data collection within the research study and because the participants were colleagues within GSK, people were willing to give their time freely and to review their interview transcripts. However, I have tried to minimise the risk of any perceived coercion given my role in GSK, through the invitation to be a participant in the study coming from a neutral person and specifically stating that participation was entirely voluntary and would not impact their career in any way. Additionally, care was taken to explain this again at the beginning of all interviews, thereby taking appropriate precautions as much as possible and to ensure that people spoke freely and gave their honest view, including recounting negative experiences about the coaching process (Unluer, 2012). I was extremely vigilant in capturing accurately all that was said by the interviewees through recording the interviews and touch typing notes throughout to ensure I heard all that was said, and not just the positive things recounted about the experience of coaching.

Knowing the context of GSK and what was happening at an organisational and divisional level enabled me to understand and appreciate the nuances of some of the answers given in the interviews. During the time of the study, GSK undertook monumental organisational changes through a complex three-part deal with Novartis – a competitor pharmaceutical

organisation. The deal has made these businesses more evenly balanced in terms of sales across Pharma, Vaccines and Consumer Healthcare (restated sales after the transaction were split across these businesses by 59%, 16% and 25%, respectively). Combining GSK's Consumer Healthcare business with Novartis' over-the-counter business has created one of the world's largest 'over the counter' (OTC) consumer healthcare businesses. Acquiring Novartis' global vaccines business has significantly increased the size of the GSK vaccines portfolio and has positioned GSK as a leading global vaccines supplier (Rosenmayr-Templeton, 2015). Many female leaders in the AD programme were directly impacted by this deal. As an insider researcher I could appreciate the sensitivities that the deal brought with it – along with the opportunities for growth, there was also the synergies to be obtained and the cost saving targets were set extremely high. This caused additional stress and pressure in the organisational system and levels of ambiguity and uncertainty were at times palpable.

My insider researcher status ensured that I was particularly vigilant in my behaviour and messaging to participants as well as in my data collection and analyses. Specifically, this required paying attention to details that were all too familiar to me – I had to ensure I did not overlook certain routine behaviours or details that were part of everyday life within GSK (Butler, 2003). This drove an awareness within me and a shift in my identity – I was both a senior leader in GSK, an 'insider', and a doctoral student, a 'researcher'. Given my ontological frame of reference as social constructionism, I felt somewhat uncomfortable with the dualist notion that the term insider sets up – that you are either an insider or an outsider. So whilst a researcher's knowledge may be influenced by his or her position or experience (Mullings, 1999), being either an insider or an outsider researcher means having 'an appreciation for the fluidity and multilayered complexity of human experience' (Dwyer & Buckle, 2009, p.60).

The concept of 'the space between' is raised by Dwyer and Buckle (2009) as being the dwelling place for qualitative researchers who are objective in their research but who have an understanding and appreciation of the context and situation of the people whom they are studying (Dwyer and Buckle, 2009). For me, this concept best describes the place from which I conducted my research – with awareness of my need for distance from the participants, but while still allowing my tacit knowledge and deep understanding of the context to interpret the data collected. I have also taken care not to fall into some of the traps highlighted by Weber (2003) – those of narcissism where the focus of the study shifts

to the introspection of the researcher, away from the issue being studied. I have been watchful to ensure that I have not become self righteous in my research and have not denigrated other researchers who do not engage in reflexivity and, equally, I have steered away from nihilism of my own research (Weber, 2003). The separation from my role in GSK that the role of researcher is therefore an aspect of discipline required throughout this research study.

To stimulate my thinking within and outside of the coaching arena, bringing depth and breadth to my thinking on the research topic, I attended three Oxford Brookes Annual Coaching and Mentoring Research Conferences (January 2014, January 2015, January 2016), the Coaching at Work Annual Conference (July 2015, July 2016), The International Coach Federation Annual Conference (2014), the Association of Psychology in Business Conference (2015) and the Corporate Research Forum Conference in Vienna (2015).

3.8 Ethical and legal considerations

Ethical standards were an integral part of my research study – from inception through to the final writing up of this thesis. For me there are clear moral principles that have guided the research to ensure I have conducted this study in a responsible and morally defensible way (Patton, 2002). The study was approved by the University Ethics Committee. Permission to conduct the research study within GSK was also sought and obtained on behalf of the organisation.

I used the checklist of ethical issues published in Gray (2014) and adapted from Patton (2002). Key areas that were particularly pertinent were issues around privacy – all participants were given written and verbal reassurance that they could decline to be part of the study without fear of reprisal in any way and that they could withdraw at any time. Tailored Participant Information Sheets (PIS) were also provided for all categories of participants in the research. An example of a PIS form given to female leaders is provided in Appendix Eleven, and Steering Team members and Coaches in Appendix Twelve. All participants were given written and verbal confirmation of confidentiality within the study.

Three female leader participants left GSK during the research study – between the first interview and the second interview. With each participant they contacted me to let me know this and all three offered to do the second interview even though they were no longer employees of GSK. Each of the three interviews was conducted after they had left the organisation. I have maintained full confidentiality as agreed through the PIS and this

will be honoured in any future publication of this study. Support to individuals was offered should they have suffered any perceived effects from taking part in the study – none were requested. Overall I conducted my research with in-depth reflexivity and rigour and was constantly 'looking over my shoulder' (Yin, 2014) to ensure ethical behaviour and practice. Particular attention was paid to ethical issues raised in the literature around insider researcher status as it was not feasible, nor desirable, to have other people to interview the participants, nor to conduct the research in another organisation (Trowler, 2011).

3.9 Limitations of research methodology

Some limitations of the research methodology can be identified – including the decision made on case study boundaries, the selection of participants and the manner of data collection. The boundaries selected for the case study precluded more data input from other sources such as line managers. Whilst this would have been highly informative, the sheer volume of data to be analysed in a coherent and timely way proved to be impossible, given the constrictions of the study scope and timescale. Similarly the number of Coaches and Steering Team members interviewed had to be constrained for similar reasons, as additional semi-structured interviews, whilst giving a more comprehensive picture, would have been unmanageable in terms of volume of data to be analysed. The selection of which female leaders to include in the study could also be considered a potential limitation as including the first 15 respondents then precluded any way of ensuring a representative sample across nationalities, businesses or geographies. Instead it ensured a sample across participants from Cohort One, which was useful but could be seen as a lost opportunity to look deeper at the patterns from a geographic, cultural or business basis. Additionally, it may also have biased the sample towards participants who were positively disposed towards the intervention, as there were attendance requirements in place, participants who had opted out or who viewed the coaching in a negative were self selected out of the study.

Choosing only to study Cohort One could also be considered a limitation to the study – as this was the first cohort and various changes to the operating and management of the initiative were made following completion. Understanding in more detail the experience of the other aspects of the AD initiative, sponsorship and dialogues may have given even further insights into the experience of the combined coaching, as it would have brought in different sources and perspectives of data. Overall, whilst it is possible to identify

limitations of the study, attention has been paid to ensure coherence and congruence throughout the design, data collection and analyses and writing up of the research study.

3.10 Summary of methodology

In this chapter, the study has been situated within the ontological stance of social constructionist with an epistemological stance that is interpretivist. These world views necessitated that the research study be qualitative in nature – the belief that there are multiple realities and people construct their own version of knowledge and reality through discourse. An exploration of these perspectives was necessary to ensure that there was congruence between world view, the research subject matter and the research methodology. The research question concerns the experience of having group and individual coaching by female leaders in a large multinational organisation – therefore a case study methodology was selected as most appropriate. Thematic analysis as the data analysis methodology was selected as being the most appropriate – allowing exploration of themes to emerge through thorough analysis. The concept of insider researcher was discussed, along with the reflexivity and ethical considerations that the insider status confers. As in all research, issues of ethical considerations are of paramount importance and were examined in order to satisfy the required standards of both the University and the organisation, GSK.

Chapter Four: Findings: Experience of the female leaders being coached

The following three chapters contain the findings and discussion of the research study. Chapter 4 comprises the findings of the experience of the female leaders being coached. Chapter 5 comprises the findings identifying the experience of the process of simultaneous individual and group coaching. Chapter 6 comprises the findings regarding the combined coaching as a development mechanism for organisations. In presenting the findings of the study it seemed logical to begin with the perceived outcome of the coaching from the coachees' perspective, i.e. the actual experience of the female leaders being coached. This is followed by reporting on the process of coaching and specifically the experience of simultaneous individual and group coaching from the coachee and from the coach perspective. Finally, moving to a more systemic perspective and looking at the organisational experience of the two types of coaching as a development mechanism for the organisation – from the coachee, coach and Steering Team member perspectives. Each chapter follows the format of identifying the key themes and evidential data to support these, followed by a summary and discussion of the findings in relation to the extant literature. Reference is made to the literature in this findings chapter to ground and situate the findings at a granular level. This then allows the a more comprehensive exploration of the findings in relation to the extant literature in the more conceptual Discussion and Conclusions chapters.

4.1 Overall summary of the key themes

The summary of key themes showing the inter-relationships is presented diagrammatically in Figure 4.1 below.

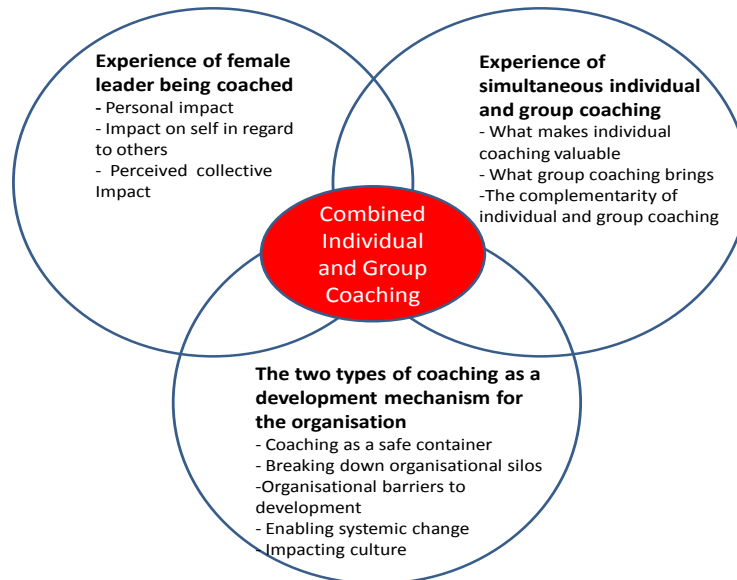


Figure 4.1: Summary of key themes showing the inter-relationships between the three findings chapters

The summary of the key themes identified within the interviews is presented in Table 4.1 in order to give an overview of the findings. This enables a complete perspective to be held when delving into the individual themes.

Perspective	Theme	Sub-theme
Experience of female leader being coached	4.1 Personal impact	4.1.1 Self-awareness
		4.1.2 Self-confidence
		4.1.3 Identity
		4.1.4 Self-leadership
	4.2 Impact on self in regard to others	4.2.1 Leadership style
		4.2.2 Relationship to Line Manager
		4.2.3 Relationship to conflict
		4.2.4 Relationship to power
		4.2.5 Relationship to personal life
	4.3 Collective impact	4.3.1 'Feeling I am not alone'

		4.3.2 Feeling connected to the group
		4.3.3 Relationship to the broader system of GSK and beyond – reflections on gender
		4.3.4 Giving back
Experience of simultaneous individual and group coaching	5.1 What stands out in individual coaching	5.1.1 Reflections and mirrors
		5.1.2 Relationship with Coach
		5.1.3 Individual is tailored and varied
	5.2 What Group Coaching brings	5.2.1 'Going to places I wouldn't go on my own'
		5.2.2 Getting feedback
		5.2.3 Group topics were the same but depth is perceived as variable
	5.3 The power of the interplay between group and individual coaching	5.3.1 Using the group topics to feed individual coaching
		5.3.2 From group to individual – deepening and reflecting
		5.3.3 Backwards and forwards and in parallel
		5.3.4 Synergistic effects
Combined Coaching as a development mechanism for organisations	6.1 Coaching as a safe container, a safe space	6.1.1 Safe space
	6.2 Breaking down organisational silos	6.2.1 Cross-functional, cross-cultural and cross-geographical working
	6.3 Organisational factors	6.3.1 Line Managers
		6.3.2 The importance of the micro-climate
	6.4 Enabling systemic change	6.4.1 'The fish and the pond'
		6.4.2 Engendering loyalty

Table 4.1 Summary of the perspectives, key themes and sub-themes detailed in the three findings chapters

This section examines the experience of the female leaders being coached as part of the AD initiative, on both an individual and group basis. The thematic analyses of the interviews identified three thematic constructs within this category: the personal impact of the coaching; the impact of the collective experience; and the wider systemic impact on participants regarding the wider system in which they live.

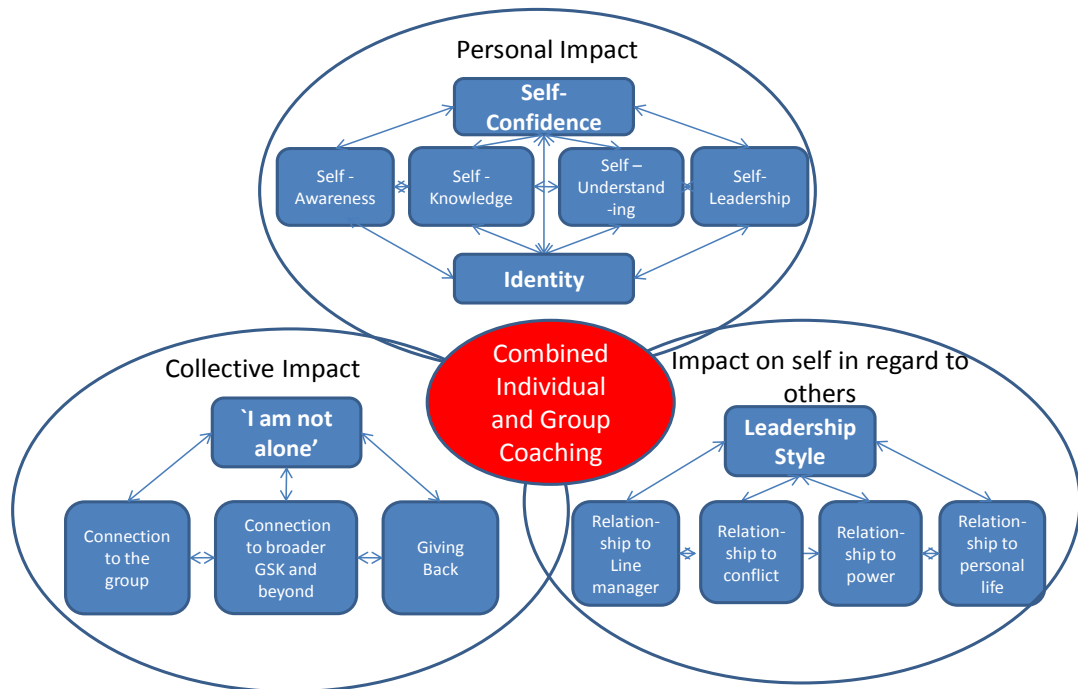


Figure 4.2 Summary findings of the experience of the female leaders being coached

Prior to the start of the AD initiative, participants had been nominated to take part by their line manager and HRBL and had received an invitation from the President of their business to join the initiative. Additionally, they had been invited to attend a launch webinar where the rationale and context for the initiative had been explained and participants were given the opportunity to ask questions. Line managers and female leaders attended the launch webinar together and two were conducted to address the issue of appropriate time zones. A recording was made of the launch webinar and made available online for anyone who had not been able to attend. Despite these attempts to describe and introduce the initiative to the participants, many reported feeling uncertain at the beginning of the coaching as to what the whole initiative was all about and not feeling well prepared. When asked about their feelings at the start of the coaching as to what they were embarking

upon, Petra stated that she started the programme and initially 'sort of wondered what is it about and why am I here?' and Pauline said:

'when you start you don't really know what is going to happen, it is not like a normal process like I am going on a training course and I know what the outcome is going to be – it is a journey and curiously you don't want to know what it would look like, the journey is about what you make of it.'

Many participants had questions about the process and some admitted to being slightly sceptical, as Pam put it 'I has some suspicions that it will be a 'power to the women' kind of thing and I was slightly sceptical'. This demonstrated her rejection of taking part in anything that could potentially be perceived as a form of positive discrimination. Other women also rejected the idea of being part of any development activity that was considered to be about positively discriminating and positioning women on the basis of their gender alone, and thereby being gender binary. This negative perception of women-only programmes was also encountered by De-Valle (2014) in her interpretive phenomenological analysis study of female executives and the use of mentoring and coaching.

4.2 Personal impact

Participants constructed their reports of their experience of coaching from a perspective of being impacted personally by the coaching, in some cases to a significant extent, which they attributed to being a part of AD. Their constructions of the impact of the experience of coaching revealed how they believed elements of themselves had been affected 'from the inside out':

'Developing from inside out ... confidence and self-esteem, presence power and impact then hand over to navigation of system and represent ourselves in to networks and systems' ... actually we empower ourselves from within.' (Chris)

4.2.1 Self-awareness

The majority of female leaders, as well as coaches, raised self-awareness as something that had changed for them during AD. Overall, 12 participants reported experiencing an increase in their self-awareness which they ascribed to the coaching and their comments were quite broad in nature, ranging from being more conscious of what they were thinking about on a day-to-day level, to questioning their purpose in life.

Self-awareness is discussed in the literature as a key attribute for coaches and frequently as an outcome for coachees (Bluckert, 2005; Stokes and Jolly, 2010; Gatling et al., 2013). Self knowledge is less frequently reported although in their historical review of the competencies required by executive coaches, Maltbia et al. (2014) cite self knowledge as the number one competency. Self knowledge was considered as akin to self-awareness by participants and was mentioned as simply 'getting to know myself more' (Phoebe). When talking about self-awareness, Peggy reports her learning about herself, specifically with reference to her emotions:

'I learned how I like to handle things – e.g. conflict and I learned about emotions, I learned to accept that is me and I am a people feeler and be aware and what it is I am feeling and it may not be the same for them.'

Paula also constructs her meaning of awareness from self knowledge: 'the other big thing is self-awareness, I know myself better than when I started' (Paula). Pippa related her self-knowledge and awareness to a very practical example – that of her increased awareness of her habitual way of being at conferences, and how she was able to change that:

'I take a more observing role and I didn't want to do this for this conference, I needed to step up a bit I talked with my coach about going through one of those big conferences mentally and [...] I was able to get more out of that conference.'
(Pippa)

This response chimed with the assertion from Perls, Hefferline and Goodman (1951) that self-awareness is the key to people's 'response-ability' rising beyond the support of the environment to that of one's inner being. Indeed, this relation to one's inner being was reported by participants as being an increase in being conscious of themselves and attributed to the initiative. As Patience reported 'having done AD it opened my awareness, it unlocked it, it opened a new frontier for me, I rediscovered myself'. The coaches spoke of their experiences in raising the self-awareness level in their coaches, 'developing from inside out' (Chris). Many participants cited self-reflection as a consequence of coaching and this in turn prompted increases in self-awareness:

'I used coaching for the process of thinking what is my purpose of being on earth....and I realised that being in a big company and being director or in the future a VP or whatever it is not the endpoint – it is an enabler of why I am here.'
(Prunella)

This realisation demonstrates the depth of the coaching that Prunella was experiencing – she was able to work at a deep level on inner awareness, and felt able to introspect with the support of her coach. Introspection and self-awareness appear to go hand in hand and are cited in a positive manner – and the resultant increase in awareness is positive and welcomed as part of growing and developing. For most of the participants, the concept of self-awareness was reported as the deepening of their understanding of themselves, who they are, their self concept and their awareness of their impact on others. This strengthens and adds weight to the findings of Wales’ (2003) phenomenological study of a UK bank and the effects of a coaching programme; although this study appears to include an additional inner focused dimension – introspection. The Wales’ (2003) study suggests that the concept of self-awareness comprises four areas: ‘The ability to understand one’s past and learn from it, openness to one’s own and others’ feelings, the ability to reflect on situations before moving to action and the ability to make appropriate choices’ (Wales, 2003).

4.2.2 Self-confidence

Eleven of the female leaders reported that increasing their self-confidence was one of their coaching objectives. The general term of self-confidence appeared to be used interchangeably with the term self-esteem, in that distinction between the outward shows of confidence was not distinguished from the inner perspective of esteem. In the group coaching, the definitions shared with the participants used in the AD programme are set out in Table 4.2:

Self Confidence	The amount of confidence we have in our own judgement or discernment. It revolves around how much we trust ourselves as we interact with the world around us. Our experience of inner confidence can be sensed by others who are working with us.
Self Esteem	The overall evaluation of one’s worth. Sometimes described as self regard. It is the opinions we hold about ourselves. These are not static and we can change them. They may be made up of many differing and specific ‘Beliefs’. When we describe someone as having high self esteem we see that this acts as a buffer between the individual and the knocks and shocks of life. People with high self esteem are more likely to have ‘bounce back-ability’. Without knowing the specifics we can often sense when a person has low self esteem.
Self Belief	Essentially our belief in ourselves to DO things successfully. The higher our self belief the more likely we are to move into unfamiliar territory, experiment and learn. Each belief can of course be very specific. Positive self beliefs are more likely to create an overall sense of high self esteem.

Table 4.2 Definitions used in the AD initiative for self-confidence, self-esteem and self-belief

These distinctions were not referenced by the female participants; instead the most frequently used term was self-confidence which tended to be used in a general fashion to encompass various elements of self concepts and growth. As Patricia proclaims, 'definitely self-confidence is a huge outcome coming from this programme, I had a lot of self limiting thoughts about myself' (Patricia). Padma shares the belief that the coaching she received contributed positively to her increased confidence, she states:

'My coach helped me to improve my confidence level and my emotional level and my emotional ability, I was very emotional I was sensitive about minor issues and not that confident and this programme helped me to learn a lot.'

The references to self-confidence were consistently positive in tone, and were regarded by all participants who raised it as being an invaluable outcome, as Paula stated: 'Self-confidence – another big achievement, knowing that I can do whatever I want to do – the key thing is to know what I really want, that part is key.' Whilst the participants tended to use the term confidence when they referred to how they feel about themselves, in the literature this is more commonly referred to as self-esteem (Dinos and Palmer, 2015; Keller et al., 2015). The concept of self-esteem is an important psychological construct and the literature is extensive regarding its multi-faceted nature although few studies discuss how coaching can actively support its development (Bachkirova, 2013). When thinking about how she had changed as a result of AD, Pauline describes her self-esteem, however she refers to it as confidence stating:

' I have had more confidence, I feel more in control of my options and things – what is ok and what is not ok. Definitely you get to a point where you feel good ... content, happy in terms of options... yeah really good.'

In terms of support on confidence, Peggy talks about a practical experience within a group coaching session that supported her when she felt she was lacking confidence in how to approach her new job.

'I was completely lacking in confidence and I was managing a team and I was joining the leadership team, the feedback I told the group, I don't see why they should respect me and see me as an equal, [.....] and it made me confident of my positives and own them – I remember standing on my book.'

The concepts of self-awareness and self-confidence are reported often interchangeably rather than being considered distinct and separate. Phoebe conflates them when she talks

about growing her awareness and self knowledge and then confidence following almost as a consequence: ' One thing I learnt about myself I appear calm, composed but very firm – I have always had doubts about being firm – it has reaffirmed me about being calm – it builds confidence'. This was taken through to action by Phoebe – she talked about gaining awareness, leading to increased confidence and then about relating that into action: 'it is not just confidence and awareness but now that this is what I know what I do with it – this is the most powerful part of all this process – what do you do with it.' (Phoebe). This interchangeable use of terminology concerning the areas of confidence, esteem and self-belief by participants, represents a conflating of issues that academics and the extant literature prise apart (Vinnicombe et al., 2013). The finding that the female participants used coaching to support their development of self-confidence takes to another level the previous research by De-Valle (2014) and Worth (2012) and reinforces previous work by Vinnicombe et al. (2013).

4.2.3 Identity

For some participants, the inward reflection appeared to progress to a deeper level than awareness and self knowledge and concerned identity, i.e. who they were in the world and how they conceive of themselves within the world (Butcher, 2012). What is interesting is that this could be construed as deep reflective work of existential coaching (Van Deurzen, 2012), which would have been considered outside the realm of what constituted the level of capability given the relative experience and professional capability of the coaches. However, these constructs underpinning a sense of identity were discussed by many participants – even though the term identity itself may have been rejected, as Prunella states:

'We discussed purpose in life, not so much identity per se, but I think that becomes apparent as you go through it even if you don't deliberately discuss it so you can't avoid it – it comes out in the discussions and how we show up in work every day.'

The sense of awareness, of self knowledge and of inner reflection led some participants to reveal they had a new sense of identity as to who they really were. For Pam, there is a progression that she saw in herself from the coaching – going from awareness of what she was doing, through why she was doing it, to identity:

'Building awareness of first what you are doing and exploring why you are doing it and this is serving you or not and then trying to change to serve yourself and stay

yourself was one of the greatest gifts from AD – being myself while improving myself.'

Again, the reflection on the progression and developmental growth was observed by the participants with obvious delight and gratitude. The coaches identified that shifts in identity had taken place within some of the coachees. As Cathy observed:

'I think some strength, confidence in their belief actually in that they were and still are talented, capable senior leaders and powerful as well, when they started the programme they took for granted their ability and maybe didn't want to or know how to promote themselves in a helpful, positive way.'

The findings regarding identity reinforce aspects of the 'imposter syndrome' in female leaders (Vachon, 2014) whereby women tend to undervalue themselves and feel fraudulent in holding senior positions. The findings suggest that as the women progressed through the coaching initiative they developed self appreciation and seemed to grow into their own view of themselves, that the coaching helped them to overcome their feelings of being 'imposters' and supported the development of their own positive identity.

4.2.4 Self-leadership

As the self-awareness, self knowledge and confidence and sometimes identity grew, some participants and coaches observed that what they saw happening was a growing sense of self-leadership:

'There is something about self-leadership and realising actually they have a more significant part in how they are viewed and seen and how they represent themselves in the system. Discovering how to have confidence, how to have impact, how to use power, have influence, how to bring a signature and perspective on their leadership, how to challenge and important things like this.'
(Chris)

This was expressed in different ways – one participant stated it 'helped me to understand me, 100%' (Pauline). She goes on to explain 'I think it helped me understand why I was doing things and it adds to the confidence what it means for me and why is it important?' The often unconscious setting of personal expectations was a common thread running through the interviews. Participants recognised that as their self knowledge deepened they were able to recognise the often unrealistic expectations that they had put upon

themselves. Their ability to manage their approach to their expectations appeared to be ongoing work and handled with acceptance and compassion, as cited by Pam:

'We had briefly touched on procrastination and through the coaching we identified that I hold very high expectations for myself and how to address that and how to be realistic about that, how to show some self compassion as well.'

The thematic analyses of the interviews reveals that many aspects reported on coaching regarding impact on self are interconnected, and this is apparent in the way terms and references are used interchangeably but collectively they point to the strength of the impact received through coaching. Their experiences of coaching are universally reported as being positive and constructive. The themes of self-awareness, self-confidence, self-esteem and identity all followed through from the literature review and built on the existing body of knowledge that is well documented as being areas impacted through coaching, and particularly coaching of women. See 4.3 Connections between aspects of self and coaching.

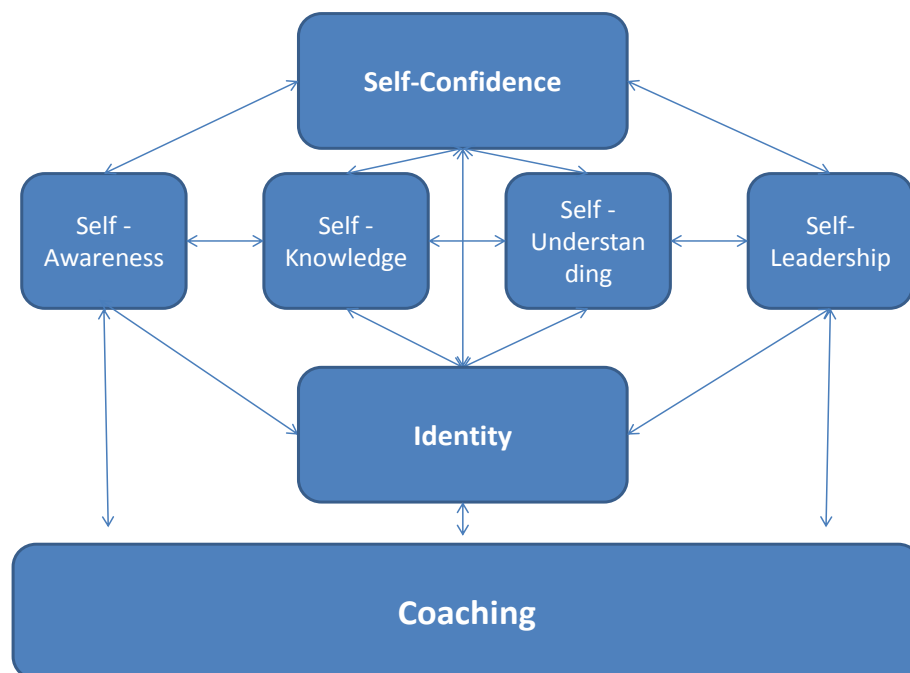


Figure 4.3 Connections between aspects of self and coaching

4.3 Impact on self in regard to others

Another theme identified was the impact of coaching with regard to how participants relate to others in their lives – the changes in themselves had manifested in changes to the way that they related to other people. This played out in many aspects of their lives – in the way they operate at work in terms of leadership style and relationship to their teams and their line managers, and also more broadly in their personal lives. The analyses found that how they perceived themselves and others in relation to power and conflict were of particular frequency and resonance as to be identified as sub-themes in their own right.

4.3.1 Leadership style

From the analyses it was clear that their interpretation of the impact of having coaching was directly concerned with how they were thinking and behaving as leaders. Some participants reported becoming more conscious and aware of their leadership style and were able to make choices about how they approached tasks or goals as a result. The depth and extent to which this happened varied – including the quite pragmatic 'being thoughtful about the team I was building' (Peta) to others that perceived the impact at a greater level. As reported by Phoebe:

'My leadership style was impacted to a very, very large extent because just understanding what my capabilities are, how far I can go, was very useful in influencing how I work with them, I was able to let people know and understand me in a new and deeper way and that improved my relationships enormously.'

This was echoed by Peggy: 'I think for me, I grew in confidence, I was able to manage them better I could reflect on how I interacted with them and how I wanted to interact with them so they saw a better manager.' (Peggy). These findings concur with the extant literature on coaching being effective in supporting the development of leaders' capability (MacKie, 2014; Passmore, 2015b). Additionally, the findings from the analyses demonstrate that in the volatile and often highly pressurised context in which they were operating, coaching was a great support to them. Many participants from Consumer Healthcare had the integration of Novartis as a large-scale goal during the time of the research study. One leader talks about how her awareness and confidence had helped her in being intentional in her leadership style:

'I understood what sort of impact I had to make and I have been consciously choosing my approach, I made decisions on how I would lead the team, I made

choices as to what I would do and not do. It was not a mask; I was choosing how to lead the team consciously in order to achieve the objectives.’ (Patricia)

These findings reinforce and build on research by Grant (2014) demonstrating the value of coaching as a support to leaders during times of organisational change. Additionally, they add weight to the findings of Mavin et al. (2014) in that understanding one’s own leadership style is imperative for women to progress to senior executive levels in organisations.

4.3.2 Relationship to line manager

Another theme identified was the relationship of the participant with their line manager, i.e. the relationship of the coachee as being a direct report of their line manager. For clarity, the relationship under examination here is that of direct report to manager, as distinct from line manager as coach. In AD, no line manager acted as an individual or group coach to their direct reports who were participants in the initiative. The importance of the role of the line manager in the context of coaching, as a support or as a customer of the outcome of the coaching between the client and coach, has not been reported on widely in the literature, but has been mentioned by Hunt and Weintraub (2007), where it is identified as being ‘multifaceted’. The nature of the existing coachee and line manager relationship was brought under the spotlight during AD and some people identified less than ideal relationships, others were very satisfied with their relationships and for some, the relationships changed as a result of the AD initiative. In some cases the female leaders expressed joy and delight in receiving support and acknowledgement from their line managers as they grew and progressed during AD:

‘When you are changing, your relationship changes - he was also playing back to me he was seeing better clarity on the future I wanted and he has seen better stronger self-confidence from me, he was seeing I was clearly stronger and more self-confident. Which was brilliant!’ (Patricia)

One leader, Pauline, reported having conversations with her line manager where he reflected on his part of the relationship:

‘There were some reflections from him about his part in this – it was a more mature relationship than we had had before. My confidence has grown and I have developed a more of a coaching approach with my leader.’

It appeared that the texture and depth of the relationship between coachee and line manager was able to be developed as a consequence of the growth experienced by the coachees. In some instances, the coachees reported growing and changing as a result of the coaching which impacted their relationship with their line manager negatively. Peggy identified her personal feelings related to her line manager and his lack of engagement and how she ended up coaching him:

' I could not respect him and was feeling frustrated, I was doing his job I saw a way out to move on – it did help. I don't think he was really that engaged he didn't know what it was I did keep on reminding him in our one-to-ones. I did end up coaching him [...] we connected in a different way he saw me as a bit of a counsel.'

For Peta, as she progressed through AD, her awareness and perspective on the relationship changed as she had changed so she was able to observe:

'I had grown and I saw how I had been restrained in the relationship I was taking on a lot of work thought I would get recognition for it – it came as a realisation that I need to do this for me I out grew my relationship with my manager.'

Overall, it was clear from the findings that the calibre and quality of the relationship between line manager and coachee had a significant impact on creating the micro-climate in which the female leader operated. This micro-climate ranged from being fully supportive to highly dismissive and significantly influenced the reported quality of the coaching experience and the career outcomes perceived by the female leaders.

4.3.3 Relationship to conflict

Their relationship to conflict was expressed by many female leaders as an area of interest with some reporting feeling comfortable with conflict, others reporting it as an area of concern and learning. Through having one of the group coaching sessions dedicated to it, all participants experienced it as a topic, even if it had not been identified as an area on which they wanted to work during their individual coaching sessions. This was an area that some leaders felt at ease with:

'Managing conflict, I felt very comfortable with that [...] how to manage through that and how to maintain your self-belief and ethics with all that going on around you I think I was able to support the group in giving some examples.' (Petra)

The same sentiment was expressed by Peta and she recognised that she learned from the coaching conversation too:

'This was about what different people see as conflict, the parent child relationship. I think it helped me think that other people saw as a conflict that I don't [...] I learnt a bit more about because it had built on the self-confidence and the power situation how to position yourself going into the conflict so I go in and have more ability to cope and not to get so emotionally involved.'

Some female leaders approached this area from a highly pragmatic standpoint, relating it to current issues that they were facing, as Peggy did: 'I had to manage conflict between two people. Actually sitting down and planning it [...] it went really well [...] it went really well – the planning and model, the I'm OK You're OK model really helped.' (Peggy). These findings, that coaching appeared to support the female leaders' ability to handle conflict in a more effective manner, serve to strengthen and take forward the findings of Brinkert (2016), Jones and Brinkert (2007) and Noble (2012). They report on the use of specific coaching models to address conflict and resolution approaches. Another participant related conflict to negotiation and reported finding the session and other resources helpful as 'it is about digging deep and uncovering mutually acceptable solutions, finding the needs for each of those parties.' (Pricilla) There was also recognition from a number of participants that conflict was something that they had been avoiding – that they held beliefs about conflict being negative and hence it needed to be avoided: 'I was trying to avoid it. I would wait for things – I avoided giving feedback when it was small things, I would wait until it was bigger until it was a big thing and call it a conflict'. (Pam)

However, through the session and subsequent reflections, some of their existing beliefs around conflict were challenged and changed and they are adapting their behaviour as well. As Patricia stated:

'First of all the conflict can be enriching for a relationship – I had viewed it as damaging for a relationship, this was eye-opening that it can be good. This was new to me, and I do know how to do this and now I am approaching conflict as a positive end not just to finishing it.'

These realisations, that came from peers during the group coaching, update and take forward the findings from Damon (1984) and Foot and Howe (1998) who found that

learning from peers, specifically on conflict, can be compelling because they speak on levels which can easily be understood by one another.

4.3.4 Relationship to power

Another compelling theme identified in the analyses was that of the female leaders' relationship to power as it provided some interesting responses from a variety of perspectives. Concepts raised relating to power ranged from the very practical and tangible – how to use dress to convey power, to the conceptual – power with as opposed to power over others. The importance of power, how it is conveyed and the differing attitudes to power provided a breadth of perspective to this component of the research. Coaching has been used to support executives in analysing power relations and to assess complex systems as reported by Western (2012) in his Network Coach Discourse (Western, 2012). Additionally, for female leaders specifically, it is an area that has been included in coaching as it is a key determinant in leadership success (de Vries et al., 2016).

In discussing different types of power, one person related the concept of referent power to where power comes from – and challenged the use of dress as a source of power when it is not an option, as in a manufacturing unit: 'One girl would always have a sharp suit on and I was sharing the opposite you have to have your hair tied back under a hat and have to form a relationship when they can only see a bit of you.' (Peta) Some female leaders related the concept of power to the concept of femininity and to being authentic:

'Power is not necessarily hierarchy and linking power and self-confidence. I thought about female energy power in the past, I dressed in suits and hid my femininity and then I thought why, what is wrong with femininity what is wrong with being female and not trying to hide it?' (Patience)

For some female leaders there was a rejection of the concept of power – they reported that they had an almost a visceral reaction to the use of the term power, as Pam describes: 'For some reason I took it negatively that I didn't want the power, just the word itself why would I want that the word itself, why would I want that this?' This reaction was shared initially by Patricia, however she reports a shift in her perspective of what power means to her following the coaching sessions:

'Power over or power through someone, that was quite a big insight for me, power is not a female word and I would not, before this like to be perceived as powerful,

while now I understand power is about strength, confidence, convictions, visions and working through people.'

This move towards accepting power as a positive force, that it was constructive and was important was an insight derived from the coaching. For Patience, there was a realisation that she had perhaps been giving away her power and that she did have a choice about how she could use her power, if she chose to do so. She shifted in her thinking to reveal a self-determination about her power in relation to her situation:

'I realised I can use my power - he offered me a job at a senior level and I said no, I used my power in that way.'

The female leaders appeared to be describing a broadening of the concept of power – taking it from something that had a potentially negative connotation, to a more positive, constructive and inclusive interpretation. The coaches also reported being surprised by some leaders' reaction to the topic of power:

'People said 'I don't even relate to the word power I don't even use the word my work speaks for me.' People met their unconscious bias in a conscious way and were challenged to review what it might mean to have power within and what it might mean for them as a leader.' (Chris)

This concept of power within themselves and as a leader reinforces the findings of Mavin et al. (2014) in their theme 'Bravery counts' (p.10). The theme refers to the risk that is associated with women behaving in a way that challenges organisational stereotypes, specifically concerning organisational politics (Mavin et al., 2014). The focus of this finding was the positive broadening of the understanding of power and the recognition that it is a positive support that female leaders can use in an authentic way to increase their voice and influence as leaders within the organisation, building on Heath et al. (2014). This theme brought into focus the multi-faceted nature of being a female leader within an organisation and the gendered stereotypes that were recounted when discussing careers and progression.

4.3.5 Relationship to personal life

The participants described how the experience of coaching as part of AD had made them reflect on the overall balance in their lives regarding work and life outside of work, particularly in relation to their responsibilities regarding family. Some started with work issues, before going broader as Paloma described: 'First of all it was all about work and

then we linked it to things outside of work – it wasn't just on work, it went outside those boundaries.' Some were explicit about the impact that life changes had and how this was addressed: 'I remember when it started I didn't have a child, I was newly married and I was facing issues and they supported me, work life management, we really worked on work life management.' (Padma)

Some reported the inclusive nature of the discussions from the perspective of awareness and recognising that balance was an issue to work on, other times it was acknowledging that the coaching was helpful to look at beliefs that may influence how to manage the inherent practicalities in life. Pauline states:

'How I balance my work and with two young boys, my husband is on shift, it is very draining to try and do commitments to a challenging job. There was some good reflection on how you handle that and some limiting beliefs on how to handle those things.'

Later Pauline talked more holistically about her life acknowledging the integrated nature of her coaching conversations stating:

'We talked a lot about home and children and other challenges that affect your balance and energy and I was having quite a few tough things happening – we talked about them and that was brilliant – they are not separate.' (Pauline)

For Patricia, it was the opportunity to look longitudinally: 'what do I want for myself from my life and my work from me, basically and what do I want to say about myself in 25 years from now?'

The discussions of family responsibilities and issues such as returning to work following maternity during coaching sessions can be seen as a way of 'normalizing' women's experiences, and as such supporting their development as leaders (Mavin et al., 2014, p. 8). The concept of work life balance was also talked about as work life integration (Brough and O'Driscoll, 2015) and considered in relation to how women relate to their careers and work and integrate this with their familial responsibilities. The data strengthens their view that coaching enabled the exploration of possibilities and generally resulted in insights, more open perspectives being considered and more constructive dialogues being undertaken towards the integration of work and life (Brough and O'Driscoll, 2015). The interconnectedness of impact on self in relationship to others is depicted in Figure 4.4.

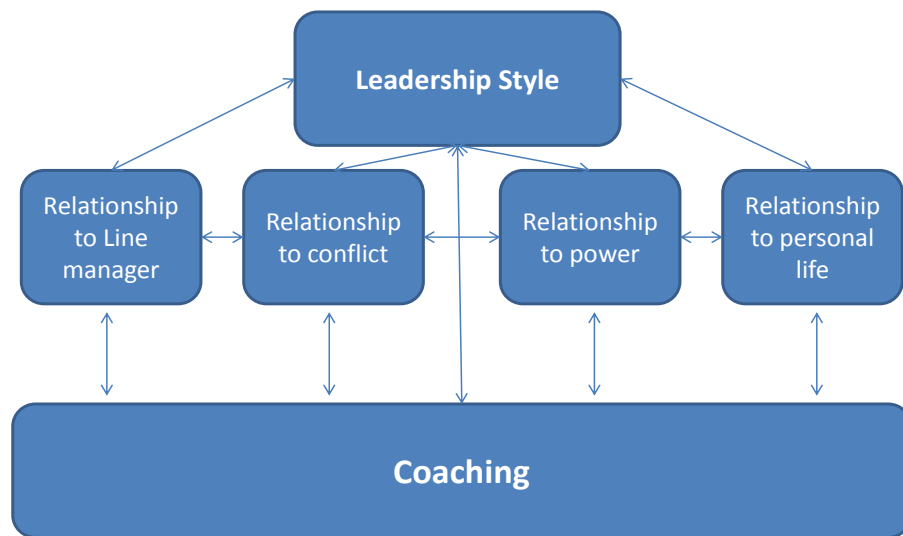


Figure 4.4: The interconnectedness of the impact on self in relationship to others

4.4 Collective impact

A key aspect of the interviews was the references made to the concept of collective impact as a result of AD. The participants talked about subjects and issues in a way that described the collective impact, in addition to the individual or personal impact of the initiative. These covered a range of areas from feelings of connectedness to each other, to their broader relationship to GSK and even to their feelings and belonging to their gender.

4.4.1 'Feeling I am not alone'

This 'in vivo' code was raised by over half of the participants as a key insight that being part of AD gave them the realisation of 'feeling that I am not alone'. Many spoke about this realisation in relation to their feelings and thoughts as a female leader: 'it was not just me, I realised I was not alone' (Paula). This feeling of connectedness with others was far broader than the feeling of connectedness to the group – it was reported as feeling connected to others – specifically others with a similar way of looking at the world. The strength of this theme came through from many interviews – and particularly from those who were working in male dominated parts of the business.

Another aspect of this realisation of not being alone was the connection it brought with other women. As Phoebe remarked:

'I took away I am not alone, some of the challenge you may face as being a woman , parents, kids and family I am not alone there are women out there who are going through the same thing.'

This feeling of communal understanding and appreciation of what life is like for the female leaders was often repeated: 'It made me feel I wasn't alone, the stories being told other people had been in similar situations, you sometimes think this is just me that this happens to' (Paloma). This realisation that situations and feelings that each individual woman may have been experiencing were, in fact, common to other women but they hadn't known this was reported frequently and with what appeared to be relief: 'Understanding other women have exactly the same was extremely liberating – I am not the only one, we all have the same fears, we are scared we can accept it and deal with it.' (Patricia)

For Pam it was the act of being able to share with other women her situation and in so doing and hearing other women tell their stories, she recognised the collective nature of their experience. This was beneficial as, in her eyes, it normalised her experience and made it more manageable:

'What was eye opening was to see how many things we have in common across functions and regions etc. Some things that you thought no one else was facing and then you talk to ten people and you see everyone has faced it at sometime in your life so it makes it feel much more manageable.' (Pam)

This theme of feeling I am not alone builds further on the concept of 'sisterhood' originally identified by Moss-Kanter (1977) and built upon more recently by Mavin et al. (2014). The findings from this research identify quite distinctly the concept of connectedness brought about by the group coaching which may be situated at the intersection of the literature on group coaching of Kets de Vries (2014) or Florent-Treacy (2009) for example, and coaching female leaders, for example Skinner (2014). While each brings insights from their specific areas of focus, this aspect of feeling I am not alone and the relationship to group coaching, appears to be a gap in the extant literature.

4.4.2 Feeling connected to the group

Some leaders felt that they had been able to develop a connection to their colleagues with whom they had group coaching which they deemed to be positive and helpful: 'the connection with the individuals that were similar to me and different, the connections and the learnings were valuable.' (Priscilla). They reported that the relationships they had built through the group coaching sessions had then transferred into their ways of relating to each other outside of the AD context, back in their day jobs:

'The network that we have now, the relationship is completely different it doesn't mean we will not be tough one to another – one of the girls is in quality and even the discussion is at a different level, this is my position but I will listen to your positions.'(Paula)

The coaches also reported on the connections that they had witnessed forming in the groups between members: 'in the group they challenged each other and supported one another and outside of the group they were a resource for one another' (Cathy). The differences that individuals brought to the groups were also valued and were felt to contribute to building the sense of connection between team members:

'We had 3 different nationalities, 3 different locations, different cultures and ways of working and we all learnt from each other [...]we have a special bond, it is quite reassuring in a quiet way – it is uplifting.' (Peta)

However, not all participants felt that they connected with their groups – one leader, Patience, felt she connected with her individual coach and group coach but not with the group or the broader AD group:

'The biggest thing I got was self-awareness, how psychology is important, meditation, connection with my coach and my group coach, but I didn't get the chemistry within my group or the broader AD team – it didn't come through other people.'

This negative case may have been replicated more broadly through AD, and the female leaders who felt they were not getting a lot out of the group coaching may have opted out by simply not showing up for the coaching sessions, and therefore excluding themselves from the study. Due to the limitations identified of the study in the selection of participants, it is not possible to gauge the extent of the negative cases.

4.4.3 Relationship to the broader system of GSK and beyond – reflections on gender

Many women spoke about how their experience had prompted them to reflect more broadly on the role of gender in the system in which they operate – that of GSK and in society as a whole. For Pricilla, she recognised that within GSK the issue of gender was apparent:

‘My perception is we don’t have that many women in leadership teams – they are very male – I would want that to change. For it to be seen as really serious there should be more women at the top.’

This type of reflection was a common theme expressed by the female leaders and relates to the meso (House et al., 1995) or organisational level of understanding. The construction of this theme at this level reinforces the concept identified by Mavin et al. (2014) who found that inclusion of the meso, along with the micro and macro level, was a requirement to understand women’s career development. The macro level of context is important for Patricia who recognised the challenge as being much broader:

‘I think that it showed to me the magnitude of the challenge we have actually - the role of the women in society. [...] I also have a daughter and thinking about her in all of this – I don’t want her to face the same challenges and she has, if not me, if not now, when?’

The experience of having coaching through the AD programme is reported by some participants to have had a broadening impact on their consciousness causing them to want to extend their thinking and efforts to support other women in society. This strengthens and reinforces the findings of De-Valle (2014) and Worth (2013) that the impact of coaching prompted more macro and broad ranging desire to support other women in society. From a coach’s perspective, the coaching appears to have tapped into the Network Coach Discourse (Western, 2012) in terms of becoming more connected and aware of the systemic impact of the initiative and the power of the collective group of coaches.

4.4.4 Giving back

One of the surprising consequences that participants reported was a desire to ‘give back’ to others in some form following their involvement in AD. For some it manifested in them embarking on training to develop their coaching capabilities – and for others it was more externally focused. As Peta states, she decided to become a JPC within GSK: ‘the first thing I

did was register on JPC to be trained as a coach – so I have coached some people the skills I got there, I use them with my team, my peers, my friends, my sister.’ This was echoed by Paula: ‘I am now coaching two people and they are making great progress. Outside of GSK I am participating in a forum in a university; it opened my eyes to other things happening in the world.’

This was also reinforced by Petra who also stated that the nature of her support for others had changed, in that she felt more able to discuss all aspects of her career:

‘In sharing my story some of the women in the room said thank you afterwards – we don’t often share the challenges and the issues I have had to face in my career – the balancing , the good and the bad.’

Many women also reported taking elements of the initiative that they had experienced and running development sessions for women in the site where they work. Paula expresses how it prompted her to go beyond her GSK boundaries:

‘It was so powerful for myself, I am more involved in the development of young women I have participated with other companies in [my country] with women to talk and now there is a seminar in the US and I am sharing what I learned.’

This finding extends those of De-Valle (2014) who found that female recipients of individual coaching transferred their coaching and learning back into their own organisation. The additional inclusion of group coaching specifically appears to have had a positive influence in enabling participants to support each other during sessions and also in transferring learning back into their teams; this is identified by some participants. The combination of individual and group coaching is discussed in detail in Chapter Five. For other female leaders, a more general altruistic orientation to development is expressed:

‘I made a personal commitment [that] whatever I get out of it I need to use it to help someone else, we grow, it doesn’t necessarily have to be about something in work it is about how we are as people.’ (Phoebe)

The analyses identified that the coaching enabled feelings of connectedness to develop within the participants. The recognition and relief that surrounded the statements about feeling ‘I am not alone’ were significant. Often when the participants expressed this they were in a male dominated environment where they were frequently outnumbered in the leadership team they belonged to, and often also in the team they led. The coaching

enabled them to recognise and reconnect with who they are as women and as such enabled them to connect with their coaching group. Whilst not all participants reported feeling more connected to the other members of their group, many reported getting a sense of support from knowing they were there, and who thought like them. It was this sense of connection that went beyond the groups, which extended to other women within the organisation, and demonstrated a form of social exchange (Rutti et al., 2013). These feelings of belonging, together with an increased sense of self-esteem appeared to engender an altruism that prompted a desire to give back, to support other women in the same way that they had been supported (De-Valle, 2014).

This sense of belonging and of feeling connected was also experienced by the coaches who reported finding great value in connecting with each other as part of the AD initiative.

Figure 4.5 shows the interconnections of these sub-themes.

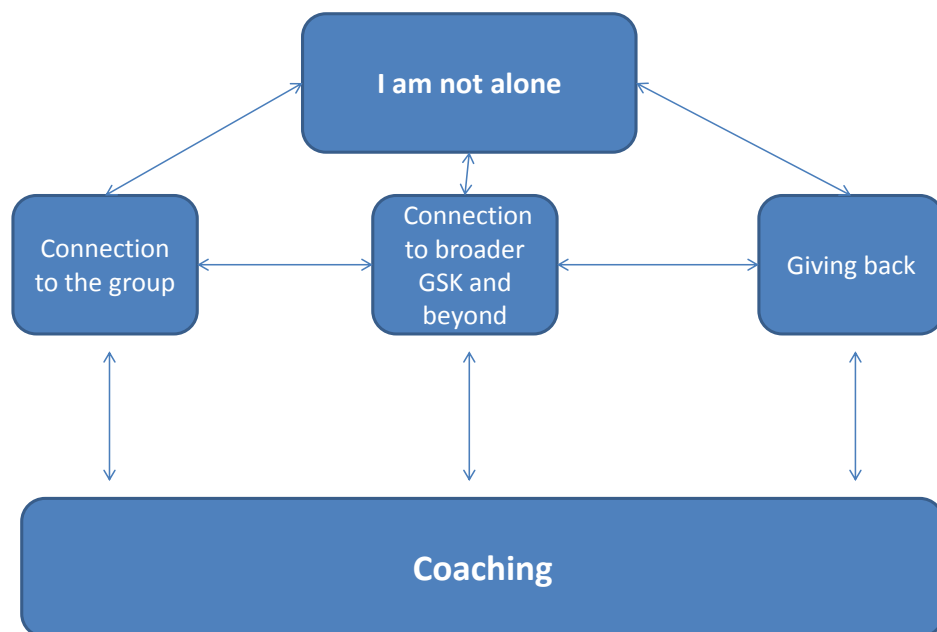


Figure 4.5: The interconnectedness of the sub-themes of collective impact

4.5 Summary of findings: Experience of the female leaders being coached

This chapter has presented the research findings from the perspective of the female leader participants. It highlighted the three key themes that emerged from the data analysis, those of personal impact, impact on self in regard to others and collective impact. The sub-themes comprising personal impact were the development of self-awareness, self-confidence and identity development, all of which were reported as being important outcomes of the combined coaching process. The sub-themes comprising impact on self in regard to others were relationship to line manager, relationship to conflict, relationship to power and relationship to personal life. Finally, the sub-themes comprising collective impact were 'feeling I am not alone', feeling connected to the group, relationship to the broader system of GSK and giving back. Whilst the purpose of the analyses was to separate and forensically examine each theme and sub-theme within it, it is recognised that at one level they are inextricably linked through the narratives of the participants. The interdependence of the themes is evident in the women's responses and in the articulation of their experiences and, as such, my construction of meaning is an interpretation of my understanding of their understanding of the experience. It is clear that their experience of being a participant on AD was a positive and beneficial one, with a range of benefits and outcomes being expressed and attributed to different aspects of the process. The next chapter explores the process of simultaneously having individual and group coaching and reports the findings from the analyses along with discussing the findings in relation to the quite scarce extant literature.

Chapter Five: Findings: Simultaneous individual and group coaching

This chapter examines the experience of simultaneously having individual and group coaching which is one of the key research aims of the study. A number of themes are highlighted by participants: what makes individual coaching a valuable developmental experience, the benefits of having group coaching, the different ways individual and group coaching are used by participants, the power of the interplay between group and individual coaching, and the amplifying nature of having both types of coaching. The findings demonstrating the experience of simultaneous individual and group coaching are then discussed in relation to the limited extant literature on group and individual coaching allowing their contribution to the research knowledge base to be identified. The experience and contribution that these simultaneous coaching interventions make is summarised in the metaphor used by the coach, Chris, to explain what he experienced:

'Coaching is the kind of active gene that we are turning on – at a group level and at an individual level and it caused people to consider their state of being, curiously being open, it invites a self-awareness and creates the traction for learning.' (Chris)

5.1 What stands out from having individual coaching

Some participants were completely new to the coaching process, and others had experienced individual coaching either independently or as part of a programme, previously. Their views were predominantly positive and the range of reasons given for this was extremely broad with some participants crediting it with such significant impacts as changing their lives and others being more pragmatic about the impact, such as Prunella:

'The individual coaching in terms of accountability, thinking about the development objectives and how you are doing against them and having that time to talk about what is working and what is not.'

The positive impact was echoed by Patricia for whom it was a new experience as it was her first time of having a coach:

'I think it was extremely effective what it gives you is a time to think, a scheduled one hour conversation every month and it is about objectives, we live in such fast paced lives and to have time to stop, think and have questions was very valuable - planning the future and thinking ahead.'

However, individual coaching was not universally viewed as positive. Paloma stated 'for me, individual coaching was not really effective'. She explained that she got more out of the group coaching and attributed her view to the inexperience of the individual coach and her own situation. These findings enhance and take forward the existing body of research on how executive coaching supports female leaders from the coachee's perspective (De-Valle, 2014; Worth, 2012; Skinner, 2014; Leimon et al., 2011).

5.1.1 Reflections and mirrors

The reasons stated as to what and why the individual coaching was effective were various. One of the most frequent reasons reported was that of having time for reflection: 'it made me reflect on how I was using my skills to support the Senior Leadership Team.' (Petra) The coaching not only provided the time to reflect but encouraged reflective thinking to take place: 'There was lots of reflection for me, I would think about this is my issue at hand, how do I feel about it, what do I want to say, there was quite a lot of reflection and deep thinking.' (Phoebe)

The combination of being able to speak freely, to have time to think and to be listened to enabled a spaciousness: 'for me it was a time to reflect and have somebody listen to my reflections, it was more listening and asking to get my mind clear and it was good in that respect.' (Petra) For some the ability to reflect was reported as having a positive impact on their work:

'I see value in reflection now as good – not getting frustrated or overwhelmed and blaming myself, I now pull out of this, I turn it around and I now use reflection in my job. I like pace of work and action – now I reflect and I know I am quick in my thinking and now I can see I act too fast sometimes so I have seen the value of reflection.' (Patience)

The participants reported that the process of coaching also enabled them to have a mirror held up to them: 'I guess the thing with coaching, it is quite tough in terms of they act as a mirror you are not being told what to do, you have a mirror and the space to reflect' (Peggy). This was also stated by Peta: 'it was being able to see myself in the mirror – I learnt so much about myself by being appropriately challenged on what I think about myself.' The act of mirroring was also cited as being a valuable part of the coaching process: 'I found the individual coaching much more valuable than I thought it would be – having someone there to act as a mirror.' (Peta)

The challenge brought by the coaches was also cited as being a helpful aspect of the coaching: 'I got a bit frustrated at him not telling me the answers, but I liked the challenge this gave me.' (Peggy) This was also reported by Peta: 'the coach was challenging without being aggressive and she would say you don't mean that do you and I knew instinctively that she was right'. The process of coaching, combining the time for reflection, of being mirrored and of being challenged was perceived to be valuable and constructive to participants and reinforces the extant literature (Worth, 2012; Watts and Corrie, 2013; Passmore, 2015b; De-Valle, 2014; Cox and Bachkirova, 2007).

5.1.2 Relationship with my coach

One key element that was cited by many participants was the importance of the quality of the relationship they had with their coach and the impact it had on their experience of AD. Paula stated: 'I think it is very, very important to have the connection with your coach even though we didn't know each other it was very easy to talk with her – sometimes it is just chemistry.' Participants reported building a sense of trust with their coaches, which for some started at the beginning of the coaching process: 'from the first session on just there was a sense of trust, openness, seeing the patience, the acceptance that the coach expresses so you build your own self acceptance' (Pam). For another trust was built to such a degree that the female participant reached out to her coach when her father died: 'I had a coaching session and I had no one else I could have talked to about it and I wouldn't have talked with my family so I opened up to her [the coach] more than anyone about that' (Pippa).

The coach's attitude and behaviour was also appreciated by Patience:

'I valued my coach for being very committed and not tied by what the programme dictated –I was depressed because of my career, and I found the connection and conversations very valuable.'

The trusted relationships developed between participant and coach enabled deep disclosure but also enabled challenge and difference to be brought out:

'It was very helpful that I could talk with her openly, we were not alike we were very different, she was confronting and challenging me but she also respects what I say and she understood me and was very engaged personally.' (Patricia)

The finding from the study indicated that the relationship between the coach and the participant played a significant part in the experience of AD. This builds on previous studies

demonstrating the significance of the coach/client relationship, and reinforces the robustness of the findings of others (O'Broin and Palmer, 2006; Ianiro et al., 2013; Gyllensten and Palmer, 2007).

5.1.3 Individual coaching is tailored and varied

The process for in the individual coaching included the setting of coaching objectives by each female leader, and endorsed by their line manager and HR BL as part of the initial tripartite meetings. As such, there was an expectation that the individual coaching sessions would be used to progress these. The analyses showed that this was the case – for some participants the individual coaching sessions were very tailored to exploring their own issues as Paula reports: 'the individual one is a lot of work for yourself [...] it is just you working.' Some participants used the individual coaching sessions for doing deeper, introspective work that was regarded as personal and only appropriate to cover in the one-to-one coaching sessions. As Phoebe states: 'In the individual ones you can go deep into things you would not be willing to go into in a group (Phoebe) This was echoed by Patricia: 'The individual coaching were more helpful to define me, myself. Definitely, for me the individual coaching was a great way to stop and think about things I wouldn't do otherwise' (Patricia). From the analyses it became clear that the female leaders were using the individual coaching for a range of things, from the deep, introspective work, to the highly pragmatic, day-to-day issues that cropped up as part of working life. As such there was little consistency in how it was used, but there was overwhelming support for the positive impact that the individual coaching had.

5.2 What group coaching brings

The group coaching was reported as being a very positive experience by 12 of the participants. They cited benefits that they attributed to the group coaching that ranged from the practical feedback they received in the sessions, to the connections formed that translated into much deeper relationships across the business, outside of the coaching. The mechanism of the group coaching was new to all participants and after some initial reticence, overall they reported engagement and value in participation:

'There were a lot of reflections about why we do the things that we do ... and there was a lot of openness and discussion about what emotions we were feeling at the time and why we behaved the way we did and what is important about work and it led to changes in people over the course of the year and a half'. (Petra)

The coaches also reflected on the power of the process of group coaching and the learning and benefits they witnessed as participants progressed through the sequence of group coaching sessions:

'Something about the whole group intensifies and amplifies, they do build community and networks being like minded female talent in the system it felt they are in here together and can hear other women comment and share common experiences. There is something in the process that deepens learning and insight – something about the group coaching experience that fires them – it affirms them, it is very powerful – the structure and process for learning.' (Chris)

However, some reservations regarding group coaching were expressed from one leader who had participated in the two day intensive version:

'It was fairly useful - up to a point – then it got not so helpful I think the group – I was in a very diverse group in Dubai – it made me think about my experience compared to my colleagues – it was useful up to a point.' (Pippa)

One participant did not find the group coaching useful and reflected 'I was in a dark place I wanted to resolve things, the rest of my group were very cheery so I didn't resonate with them so much – it didn't quite work for me.' (Patience)

These two negative cases highlight that group coaching was not universally viewed as beneficial, these findings add an additional dimension to the limited literature concerning the positive impact of group coaching (Kets de Vries, 2014; Ward et al., 2014) as they relate to group coaching that takes place over a significant period of time. The specific findings as to what was helpful are now presented.

5.2.1 'Going to places I wouldn't go on my own'

This 'in vivo' code encapsulates the theme cited by seven of the 14 participants as to the group coaching process brought to them. For many it was evident that one of the benefits of being part of a group coaching session was focusing time and attention on a specific topic. The topics were selected by the Steering Team following internal and external research to ensure they were representative of issues most commonly cited as areas of concern or interest for female leaders. In planning the sessions the group coaches talked through the ISTR framework (see Chapter Three and Appendix 13) and resources such as models, YouTube clips and TED talks identified that may be useful for the participants. The topics were sufficiently broad to ensure resonance with the participants who could

interpret them in a range of ways. The participants found it to be beneficial to have set topics as they would not necessarily have discussed them in their one-to-one coaching: 'Group helped me talk about different things - absolutely sure, 100%, I would not have raised those topics on my own' (Patricia). Participants also cited the benefit of hearing others' views and stories on the specific topics, and the opportunity this gave to learn and broaden perspectives. As Prunella observes:

'It gives you the view of areas other people are working on, so it gives you a broader perspective and gives you GSK enterprise perspectives – which you wouldn't get otherwise.'

For some participants, hearing about other people's views, stories and experiences served to enable learning in a vicarious manner – they felt they learned through other people sharing their learning and experiences:

'It gave you a wider perspective on things, listening to other participants and understanding their struggle enables you also to see things differently. The issues that you don't have to experience it – you can develop empathy for things you are not necessarily experiencing yourself.' (Paula)

The coaches also experienced the group coaching as taking people to different places – from their observations they recall that the different topics tended to encourage different people to speak out. They identified that whilst in some groups there was a tendency for one or two members to be the first in coming forward, what they noticed happening was that the topic tended to influence who put their voice into the group most vociferously and loudest. So the subject matter of the group brought people into the discussion, as Sue recounts: 'Different people spoke more in some topics than others – one woman hardly said a word beyond her story in the confidence session, but in the conflict one she was all over it.' The reflection from another coach was that the group sessions allowed participants to learn from each other and to learn from their admissions of failure as much as from their successes, as well as drawing them into a collective. As Chris states:

'How these isolated and difficult challenges could be acknowledged as a common issue that a number of people are working through not just you – something about the group that amplified the I am not alone. It was very powerful.' (Chris)

The finding of vicarious learning as an outcome of group coaching builds a new robustness into the research of Kets de Vries (2014) and Ward (2014) where they identified learning

benefits from a one-day group coaching session prior to classroom activities as part of a business school programme. They reported the value of participants hearing about each others' experiences and struggles and witnessing the coaching of others taking place, reinforcing findings identifying the positive impact of group coaching (Nicholas and Twaddle, 2008).

5.2.2 Getting feedback

Although not reported by the coaches or the Steering Group members as being an explicit part of the group coaching process, participants spoke about getting feedback from other participants as part of the group coaching sessions. Participants reported the value they gained from being able to share their own story and to work on their own issues and to receive coaching from the group coaches, and reported specifically on finding great value from getting feedback from fellow participants. For example, Patricia commented: 'Some sessions were often eye opening and getting feedback from my colleagues helped me to come to some conclusions myself which I wouldn't have got to on my own.' This was echoed by Pauline who reported the value of feedback received from other participants:

'You are exploring different topics how you perceive yourself how you can deal with them. You hear from others and get feedback from people who really understand where you are coming from and just the connection you get, you understand yourself more.' (Pauline)

Receiving feedback was considered valuable, not only from the other participants, but from the coaches as well. Group coaching was in this way identified as being a positive process for individual growth and learning through the giving and receiving of feedback – a positive benefit identified by Kets de Vries (2014) and Ward (2014), thereby reinforcing this outcome and the robustness of the insight.

5.2.3 Group topics were the same but depth is perceived as variable

There was a consistent approach taken to the group coaching in the topics that each group covered. However, as the coaching approach taken across the whole initiative was client-led, there was variety in the way each group covered the topics. This resulted in some participants experiencing the group sessions in different ways, and specifically the depth to which they were able to explore things. As Patricia stated: 'group coaching sessions were helpful in helping me to go deep and confront myself and to discuss topics at depth for me that was helpful.' However, there was differing views, as stated by Prunella: 'I thought the group coaching was more superficial than the individual coaching.' For Paula, the group

sessions were more about the connection with others and bringing awareness at a more systemic level:

'Group coaching is more about us, it is more about you as a part of the fifty percent of the population of the world you can create this network to sometimes face things you may not want to face, you can see other women in your situation make something different and change something.'

What was clear from the analyses was that the group coaching sessions were experienced by the participants in a variety of ways and to differing depths. As such the group coaching process could be viewed as a flexible and inclusive process.

5.3 The power of the interplay between group and individual coaching

A clear finding from the analyses was the relationship between the two types of coaching, as experienced by the participants and coaches.

5.3.1 Using the group topics to feed individual coaching

The group coaching introduced set topics into the coaching process that were predetermined by the Steering Group. Each group would interpret the set subject in slightly different ways according to the needs of the participants. The group would discuss the specific topic which was then taken by some participants and carried through to the individual coaching where the topic would be reintroduced into the coaching process by the participant: 'It was very helpful in introducing specific topics. They were feeding – one to the other – topics raised in group and thoughts we could bring back to the individual sessions. Very helpful.' (Patricia)

For others the subjects raised in the group sessions provided the stimulus for work they would do with their individual coaches:

'If I had just had the individual I would have struggled to know what to talk about – if I just had the group coaching I would have been OK but having the both together allowed me to continue the thoughts and to talk about group stuff and vice versa.'
(Peggy)

The analyses identified that whilst the participants appreciated having the freedom and opportunity to determine the content of their individual coaching sessions, having the set topics introduced during the group sessions did not limit the conversation, conversely they

added significantly to the value of their overall experience. 'Individual gives you the space to think about specific topics which are not designed, and group is about topics even in group it was not limited to those topics' (Phoebe). This 'seeding' of content topics was positively received by all of the participants who reported the topics as being appropriate and relevant, and provided input for further contemplation within their individual coaching.

5.3.2 From group to individual – deepening and reflecting

The process of group coaching served for some participants as an initiating source or impetus for the process of deeper thought and reflection which they felt able to then undertake in their individual coaching sessions. As Petra identified:

'I think you need both – when you step out of the group coaching you need time to reflect – you need an outlet to take that to – you need to take it into a discussion one-to-one and the individual coaching did that.'

This taking from group to individual was also reported by Peta:

'In group things would get me in my stomach and I would take it into individual. The groups gave me perspective on what I thought and then the individual allowed you to dig deeper in that perspective.' (Peta)

In this way the initiation and generation of thought was prompted by the process of group coaching and then transferred to the individual coaching which provided the space and forum by which the process could be continued to a deeper and more reflective level.

5.3.3 Backwards and forwards and in parallel

Some participants chose to take this further and identified a synergistic relationship between the two types of coaching.

'I found the two worked really well together – in some of the individual sessions I would take them to group or things would come up in group and I would take them back into individual both prompted me to think about different things.' (Peta)

Paula reported the interplay and movement between the two types of coaching as 'sometimes one was more useful than the other and moved back and forward – and improves something – you need both in order to have a good job.' There was a strong recognition that the combination of the two was necessary, however the reported reasons for this varied.

'If we just did group coaching there is not the opportunity to go really deep because there isn't the time and if we just did one-to-one coaching you would miss out hearing the stories and the challenge and mutual support in the room.' (Peggy)

There was also a recognition that there are some issues that participants would not want to go into more deeply within the group setting, but they would be willing to explore more in the individual coaching: 'each has its own strengths, the individual ones you can go deep into things you would not be willing to go into in a group – both of them are actually useful' (Phoebe). However, while the value of having both types of coaching was identified, the rationale and way in which the individual coaching was used was different for Pam:

'I think it is a really important combination – group coaching definitely gives you that awareness of self and others [it] helps you develop more empathy for others but the group coaching would not allow for [...] work on my operational things – setting individual goals and actions and in that case you miss on experience of the results.'

This interplay was experienced by others slightly differently and expressed by Prunella as:

'Something about being focused on yourself makes the broader group richer, quicker faster than if you just did one method or the other you wouldn't get. You need the group to make you think more broadly and the individual to, how would it apply to me, and you wouldn't have that in the group.'

For Peta the experience of group can be interpreted as a form of validation for the personal development work carried out in the individual coaching: 'in the individual I was learning about myself and then to take it into the group you almost got it ratified.'

An important finding identified therefore, is the range and variety of how the two different types of coaching are used – the combination appears flexible in enabling participants to determine the utility of the different coaching types within the overall coaching process. The fact that both processes were running at the same time and the participants moved between the two in real time was identified as a positive feature of the programme by five of the participants. As Phoebe identified:

'Where they are running in parallel was really useful if you have something in the individual setup and it could be a challenge and something you are happy to talk about and you talk about it in individual sessions and if you haven't figured out yet

you can take it to group and get their perspective running in parallel was a very good thing.'

The timing and interplay between the combined process of individual and group coaching has been identified therefore as having a positive and complementary impact on the experience of the participants and expands previous knowledge on combined coaching (Brown and Grant, 2010).

5.3.4 Synergistic effects

In addition to the complementary nature of the individual and group coaching, participants also identified a synergistic or amplification effect of having both types of coaching: 'Each is powerful in its own way but when you combine them together you get a lot more out of it. Individual being able to think through and the sharing is really useful' (Phoebe). This was echoed by Pam: 'I think the two were very important ingredients, they helped one another – one plus one equals three in this case – a powerful combination.' This combinatorial impact was identified by the coaches as well: 'it amplifies significantly I think the group coaching [...] three to the power of three it is a much greater number, there is something bringing the power of individual coaching and group together' (Chris). The result of combining both types of coaching into one process for participants to experience has a strengthening, accelerating and expanding impact. Coach Chris' constructed explanation of the combination states:

'It can feed into the individual level and then can come into the group...the group coaching allows the amplification of the issues and an opportunity because it is a really experiential, there are real issues, real challenges lived out in the room – it becomes a practice field and elevates and intensifies the experience of learning.'

The combination of factors including the learning environment, the expectations of the participants, their individual coaches and their line managers and the expert interventions from the coaches collectively reinforce change, growth and positive impact. The metaphor of a 'group journey' was used to describe this growth: 'you are part of a group moving and growing together – both things at the same time, it is a journey and you're walking through the journey growing through both aspects' (Paula). An awareness of the combination of factors enabling change in 'others' and the collective group growing together was also identified:

'It is really powerful [...] it brings bigger things together from your environment in group and the opportunity to experience what positive change you can bring – this is so important to encourage others as well to make the positive changes – as a participant a very powerful and beneficial combination.' (Pam)

Participants reflected on the power of the combined coaching mechanism to impact the organisational system:

'Essential when you are looking to shift a system, for example gender balance, because if we just had the individual coaching it doesn't create the sense of shared community that female leaders appreciate – it doesn't create the shared sense of community and imparting content that individual does.' (Cathy)

The combination has prompted reflections from a broader perspective: 'the whole programme has opened my mind on the subject of female leadership as such [...] there are a lot of humans struggling in the same way.' (Patricia)

5.4 Summary of findings: Simultaneous individual and group

In summary, this chapter has identified the key findings from the process perspective of simultaneous individual and group coaching. The findings have been constructed into three key themes – individual coaching and the specific sub-themes that comprise: the meaning and relevance of the experience of the one-to-one coaching, group coaching and the sub-themes that were reported as contributing to the experience of having coaching in a small group and finally, the third theme of the power of the interplay between group and individual coaching. This final theme captures the perceived experience of the combination of the two types of coaching, identifying a combination of felt experiences as well as descriptions of the process that was occurring. See Figure 5.1 below for a summary of these themes.

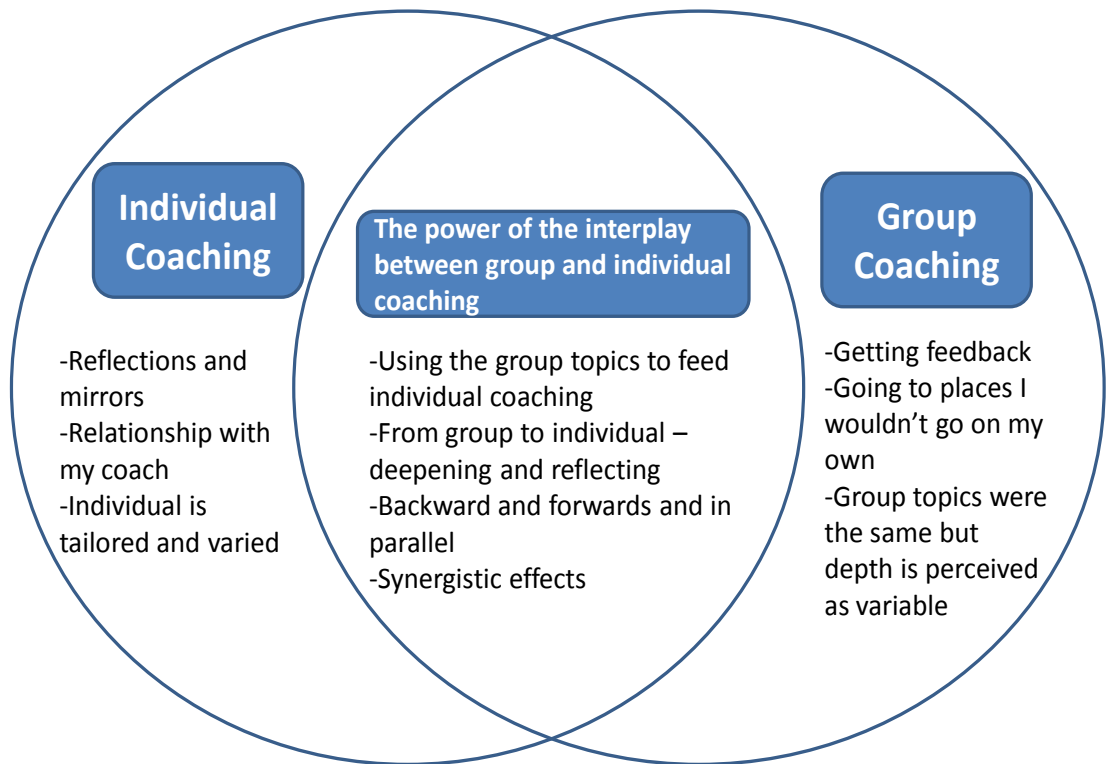


Figure 5.1 Summary of findings: Simultaneous individual and group coaching

Chapter Six: Findings: Combined coaching as a development mechanism for organisations

Chapter Five examined simultaneous individual and group coaching encompassing the value gained from each type of coaching, the variety of ways each type of coaching was used and the power of the interplay between the two coaching methods. This chapter presents and examines the findings of the combined coaching experience as a development mechanism for the organisation. A number of themes are highlighted: coaching as a safe container, breaking down organisational silos, organisational barriers to development, enabling systemic change and impacting organisational culture. This chapter addresses the original research question and explores the combined coaching initiative from an organisational perspective.

6.1 Coaching as a 'safe container, a safe space'

One of the key features of current organisational life was reported as the extreme busyness that is pervasive in the organisational system. The in vivo code of a safe container or a safe space was identified by several participants as being one of the elements that the two types of coaching allowed/encouraged/facilitated. They viewed the coaching as a time and place outside of the normal system or environment in which they worked – they experienced it as a separate place - a refuge from the busy nature of the everyday work pressure. It was also a safe space in terms of confidentiality – a safe environment where they could share their thoughts without fear of judgement or of views and thoughts being shared more broadly. The participants reported valuing the space it gave them to think – to focus on specific issues that would otherwise have got lost in the 'busyness' of their roles.

As Prunella remarked:

'I think it is about both the safeness and the time – unless you have time to focus on it, it may happen naturally over time but having a time to focus on it makes you think about it and think about what actions outside of the meeting to make it happen.'

These concepts of space and safety were reported as being highly valuable for the individual participants:

'It gives me time and space to think about things, it was a safe environment, what was more important for me, it gave space to challenge internal beliefs and ask questions I wouldn't ask myself. It was safe.' (Patricia)

The coaching sessions – whether individual or group – provided a mechanism for respite from the highly pressured environment in which they worked. The process of coaching created a safe environment whereby participants felt able to share thoughts which, for whatever reason, they were unable to do in the normal course of their working lives. One participant, Pam, did not see that the coaching provided a safe space as she reported that the whole environment in the region where she worked for the first stage of her participation in AD was a safe environment, therefore she did not view the coaching as offering a difference in safety or security:

‘while I was at GSK in [the first region] the whole environment was an open space so I wouldn’t necessarily say I looked for or needed that – for me it was just a part of a very accepting environment that was concerned with private growth, definitely the safety it was very safe, as I felt in a very safe environment.’

She identifies that things changed when she moved to another region where she reports a very different environment which impacted how it felt to be part of AD: ‘This changed very much when I moved to [another region] where the approach was completely different and there wasn’t any space for people.’ (Pam). After that she recognised that the coaching had provided her with a safe environment – which could replicate the safety she felt within the first region. The coaching process could be seen to provide the safety valve on the pressure cooker environment that pervades the organisation. In some ways, the safe space created by the coaching resembles the ‘identity laboratories’ described by Kets de Vries and Korotov (2007), Florent-Treacy (2009) whereby participants consider they are in a place with sufficient safe boundaries to be able to try on different identities for themselves (Kets De Vries et al., 2007).

6.2 Breaking down silos

One of the stated aims of the AD initiative is to support a culture of inclusive leadership for the organisation as a whole. One of the Leadership Expectations that underpin the GSK Performance Management System is Working Across Boundaries which has the explicit aim of expecting leaders to transcend these traditional organisational and cultural silos, to break down the intangible barriers that exist between, for example, different divisions of the business e.g. between Consumer Healthcare and the Global Manufacturing and Supply organisation. One of the findings from the research has been the impact the AD initiative has had on serving to break down these silos.

6.2.1 Cross functional, cross-cultural and cross-geographical working

The degree to which participants were exposed to different cultures in their coaching groups varied according to location – for example, because of the number of women leaders based at the company headquarters in London, four coaching groups ran in the UK within the same cohort. Where there were only one or two women participants in a geographic location they flew to a congregation point where they attended the two-day intensive group coaching event, followed by virtual group coaching sessions and closed with a repeated intensive two-day event in the common location. By definition the composition of these groups were multicultural, with several nationalities being reported. Participants highlighted that this mixing of cultures and the learning opportunities this gave, proved to be a very powerful learning in itself in addition to the content or experiential learning from the coaching. As Padma stated:

‘We were having multi-cultural people from Asia, Japan, GSK house, Kenya, Africa and other places like Pakistan and they were facing their different issues they were sharing, it was a great learning sharing other cultural diversities as well.’

Organisationally the group coaching exposed the participants to different ways of being outside of their national culture, particularly concerning leadership and ways of being a female leader within the same organisation but situated outside of their national culture. The group coaching created a sharing and learning environment for this exposure to take place. As Padma commented:

‘You should be open to challenge discussing things with your line manager and all were very helpful to learn from their experience in our country, we are only working with Pakistan people [...] First experience to work with other cultures.’

The group coaching provided a mechanism for the participants to be challenged to look at things differently, to accept that across the organisation different cultures and backgrounds influenced the organisational culture and that there were different approaches being taken in other countries and parts of the business. As Phoebe commented:

‘Just hearing about the social aspects which are inherent in a region or a country or group, when this comes out very clearly you begin to appreciate – we have our working culture and there are inherent tendencies and culture which you cannot ignore in the workplace.’

The identification of the overlay of organisational culture and national culture appeared to have a generative and perspective expanding impact on the participants:

'What you get from the group is the synergy of different thought processes which trigger your thinking and for me being female has never been a problem but I learnt it is really a big issue and this helped me look at things differently and it helped me in my interactions with other people. Not just understand but to appreciate them.' (Phoebe)

This breaking down of silos and taking a broader perspective was also noticed by the Steering Team member, Sarah, who identified the multicultural and organisational learning opportunities that the group coaching brought:

'The cross-pollination in the group coaching was such an incredible gain [...] sharing the learning across the group from other people – taking some insights from this back into the individual, it accelerates the opportunities to develop and gives more opportunity to practise and get the most out of the coaching on both an individual and group level.' (Sarah)

The complexity of the inter-relationship between organisational culture and national culture was also identified by one Steering Team member, Cathy:

'The fact it was in the society culture so it means we are not trying to resolve cultural issues, we could stay within the bounds of GSK corporate culture [...] introducing female leaders to others who they might not have met and not worked with – working across boundaries and building relationships across the enterprise.' (Cathy)

This finding takes forward the research by Rosinski (2010) on coaching across cultures where he proffers the view that coaching can play an extremely valuable role in developing executives and leaders who are capable of leading across cultures and across business units to lead global businesses. The finding also reinforces the need for coaching from a global perspective and coaching across cultures, as in the group coaching, is reported as doing so (Rosinski, 2010).

6.3 Organisational factors

From an organisational perspective various factors pertinent to the coaching process were identified as having maximum impact on development. One of the key issues identified was

the variation in the level of organisational support that surrounded the initiative, particularly with regard to the role of the line manager. This varied from business to business and whilst all three Presidents of the businesses taking part were supportive and willing to fund the AD project, the level of visible, consistent and proactive support given by them, and the leaders within their organisations, varied. This is consistent with the 'espoused theory' (what I say) and 'theory in use' (what I do) from Argyris (1991) and is evident in the role of the line manager in supporting the AD initiative. Whilst organisational support for the whole initiative was espoused, in some instances the theory in use was the de-prioritising of the participation in the programme in favour of the day-to-day work and business pressures.

'It is an organisational thing, just the sheer relentlessness and busyness of the business, some felt they were unable to be present because they put work first but it was kind of like the day job, the business came first.' (Sue)

6.3.1 Line managers

The line manager's role in the system was identified as being crucial for the success or lack thereof of the initiative. The line managers were recognised as being 'the weakest link' (Cathy) as one Steering Team Member states due to the inconsistency with which they supported the female participants. The process necessarily involved gaining the line managers' input into coaching objectives during tripartite meetings but beyond these it was left up to the line managers to play a supportive and encouraging role and to engage with their participants on their learning journey. However, the findings identify the inconsistency of this – from the Steering Team perspective, as well as the coaches' perspective. As the Steering Team member Cathy highlights: 'My biggest concern is the distance between what the women are receiving and what the line managers are doing – are they distant from it?' (Cathy). For another Steering Team member, the role of the line manager played a pivotal role in the effectiveness of the process: 'where line managers were not supportive it had a negative impact on the programme' (Sarah). Beyond the involvement in the tripartite meetings, the line manager's role was also cited as being a block to the effectiveness of the initiative when they did not support their participants in prioritising attendance at coaching sessions. As the Steering Team member Sue identifies:

'What got in the way, line managers not giving space and prioritisation to coaching – day-to-day workload, female leaders not having the support and commitment over the day-to-day work – lack of prioritising.' (Sue)

Line managers were seen as being responsible for creating the micro-climate that surrounds the individual participant, an important element in ensuring organisational success of the initiative. As a development mechanism it was clear that the coaching was effective in supporting the participants, however in order to ensure the effectiveness in shifting an organisation, the micro-climates play a pivotal role. As the Steering Team member Sue identified:

'The question for me is the eco system, I don't doubt the individual and group coaching effectiveness, I would like us to focus on the micro-climate so that what each leader feels the support from the sponsor or line manager support.' (Sue)

This finding takes forward the research by Ogilvy and Ellam-Dyson (2012) who found that line manager involvement in the coaching process could facilitate the effectiveness of the coaching process by demonstrating factors such as belief in the value of the coaching process and behaviours such as, supporting, challenging and collaboration. Line manager behaviours found to hinder coaching were identified as those which were restrictive and passive (Ogilvy and Ellam-Dyson, 2012) – this was reinforced by the findings from this study.

6.4 Enabling systemic change

The nature of the change that the simultaneous coaching initiative enabled was a key finding. The Steering Team member Sarah identified the broader impact that they saw on the system, beyond the impact on the individual participants:

'I think also the programme has helped raise visibility as an issue, it has allowed them to experience more deeply our strategy to increase diversity rather than just the metric, they are playing an active part in it.' (Sarah)

6.4.1 'The fish and the pond'

An analogy that was devised by one coach, Chris, and cited by other Steering Team members, was that of the 'fish and the pond' (Chris). This referred to the adage that you can take the fish out of the pond and clean them, but if you put them back into a dirty pond, they will not stay clean for long. In essence it was interpreted as if the organisation really wants systemic change in this area, it is important to support the female leaders, through coaching, but the environment in which they work – the pond – also needs to be 'cleaned' in order to achieve systemic change. As Chris stated, the initiative gave them this perspective:

'The space to consider who they were and what they wanted from their careers and encouragement and confidence to articulate their ambition, courage and confidence to act on what they have said their ambition is, the opportunity to stand back and examine the culture they are in and look at what they need to do to do as leaders, the pond they are swimming in as the fish and the environment that they need.'

Chris also cites the much broader systemic change that is prompted by participation in the AD initiative.

'Organisationally it can accelerate a shift, individually and at the organisational level. I think it can also be part of the brand of an organisation, more and more people are looking to an organisation that has an edge.' (Chris)

Reflecting on how the organisation was changing as a result of the AD development mechanism, the Steering Team member, Sue, reflected:

'It felt innovative, edgy of going beyond the 'there is something wrong with the women' and going into the relationships that support our female leaders and their own assumptions and careers in GSK. It felt we were moving in to an OD/LD space – how do we change this for GSK?'

The potential for this combined coaching development mechanism to be used in other areas of organisational change was identified by one coach, Chris:

'It was a kind of facilitated accelerated learning process I believe has many uses not just talent development and diversity, it has become a meta-development process design that can be explored for a number of organisational challenges.'

Whilst it was identified that the initiative had a positive organisational impact, the difficulty in really shifting and enabling organisational and systemic change was also recognised by Chris:

'The power of the collective, the group experience, there were themes that would be passed around and [be] built – do I challenge or not – questions of ethics and integrity – one person held it – but there were very common points of challenge and GSK values.'

The recognition of the complexity of organisational change and the requirement to focus on multiple voices and aspects of the system that need to be involved in causing change builds positively on the work of Bond and Seneque (2012). Their research identified the importance of the organisational context and the role that coaching can play in creating change highlighting the requirement for paying attention to the group norms and relationship to the organisation's general purpose, as well as the importance of the context and current stated aims of the organisation.

6.4.2 Engendering loyalty

One organisational outcome of the AD initiative was an increased sense of loyalty, engagement and connection to GSK and its mission. The development process had enabled her to reflect on her relationship to the organisation and to change from contemplating leaving the company to one of renewed faith in what the company stood for and her desire to be part of it:

'I was ready to leave GSK, I had lost faith in what we stood for ... but I can see the bigger picture now and want to be part of it. The feeling of motivation and the feeling of you are cared for and someone cares about your growth and development and the feeling people are willing to let you have your space so it is really motivating.' (Phoebe)

However, there were some exceptions to this finding which could be considered as unintended consequences of the development mechanism. Three female leaders chose to leave GSK shortly after completing the AD programme. They attributed their experience of the AD development as being a causal factor in their decision to leave. One reported having a profound shift in relation to what was important in her life and chose to move geographically to 'the other side of the world' (Pam) and to take a more junior role so that she could focus on her family. Another grew in her self-belief and recognised her value and when a head hunter approached her she followed up and was offered a much more senior role in another multinational organisation which she took. In her second interview she thanked GSK for putting her on the programme and for this development which enabled her to grow and recognise that she was 'wasted in my current role in GSK, and not being seen for who I really am' (Patience). For this participant, the development process allowed her to challenge the organisational view of her and to pursue her career in another organisation – she was a 'regretted loss' meaning GSK would like to have kept her. The third female leader chose to move to another company because they recognised in her

excellent leadership potential and offered her a development opportunity that GSK could not.

6.5 Summary of findings: Combined coaching as a development mechanism for organisations

This chapter has highlighted the combined coaching process as a developmental mechanism for the organisation. The process was discussed from an organisational perspective and referred to the participants' accounts of aspects of the process as well as the perspectives of the Coaches and Steering Team members. The combined approach of individual and group coaching offered over an eighteen-month timeframe, to a specific population of female leaders was examined and the findings presented. The findings suggested that the combined approach provided a valuable mechanism for both individual development, group development and some potential systemic organisational development. A number of organisational benefits were identified: the safe space that coaching provided, the breaking down of organisational silos and the increasing appreciation for difference across the organisation. Additionally, the findings highlighted some important factors that influenced the effectiveness of the change efforts – the line managers and the micro-climates surrounding the female leaders. Lastly, the contribution to more systemic change and the potential organisation wide consequences were identified. See Figure 6.1 for the summary of themes identified for combined coaching as a development mechanism for organisations.

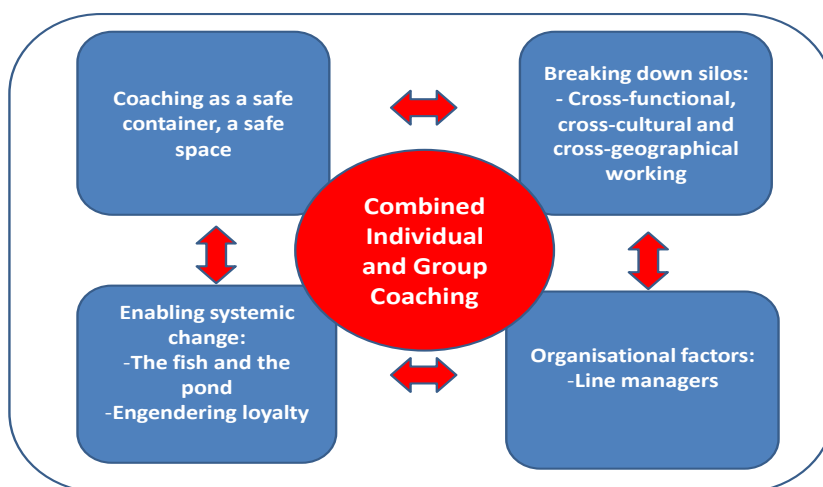


Figure 6.1 Summary of findings: Combined coaching as a development mechanism for organisations

Chapter Seven: Discussion

This Discussion chapter first addresses the findings from the female leaders' perspective, then examines the simultaneous use of individual and group coaching and finally discusses individual and group coaching as a combined development mechanism for organisations. The chapter culminates in a proposed framework for effective combined forms of coaching, based on the findings of the study and academic research.

7.1 The female leader experience

The overall finding is that the experience of coaching was reported as supporting the development of the participants in many and varied ways, including enabling the development of skills and capabilities as well as progression in their roles. This clearly reinforces and builds upon the extant research on general executive coaching (Grant, 2014c; Kampa-Kokesch and Anderson, 2001; Bachkirova and Cox, 2007). Additionally, the female leaders also emphasised that the coaching supported them with self and personal identity development, relational ability and transformational learning. This research adds an additional dimension to the limited extant literature regarding coaching as a developmental support to female leaders from a coachee perspective (De-Valle, 2014; Worth, 2012; Leimon et al., 2011; Broughton and Miller, 2009). The combined group and individual coaching experience of the women resulted specifically in reports of increased self-esteem, confidence and self appreciation and supports findings from De-Valle (2014), Worth (2012), Skinner (2014), Benavides (2008) and Galuk (2009).

The findings reinforced previous research that has identified the importance of high self-esteem in underpinning career success (Keller et al., 2015). High self-esteem often predicts job-related outcomes, such as high job satisfaction or high status therefore the building of self-esteem is key in supporting career progression, especially in women. If women need high self-esteem to obtain high quality jobs to a greater degree than men (Keller et al., 2015) then supporting the development of their self-esteem becomes a priority for organisations wishing to encourage and enable female leaders to progress up the organisational hierarchy. In contrast, the literature suggests men base their self-esteem on high quality jobs to a greater extent than women (Keller et al., 2015) so making development mechanisms, such as coaching, available to women becomes a valid option for organisations. The combined coaching effect supports the development of self-esteem in women which enables increased self-belief. In turn, having this positive self-belief

enables confidence to apply for, and gain, high quality jobs which in turn lead to progression within the organisation.

Some participants questioned the positioning used in the Accelerating Difference initiative where the term 'female leader' conferred a gender binary stance, as opposed to 'leader' or 'participant' which conferred a gender neutral stance (Mavin et al., 2014). As the women progressed through the initiative their increased sense of confidence and identity allowed some women to challenge the concept of gender binary – they felt that they should stop worrying about being women, should value themselves for being women and stop apologising for being women. As such, their increased sense of identity as women allowed them to stand up and resist becoming 'one of the boys' and adopting male traits. There was acceptance that for these women many of the environments in which they work are dominated by masculine behaviours and expectations of leaders – this became more pronounced as they rose through the hierarchy. However, the findings from this research supported the concept of choosing when 'to be or not to be a woman...' (Mavin et al., 2014, p. 7) as being an important concept to deploy. The women reported developing their own sense of identity as a leader, also experienced increased efficacy in their leadership capability and frequently positioned themselves as gender neutral leaders. It appeared that their increased sense of self, as a leader and as a woman, allowed them to let go of the need to be known as a female leader, and instead be viewed as a leader. This was not about distancing themselves from the traditional stereotypes of feminine behaviours associated with leadership, e.g. kind, helpful, warm and supportive (Case and Oetama-Paul, 2013), but more about owning and allowing these aspects of themselves to be a part of how they lead. Their experience suggests that in order to challenge the embedded patriarchal and hegemonic masculinity reproducing masculine discourses and practices, they needed to be able to adopt behaviours and attitudes that allowed them to operate successfully, e.g. by engaging in competition and ambition (Mavin and Grandy, 2012). Equally, this entailed making the choice of when to bring in their 'feminine' aspects.

Within the group coaching, the women reported developing a shared sense of identity, of connection and belonging which gave them the power and will to assert their difference and allow themselves to choose to 'do gender well and differently' (Mavin and Grandy, 2012). The group coaching created a safe environment whereby the women could share their experiences, both positive and negative, of choosing to do gender, when to bring forth their difference and when not to as they associated themselves more with

management and positions of leadership. At the same time, they recognised that they still needed to be able to manage negative responses from other women, as well as from their male colleagues (Billing, 2011). The group coaching also provided the conditions for challenging and addressing some of the gendered perceptions of roles, of which the women were incumbents, their view of the type of leader they were as well as the organisational system in which they were operating. These conditions were replicating those identified by Bourne and Ozbilgin (2008) as being important strategies for tackling gendered perceptions of professions. The group coaching design included key aspects such as promoting exposure to varied experiences and contexts, increasing individual awareness of career alternatives and recognising and supporting differences in cognitive and social background among individuals (Bourne and Ozbilgin, 2008). As the participants came from different parts of the business and had varied career experiences, they were able to create a diverse and multifaceted micro-environment in the group coaching from which they could each learn, from the coaches and the process, but importantly from each other. The cross-cultural and cross-business nature of the group coaching allowed the women to see the social construction of gender in relation to roles, and helped them to question their assumptions on gendered roles (Bourne and Ozbilgin, 2008) and ethnicity (Malach-Pines and Kapsi-Baruch, 2007).

The central finding that coaching plays a significant role in supporting the development of self-awareness, self-leadership and self-determination – all key enablers of success in women, reinforces and builds on the extant literature (Worth, 2012; Skinner, 2014; Leimon et al., 2011; De-Valle, 2014). The women used the individual coaching as a way of developing and describing their identity, identifying their personal values and strengthening their self-efficacy i.e. their belief in their own capabilities to organise and take action to succeed (Bandura, 1977). The participants also reported the coaching strengthened their self-belief and their capacity to value their abilities as leaders. As the women referred to the aspects of self-efficacy and self-confidence interchangeably, it is difficult to identify exactly whether this leadership self-efficacy is grounded in a general concept of confidence or competence - a distinction also identified by Vinnicombe et al. (2013). The women's belief in their own capabilities, motivations, resources and actions were evident and the results spoken about freely as a result of the coaching sessions, which suggests that their self-efficacy was increased albeit attributed to the general term 'self-confidence' (Vinnicombe et al., 2013).

The development of the women's sense of identity is also highlighted as a key aspect of the process of the combined approach of both individual and group coaching. These results support the findings from Florent-Treacy (2009) in her mixed methods study of participants' narratives of identity transition through group coaching in a leadership development programme. Florent-Treacy's (2009, p.71) investigation 'behind the scenes at the identity lab found that the participants were presenting a narrative of their future selves 'informed by a deeper, subconscious source that connected it all together before the individual was able to articulate it as one story' (Florent-Treacy, 2009, p. 81). The process of the group coaching enabled trust and intimacy to be developed within the group, which in turn enabled participants to reflect inwardly on their identity and to then experiment with this within the group sessions. This builds on Florent-Treacy's (2009) findings, although the method of examination was through written narratives written concurrently, as compared to verbal interviews conducted retrospectively.

The group coaching situation was considered by the women to be a safe space where they were comfortable in trying on different ways of being, of practising different behaviours and challenging their own, and others', views on many issues and in particular their relationship to conflict and power. They reported being surprised that some women do not find conflict an issue and not everyone felt a need to shy away from conflict or see it as a negative situation that either had to be avoided or fixed as soon as possible. The recognition that women can handle conflict in similar ways to their male counterparts supports the findings of Thomas et al. (2008). The participants stated that it was of great value to learn how other participants handled conflict within the same working environment. However, the majority of participants tended to perceive that their style of handling conflict did not change significantly in that they still deployed a cooperative approach to conflict resolution, but also stated that the coaching helped them to get better at deploying this approach (Brahnam et al., 2005).

The participants' approach to power and organisational politics was also reported as being enhanced by the combination of individual and group coaching. Being able to talk through what power meant to them, and to hear the various alternative views put forward by their colleagues operating in the same environment, was reported to be of huge benefit. They solicited advice and feedback during the group coaching sessions and found the responses ranged from behavioural suggestions, such as 'seizing the moment', to moving out of their comfort zone to gain experience and being prepared to stand alone when necessary. These

findings support the notion that 'bravery counts' as identified by Mavin (2014) and includes being assertive, speaking out and 'being prepared to sing their own praises' (Mavin et al., 2014, p. 11).

The group coaching supported the women's development particularly in the areas concerning their relationship to others and the balance they have between their roles as leaders and their roles within their families. The finding that the women were relieved to discover the feeling 'that I am not alone' is a profound reflection of the value of connection and sense of belonging that the group coaching gave them. This finding builds on that of Vinnicombe et al. (2013) in their account of Merck's Women's Leadership Development programme at Simmons School of Management where they state that a frequent comment from participants is 'It is refreshing to know that I am not alone' (Vinnicombe et al., 2013, p. 416). Interestingly, these are almost the exact words that are used in the current study and fascinating to notice that both organisations are pharmaceutical companies of similar size and scope. The support the women received in understanding the complexities that each participant faces and the multiplicity of ways of handling their own work and family balance dilemmas supports the findings by Mavin et al. (2014). The concept that 'family matters' identifies more contradictions for female leaders when identifying issues and concerns surfaced in group coaching. The current research identified that the group coaching allowed the women to feel more in control of the balance in their lives between work and family. The contradiction comes in that family matters should not be a barrier to women who want a leadership career, or family matters should not be an issue for an organisation there is no special treatment expected, asked for or given by the organisation because of gender. The women reported that during the group coaching, though they identified that the weight of family responsibilities falls to women and is influenced by the woman's age, and life-stage (Mavin et al., 2014), they were able to learn from each other's strategies to deploy for themselves with greater awareness of, and control of, their choices. This finding, whilst beneficial to the women themselves, is congruent with other literature which emphasises the point that 'women who want to progress their careers should instrumentally organise and plan their lives' (Mavin et al., 2014, p. 13). In this way, the group coaching may be viewed as a productive mechanism for supporting women in recognising their choices and being instrumental in their own development, but does not consider the influence of structural constraints which produce gendered contexts. Such structural constraints may include specific requirements which, while impacting both genders, because of their holistic nature, may impact female leaders more than male. For

example, the requirement of leaders to be internationally mobile in order to be considered for a certain role, such as a general or country manager means that women are likely to be impacted more than men. To use the analogy from the findings, the 'fish' may have been cleaned, i.e. the women may be qualified and capable of doing the role, but 'the pond' i.e. the organisational context or constraints may be stopping the women getting the roles.

The multi-cultural composition of the female participants creates another facet to the study and serves to build further on the very scarce literature comprising coaching and female leaders' perspectives from differing ethnic backgrounds (Ibarra et al., 2013; Mavin et al., 2014). This aspect supports the key finding of the collective impact of the two forms of coaching – the 'feeling that I am not alone'. This recognition came as a profound relief to participants and was cited by the majority as being particularly beneficial to their development and well being. The formation of a collective identity of the women sharing feelings of not being alone signifies what Kanter (1977) termed the 'sisterhood'. This is a feeling of shared belonging, of shared understanding among the women and the findings support the intense formation of this concept within several of the groups. Interestingly, whilst the notion of belonging was spoken about frequently, it tended to be to the group of female leaders firstly and then more broadly to the female population of the organisation. This collective perspective and sense of belonging brought about specifically through the process of coaching is relatively new to the research on coaching and mentoring female executives (Broughton and Miller, 2009; Leimon et al., 2011; Skinner, 2014; Worth, 2012; De-Valle, 2014).

The experience of the combined coaching also served to allow the women to take a more objective and enterprise perspective to GSK. This meso or organisational level perspective enabled them to reflect on how GSK handles gender and leadership as well as how the approach of the AD initiative was supporting not just their development, but was addressing systemic issues. These findings concur with those of Mavin (2014) in identifying that it is not about 'fixing the women' but highlighting the need for change at the meso (organisational) level as well as at the macro level of society. The call for change at the societal level towards women and careers is not new and has been highlighted in the populist press and media by the publication of the book 'Lean In' in which the author takes the stance of urging women leaders to lean into their careers. (Sandberg, 2013)

The finding that many women chose to give back by becoming coaches themselves, by taking on more junior mentees and operating as mentors and by running development

sessions for other women at their sites suggests that there is a ripple effect from their experience of coaching. For these women, supporting others through either coaching, mentoring or development was a sometimes unexpected but nevertheless important outcome of their experience of being in AD. Social exchange theory serves to explain some of the motivation behind the concept of giving back (Kim and Kuo, 2015; Rutti et al., 2013) and the resulting behaviour. Social exchange theory is one of the frameworks in understanding human relations based on the notion of reciprocity in relationships (Blau, 1964) and more specifically social exchange is 'the voluntary actions of individuals that are motivated by the returns they are expected to bring, and typically do in fact bring from others' (Blau, 1964 p 91-92). The key concept in social exchange that appears to be relevant in this study, concerns when an individual offers support for, and in some cases offers a favour for others and normally expects some return from them, albeit not defined or explicitly asked for. Returns are loosely specified in terms of timing and forms in social exchange and may even be as intangible as moral support, so as a result, social exchange is grounded in a long-term perspective and a rather uncertain exchange of favours (Kim and Kuo, 2015; Cropanzano and Mitchell, 2005). Social exchange in organisations offers the conceptual underpinning and insight for research on employee motivations and behaviours and has been applied toward building worthwhile relationships with various subjects, including supervisors, colleagues and the organisation (Kim and Kuo, 2015). It is pertinent here where the female leaders reported feelings of goodwill from their coaches and peers from the group coaching, but also in some cases from their line managers and from the organisation for operating the AD scheme. In turn, their responses suggest diffuse obligations to reciprocate by enhancing positive attitudes and in-role and extra-role performance in the organisation through giving back to their colleagues, their line managers and to the broader GSK community.

In an exchange relation, the volunteerism or obligation of returning the favour is typically viewed as a symbol of trust, as well as a sign of goodwill and support. Thus in the light of social exchange theory a coach's trustworthiness can be a critical component to constitute the effective exchange relationship in a coaching context. Additionally, the female leaders reported that trust was built up with their peers across the groups in the group coaching activity (Chun et al., 2010). Extra-role performance is affiliative behaviour, which is interpersonal and collaborative as it enhances work relationships and is collegial and other oriented (Vandyne et al., 1995). Organisation citizenship behaviour, which is one of the representative extra-role behaviours, constitutes discretionary behaviours that are not

formally included in an employee's job description (Borman and Motowidlo, 1997; Podsakoff et al., 2006). Organisation citizenship behaviour directed at other individuals and organisation citizenship directed at the organisation (Williams and Anderson, 1991).

Consistent with social exchange theory coaching that is received within AD can be regarded as management initiated support for the female leader to enable achievement, development and well being (Boyatzis et al., 2012) and can facilitate employee extra-performance for the favour of reciprocation. Since female participants tend to perceive AD as an organisational initiative, then the coaching can be perceived as organisational support too (Kim, 2014). The behaviour exhibited by the female leaders with regard to giving back, whether to their colleagues within the group, other women within their sites or area of work via workshops etc., or more broadly to other women in the company constitutes forms of organisation citizenship behaviour directed at the organisation (Eisenberg et al., 2014). Interestingly, many of the examples given by female leaders constitute extra-role activities – actions and activities that are clearly outside their day to day roles, reinforcing the positive relationship found by Ellinger and Kim (2014) of coaching, albeit managerial coaching, and organisational citizenship behaviour.

In combination with social exchange theory, social capital theory was also in evidence in interpreting the findings of the study. Social capital is a set of informal values or norms shared among members of a group that permits cooperation among them (Adler and Kwon, 2002; Nahapiet and Ghoshal, 1998). Social capital theory encompasses organisational benefits as defined by Ellinger et al (2013), as 'a set of informal values and norms and subjectively-felt obligations that group members share, which are instrumental in shaping the relationships that make organisations work effectively' (Ellinger et al., 2013, p. 1125). Social capital theory focuses on networks of informal social relations that contribute to individual and organisational effectiveness by providing access to information, knowledge and other resources (Adler and Kwon, 2002; Nahapiet and Ghoshal, 1998). In essence, the group coaching can be seen to provide the setting and context for the development of inter-personal relationships which in turn enabled stronger connections within social networks to be built by the female leaders. The group coaching sessions created environments that promoted trust, rapport and goodwill leading to reported positive experiences, indicative of the development of social capital (Ellinger et al., 2012; Adler and Kwon, 2002). Descriptions of behaviours and experiences that may be construed as contributing to the development of social capital as especially interesting as

building social capital in highly regulated environments, such as GSK, whilst possible, is less effective challenging than in other environments (Chuang et al., 2013).

The findings from the current study indicate the likelihood of being conceptually underpinned by the two theories of social exchange and social capital. When viewed together, it appears that there is a mutually reinforcing and synergistic relationship. The female leaders feel a form of goodwill, positive feelings of trust and reciprocity towards their coaches, and in some cases, their line managers and the organisation for their participation in the AD initiative. This is combined with the experience of building social capital with each other through the group coaching sessions, as well as extending beyond the formal sessions to broader networks and reputational benefit across the organisation. It appears that there is a synergy created by the presence of social exchange and social capital development that enables an openness to learning and exploring with others created through trusting and giving relationships with other participants, and coaches. The synergy created by these two theoretical constructs goes some way to explain the beneficial experience reported by the female participants, and by the Steering Team members and coaches.

These combined theories help to explain the conceptual underpinnings evident in the findings of the study and which align with Cunliffe and Erikson's (2011) interpretation of relational leadership, which recognises the 'entwined nature of our relationships with others' (Cunliffe and Eriksen, 2011, p. 1434). This ripple effect may be viewed as potentially, the coaching intervention having a much broader organisational impact taking the intervention from being an individual one to, potentially, an organisational intervention. This is a theme returned to in Chapter Eight.

7.2 Simultaneous individual and group coaching

In summary, the key findings from the study concerning the simultaneous use of individual and group coaching are that the experience is reported as positive and beneficial. There were specific benefits derived from individual coaching and distinct benefits reportedly derived from group coaching, and the interplay between individual and group coaching brought additional benefits. The use of topics to anchor each group session created a focus for the session and for some groups this enabled a deep, intra- and inter-personal discussion and collective experience. For other groups, this did not happen with the group discussions staying at a relatively surface, pragmatic level. For the participants who had experienced the deeper conversations often some aspect of the discussion was then taken

back into their individual coaching sessions where it was unpacked and explored. There were even examples of elements then taken back again into the group sessions and reintroduced into the check-in session at the next group coaching session. This interplay between individual and group was very much dependent on many variables – the cohesiveness of the group (Florent-Treacy, 2009), the relationship with their group coaches, the participant's relationship to their individual coach (Cox et al., 2014a) and their willingness to do deeper work (Bachkirova, 2011). These findings reinforce and extend the extant research in this area demonstrating the benefit of combining individual and group coaching of Florent-Treacy (2009), Ely (2011), Kets de Vries (2014) and Ward (2014).

It is clear that the individual coaching provided the women with a way of dealing with the pressures of work and life by giving them time and space for reflection, away from their normal environment. The benefits of coaching in providing people time to reflect and the positive impact this has on coachees is not new as Kline (1999) stated in the title of her book: it is a 'Time to Think' (Kline, 1999). Equally, using individual coaching for pausing and reflecting in organisational settings is a well-documented positive benefit of coaching (Passmore, 2015b; Passmore and Fillery-Travis, 2011; Passmore and Rehman, 2012a; Wasylshyn et al., 2012; Western, 2012). What the analyses demonstrated was that the women found benefit in taking the time out to reflect on their own lives, their own situations and to consider, often for the first time, what they really want out of their lives and their careers. It was this realisation that taking the time to stop and to almost bring themselves into the internal conversations they were having about themselves was part of the value that individual coaching afforded them. Having a mirror held up, to really see themselves as others see them, was for some an emotional and rare occurrence. This mirroring function that coaching provides can be transformative for individuals whereby the coach supports the coachee to find their authentic selves: identity, meaning and values by taking the coaching stance of what Western (2012) calls 'the Mirror to the Soul' (Western, 2012, p. 210). However, as Western (2012) acknowledges, coaches work across different discourses and stances and that is reflected in the range and scope of the experiences of the individual coaching reported. Other participants reported using the coaching conversations to discuss their career strategy reflecting the Role Coach stance whilst others reported benefiting from the coaching as revealing networks and connections, reflecting the Emergent Strategist stance (Western, 2012, p. 210).

The breadth of the benefits that the participants reported from the individual coaching sessions reflected the range of coaching styles and particularly their relationship to their coach. There was a considerable range of experience in the coaches who conducted the individual coaching – from JPCs, who are relatively inexperienced and whose competence is relatively untested, through to Internal and External Executive Coaches who are highly experienced and competent. The relationships they built with their coachees were again varied and depended to a great extent on the chemistry, trust and willingness to be open between the two individuals concerned. These findings reinforced the extant literature on the importance of the coaching relationship (O’Broin and Palmer, 2006; Gyllensten and Palmer, 2007). What was interesting in this study was that the ability to have a deep, connected relationship, which was considered highly important, did not appear to be related to the experience level or type of coach – these type of relationships were reported by coachees with JPCs, as well as with Executive Coaches. This revelation, whilst not surprising in terms of the experience of coaching on the coachees, has potentially significant implications for organisations as it opens up the possibility of reportedly highly effective coaching becoming possible utilising JPCs, who are significantly less costly and more accessible than external, or internal, Executive Coaches. The internal JPCs were able to develop, in some cases, a relationship they deemed significantly deep, with their coachees, as did the Executive Coaches, and they received similar feedback in terms of effectiveness. This finding supports the reports that internal coaches have even been found to be more effective due to the ‘insider’ knowledge of organisational culture and climate (Jones et al., 2014). This opens up the possibility of providing a potential source of development for leaders within organisations, from coaching at a less experienced level than Executive Coaches. Whilst this arena of internal coaching in a sophisticated form is new to organisations, it is growing and studies to date have confirmed both the potential to be highly productive as well as issuing some warning bells around confidentiality and governance (Jones et al., 2014; Ellinger and Kim, 2014; Wasylshyn, 2003).

The majority of the participants reported finding the individual coaching to be useful and a positive experience and most, but not all, reported that they found additional value in having the group coaching. Specifically the group coaching afforded them the opportunity to ‘go to places I wouldn’t go on my own’ and to use the other women as sounding boards and means of support, feedback and challenge. The group coaching design enabled the women to gain these benefits which accrued over the length of the programme, i.e. 18 months. Participating in six group coaching sessions over this timeframe enabled trust and

relationships to be built and tested and for behaviours and actions to be tried out between sessions. This extended period of time, coupled with multiple sessions, distinguishes this research study in the robustness of the findings and the longevity of the perceived impact. The participants were interviewed twice following the completion of the coaching, after three months and after six months, demonstrating the impact of the coaching was still resonant and evidence of the group connections tangible even after a significant amount of time had passed.

These findings highlight the perceived value of group coaching and take forward the growing body of evidence propounding the relevance and potential effectiveness of group coaching (Kets de Vries, 2014; Ward et al., 2014; Florent-Treacy, 2009) and specifically for women in organisations (Ely et al., 2011). One differentiating factor of this study is the semi-contextual setting in which the group coaching takes place (Bryant, 2016). The findings highlight the reported value of group coaching when carried out within an organisation, as opposed to the de-contextual setting of a business school programme research (Kets de Vries, 2014; Ward et al., 2014; Florent-Treacy, 2009).

The group coaching provides a safe setting within which trust and development has been built – albeit to varying levels. Where the participants reported ‘going deep’ and consequently feeling highly impacted by the sessions, the group coaching may be seen to constitute a ‘holding environment’ (Kahn, 2001). The participants reported experiencing being supported by others in the group in a trusting, generative, constructive and mutually reinforcing manner – effectively the constituent components of a holding environment (Kahn, 2001). The safe environment generated within the group coaching sessions allowed the participants to share intimate details of their lives without fear. The degree to which participants were able to move toward each other, and the coaches, within the sessions was influenced by their previous history and upbringing. Those who had been ‘held well’ – physically, emotionally and psychologically – in their childhood being more likely to move towards others and to see the group as a form of ‘secure base’ to which they feel, albeit temporary, attachment (Bowlby, 2005).

The current economic situation and highly pressurised work environment that characterises the climate of many organisations today creates the need for holding environments, broadening the concepts from the therapeutic realm into work place situations (Heifetz, 1994). The group coaching supplied the conditions required for holding environments to be created – trust was built between group members and the coaches

which allowed people to move towards each other, the coaches provided safe and competent holding which reduced the sense of risk and uncertainty and they received empathetic acknowledgement and listening which enables participants to make sense of their experiences and gain perspective (Kahn, 2001). Additionally, the ability of the group members to listen and receive the sharing that occurred from the coaching also allowed them to ask for support while maintaining a core sense of self-reliance. This requires the ability to manage the paradox of holding onto oneself while being held by others (Smith and Berg, 1987). The semi-permeable structure of the group sessions allowed a sense of containment and safety, whilst at the same time allowing for fluidity and movement to accommodate emergent themes and requirements of the group, which are necessary factors in establishing a holding environment. The resilient boundaries in place in the group sessions, such as no mobile phones, topics not randomly introduced, agreed times for breaks adhered to and everyone knowing they will have space and time to speak, ensured optimal safety for the group (Schneider, 1991). The presence and construction of the group coaching sessions therefore provided a much needed and perceived highly effective holding environment for the participants (Ghosh et al., 2013).

There is scarce extant literature on the complementarity of group and individual coaching, with the majority of existing studies focused on one-day group coaching, followed by one or two individual coaching sessions as part of a Business School Programme (Kets de Vries, 2005; Ward, 2008) or in the form of group coaching combined with written coaching assignments (Florent-Treacy, 2009). While these studies identify a positive experience from having group and individual coaching, the nature of the complementarity is not examined in great depth. The current study's findings of interplay between the two types of coaching from individual to group and back again highlights the true complementarity of the coaching mechanisms. For many participants the topics raised in the group sessions ignited questions and insights that they then took to their individual coaching and pursued in depth. For a few participants, the group sessions were experienced more as 'stand-alone' sessions whereby topics covered during the sessions were kept within the group boundaries, and not taken to individual coaching. For the participants who carried the threads of ideas and constructs from one type of coaching to the other and back again, the benefits were clearly identified with extraordinary and 'transformational' experiences reported. The impact of experiencing both types of coaching simultaneously and the amplifying effect was observed not only by the participants but also by the coaches and members of the Steering Team.

It is useful to consider the related discipline of therapy as it has more history of group and individual methods of deployment. The results of studies using both types of therapy, individual and group, demonstrate that the combined therapy approach produces increased impact and effectiveness (Gans, 1990). However, other factors, such as increased drop-out rates (Dickhaut and Arntz, 2014) in combined therapies can offset the gains in effectiveness from having both the individual and group interventions. Additionally, depending on the nature of the condition the therapy is being used to treat, sometimes clients express a preference for individual therapy as opposed to group therapy (Gans, 1990; Manassis et al., 2002). Given that whilst therapeutic interventions are introduced to address specific conditions, the generalisability of results needs to be treated with caution. However, the evidence suggests the combination of having individual and group coaching simultaneously, over an extended period of time, can be seen as an amplifying mechanism for the development of female leaders.

7.3 Combined coaching as a developmental mechanism for the organisation

The finding that the combined coaching approach provided 'a safe container' reinforces and builds further on the principle defined by Vinnicombe et al. (2013) that requires the establishment of a safe space for women to work on their leadership development. This was achieved by enabling the female leaders to make sense of their work experiences, an important aspect (Ely et al., 2011) but it goes further by taking an holistic approach to the women's lives and providing a sense of belonging and identification through coaching groups. The combined approach of individual coaching and simultaneous group coaching appeared to be a support to the overall goal of shifting the gender balance at an organisational level by providing an organisational 'safety valve' for high value female leaders away from the 'pressure cooker' working environment. The general context in which employees are working in GSK was characterised in the 2015 Global Employee Survey as being 'highly pressured, often intense, extremely busy and very demanding'. In the Ridler Report (2016), other organisations operating internal coaching reported this environment as being typical or standard. The US Army coined the phrase VUCA – Volatile, Uncertain, Complex and Ambiguous – which has been used to describe the environment of many organisations at the current time and which calls for different approaches to developing leaders (Lawrence, 2013). The combined coaching process facilitated a respite from the complex and constantly changing work environment and as such enabled the participants to be reflective and to gain perspective on their 'day jobs'. In his work with the

Centre for Creative Leadership, Petrie (2013) identifies the requirements of developing leaders in a VUCA world and includes interdependence and the ability to see systems, patterns and connections, to be able to hold multiple perspectives and hold contradictions. Capabilities that Petrie (2013) and Lawrence (2013) believe coaching is particularly suited to developing. The combined coaching experience appears to have delivered the space and time required for participants to be able to develop their ability to reflect and make sense of their VUCA environment.

In some ways, this safe space where capability and interdependence can flourish concurs with Florent-Treacy's (2009) account of the identity laboratories created during a leadership development programme. The combined approach of individual coaching, to allow sense making of working in their individual environment and the group coaching, comprising multiple representatives of different aspects of the system, allows the examination of what the working environment is calling for from leaders at this time. In this way, the participants are using this combined mechanism to progress their identity as female leaders. Together, the coaching formats have enabled participants to develop their skills and abilities in thinking more systemically across the organisation, of experiencing some of the variety of perspectives and contradictions that exist in the system – experiences that are a pre-requisite for the agility required of leaders in current times (Lawrence, 2013).

Both the individual coaching and the group coaching provide a mechanism for reflection and for supporting leaders in their navigation of complexity and turbulence – a finding supported by Bennett and Bush (2013). Active separation from the whirlwind of the pressurised environment was identified as necessary in order to think and reflect consciously about their leadership and their own development. Without the space and time that coaching provided, this reflection and conscious processing tended not to happen. Scharmer (2008) refers to need for 'slowing down to understand' (Scharmer, 2008, p. 53), whereby to achieve transformational change at an organisational level, leaders must shift from reactive responses and quick fixes to generative responses that address the systemic root issues. In order to do this, leaders need to take time out from the everyday whirlwind of busyness to focus attention, individually and collectively in groups, to enquire and reflect on their own and the organisation's challenges and connections (Scharmer, 2008). The transformational change required by the organisational context has been outlined in AD as a shift to inclusive leadership. A key aspect of this is the ability to work

across functions and boundaries and is viewed as an essential requirement of leaders in the complex, global organisation that is GSK. The combined coaching of AD facilitated the positive regard for difference from cultural, functional and individual perspectives (Crous and de Chalain, 2016). This appreciation of cross-functional and cross-cultural difference, and the opportunities to interact and have dialogue in safe multi-cultural situations, creates the potential for increasing organisational learning as attitudes and experiences are transferred back to home environments. These positive and appreciative experiences reinforce the skills and attitudes required for leaders operating in the highly cultural diverse and dispersed global environment of GSK today (Thomas and Peterson, 2014). As such, the AD coaching initiative can be seen as a relevant management and organisational development intervention when compared to other development practices commonly used when working with a transformational change agenda (Bond and Seneque, 2012). The aim of the AD coaching initiative was to support the interconnectedness of the participants through group coaching and to develop capabilities for working collectively across boundaries. The individual and group coaching was a means by which the individual, group and organisational learning could be integrated across the organisation transcending functional and artificial organisational boundaries – an important requirement for creating systemic change (Bond and Seneque, 2012).

The identification of the organisational factors that support coaching being an effective mechanism for organisational change, specifically the role of the line manager, reinforce the findings of Ogilvy and Ellam-Dyson (2012) who found that line managers can be both a positive support to coaching effectiveness and conversely a hindering factor too. In her study of executive coaching for organisational learning, Walker-Fraser (2011) identifies the importance of senior leaders' role modelling the benefits of effective coaching and communicating the value of the coaching learning process in providing the opportunity for growth' (Walker-Fraser, 2011, p. 76). The recognition that the line manager plays a pivotal role in the success of individual and organisational learning and change has long been recognised with seminal work by Kotter (1996) being supported by later works (Kanter, 2003; Van Dijk and Van Dick, 2009). The study's findings highlight the benefits that occur when line managers are engaged with the overarching aim and underlying principle of the changes required from the coaching initiative. When line managers were supportive, the participants were able to take learnings back into their own part of the organisation and to spread their learnings further through additional activities and support, and thereby create a beneficial ripple effect (O'Connor and Cavanagh, 2013). The extended organisational

benefit that the AD coaching initiative created supports the findings of De-Valle (2014) who found that recipients of coaching commonly felt compelled to share and redistribute their learning further across their organisations and wider communities.

The findings suggest that the AD combined coaching initiative was able to elicit learning at an individual, group and to some extent an organisational level, as evidenced by the observations and comments from participants, Steering Team members and coaches in the findings chapters. The finding that coaching supports the translation of individual learning into collective learning builds on research by Swart and Harcup (2013) in their empirical study of how coaching can be important for organisational learning. They identified the 3E-model as encompassing the process of enacting behaviours, enacting a coaching approach and embedding collective learning processes as being the mechanism whereby individual learning translates into organisational learning (Swart and Harcup, 2013). The behaviours and attitudes of the line managers, coupled with 'the fish and the pond' observations and interpretations, deftly illustrate the importance of the elements required to engender organisational learning in addition to individual and group learning. The importance of the role of the line manager and the micro-climate created by those close to the participant who receives coaching greatly impacts the transference of learning from the individual to the collective. Line managers who demonstrate supportive leadership and enable opportunities to engage in new behaviours reinforce the transfer of learning between the individual and the collective – 'transfer is fluid and displayed through action' (Swart and Harcup, 2013, p.351).

The result of transfer of learning and learning outcomes was interesting in the research study as in some cases it engendered increased feelings of loyalty and engagement with the organisation and fostered a deeper connection to the values and mission of the company. These positive feelings of well being towards each other and the organisation could be interpreted as being brought about by an increase in the social capital of the participants and the people involved with AD (Balkundi and Kilduff, 2006; Galli and Müller-Stewens, 2012). The extension of the feelings of well being and positive integration with each other along with the acceptance of difference referred to by many participants are demonstrations of the increase in social capital (Galli and Müller-Stewens, 2012). These positive feelings and collaborative behaviours demonstrated by AD participants and the desire to transfer them back into the wider GSK population were reported. These findings are consistent with the experience of narrative-collaborative group coaching whereby

social recovery and well being were positively influenced by their coaching experiences (Stelter and Law, 2010). However, the learning outcomes of some participants and the application of these back to the workplace also resulted in two high-potential individuals leaving the organisation. One interpretation of these results could be that the coaching was extremely effective in supporting the growth and development of the individuals as they grew into what could be called a state of 'self actualisation' (Maslow, 1950). Individually they were able to focus on their personal mission and purpose in life and this required them to leave the company. For GSK, this was not an ideal situation; however the prevailing belief from the organisation is that if someone leaves for what they believe are self development and fulfilment reasons then it is ultimately better for GSK as well as for the individuals concerned.

In large multi-business organisations, where the overall effectiveness of the strategic goals depends on the collaboration and synergies achieved between constituent businesses, the concept of social capital plays a significant role (Galli and Müller-Stewens, 2012). Social capital, here defined as 'the quality created between people' (Burt, 1997, p. 339), therefore influences the degree to which leaders are effective which depends on the quality of their networks and social connections across the businesses which comprise the whole organisation (Balkundi and Kilduff, 2006). Consequently the ability to build social capital between business units by enhancing collaboration through building trust, shared meaning and collective activities is to be prized in organisations such as GSK. Leadership development practices that result in stronger forms of social capital development require self-reflection activities, such as coaching, as well as activities that enhance an identification experience such as an action learning project (Galli and Müller-Stewens, 2012). In this way, the individual and group coaching experience within AD appeared to create a productive environment for social capital to be developed by participants. The simultaneous combined coaching appeared to provide the necessary components which reportedly enabled the development of social capital (Galli and Müller-Stewens, 2012). In the context of the highly matrixed, globally dispersed and very complex organisation comprising multiple divisions and business units that is GSK, this ability to support leaders in developing social capital through combined coaching has the potential to constitute a significant competitive advantage.

Finally, the research findings reinforce and take forward those of Bond and Seneque (2012) who identified that coaching can offer a framework for developing leaders at an individual,

team and organisational level. Bond and Seneque (2012) reinforce the findings of this study when they assert the importance of conceiving of coaching interventions on a systemic basis to ensure benefits are gained at an organisational as well as group and individual level. Additionally, the findings support the assertions of Cavanagh (2006) in seeing coaching as a systemic activity that can encompass complexity, pluralist perspectives, and contextual factors in supporting organisational and leadership development. Therefore, the findings suggest the potential of this mechanism to be relevant for developing leaders in today's environment and business context.

7.4 A framework for combined coaching effectiveness

In reviewing the findings, drawing them together and examining them in conjunction with the literature it is possible to contextualise and suggest the main factors that are necessary for a potentially effective combined coaching intervention. In line with the interpretivist epistemological stance adopted for this study, the findings in relation to the extant literature have been constructed into a framework that comprises the components and synergies of a coaching development initiative within an organisation. It must be borne in mind that this framework is drawn from the findings of this context specific study, and whilst transferability is possible, generalisability is not claimed and must be viewed from a critical stance. Figure 7.1 presents the framework below.

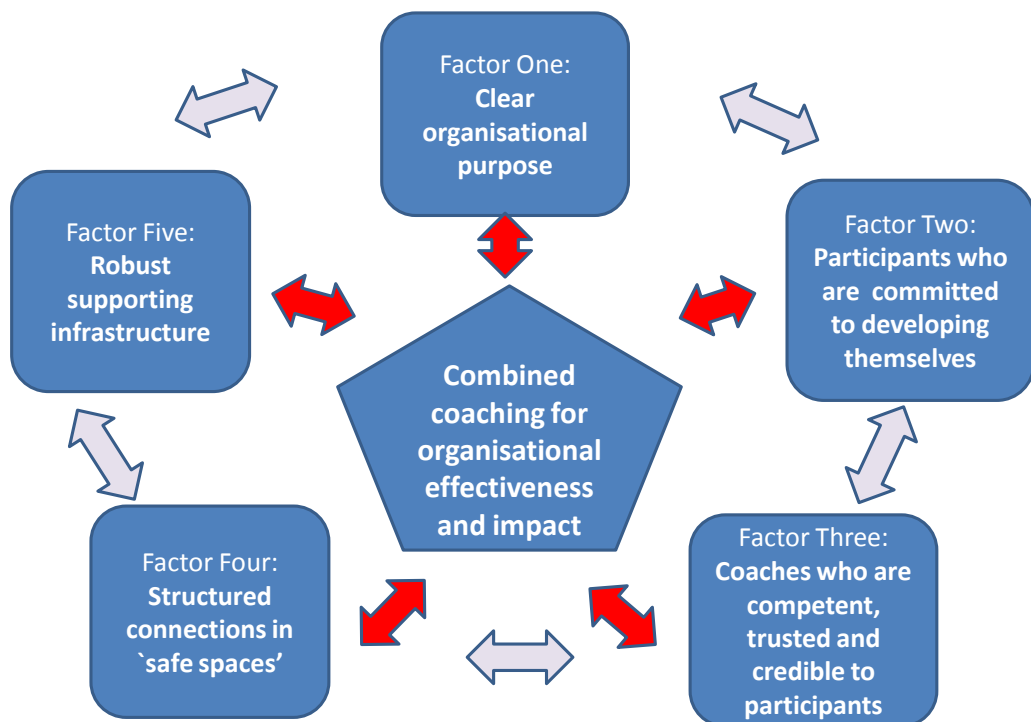


Figure 7.1: A framework for combined coaching effectiveness

Factor One: Clear organisational purpose

Clarity of the overall purpose of the development intervention and why it is important to the business, along with what the combined coaching initiative is trying to cause at an individual level and at an organisational level, appear important to success. Having an overarching purpose that goes beyond the development of the participants, and specifically addresses a broader organisational strategic goal enables all constituent parts to be engaged. This provides a unifying effect and enables stakeholders to be aligned with the overall intention and see how the component parts are congruent with, and contribute to, the overarching goals of the initiative, and the link to the organisational goal.

Factor Two: Participants who are committed to developing themselves

Coaching requires commitment therefore participants who want to develop themselves and are open and willing to engage in coaching, who understand what coaching can and can't do and who are prepared to put in the time and effort required to make it work for them are a key factor. The combination of both types of coaching enables a range of

participants who bring a plethora of different areas and issues for development to benefit. Attention needs to be paid to avoid organisational hierarchy and conflicts of interest to ensure a safe and open space is provided.

Factor Three: Coaches who are competent, trusted and credible to participants

Individual coaches who are competent and willing to build trust and are committed to working with their clients over an 18 month period. The coaches who undertake the individual coaching need to have had some formal coach training and to be credible with their coaches in the coach role. However, they do not necessarily need to be expert or executive coaches; they can be line managers trained to do coaching within the organisation. Group coaches working in pairs and in partnership to deliver group coaching sessions work well. A combination of internal executive coach and external executive coach ensures the optimum balance of understanding fully the context and nuance of the environment within which the development initiative is taking place, coupled with the objectivity and external experience from outside of the system. The expertise that the external coach brings to handling groups and the inherent challenges and complexities this brings to coaching is critical to being able to hold the group, regardless of what emerges within the group sessions. Together, the two types of coaches bring different perspectives and appeared to be optimal in supporting the intervention.

Factor Four: Structured connections in 'safe spaces'

The structure of having a set number of individual coaching sessions, e.g. 12, and a set number of fewer group coaching sessions, e.g. 6, spread out over an 18 month timeframe provides structure for all stakeholders. Having sufficient time between individual sessions – approximately four to six weeks is suggested – with group coaching interspersed across the 18 months, allows for experimentation between sessions and for the interplay between individual and group coaching to take place. The design of the group coaching sessions is enhanced by having an underpinning structure such as ISTRA (Intention, Stories, Themes, Resources and Actions) adds focus and consistency and is flexible enough to respond to the nuance that each group encounters. The selection of the topics covered needs careful attention and will ideally be based on internal and external research. This enables the group coaching sessions to be resonant and have face validity for the participants and the organisation. The careful balance of structure and freedom requires trust from the sponsors or Steering Team to ensure that the overall intention of the initiative is adhered to, whilst ensuring the most culturally appropriate coaching work is carried out with the

groups. In a similar way, trust is required of the individual coaches that they will maintain the discipline and focus required to support their clients through the journey

Factor Five: Robust supporting infrastructure

An aligned Steering Team provides guidance and alignment for participants, line managers and other supporting stakeholders so that they can be educated and engaged with the overarching aim of the development initiative, supporting effective results. Organisational support in terms of budget, business sponsorship and endorsement is an important factor in ensuring that sufficient priority and support is available for the initiative.

Outcome: Combined coaching for organisational effectiveness and impact

At the centre of the framework is combined coaching for organisational effectiveness and impact. The impact of combined coaching can be felt at the individual, group and organisational level. At the individual level, personal development and growth is supported and amplified by the group interactions. The group develops their identity and gains strength from each other and from being part of a larger collective – the total population of the participants. The organisation is impacted from the ripple effect of these leaders taking deliberate actions and holding their identities in the broader organisation.

In this study, the above framework was identified as comprising the underpinning factors enabling success. The Presidents of the three Divisions of Consumer Healthcare, Global Manufacturing and Supply and Core Business Services were all very actively supportive in endorsing and funding participants to attend. Suggestions for potential further enhancements will be made in Chapter Eight: Conclusions and recommendations. Line managers were identified as the 'weak link' in the chain of support for the current study – the variability of their support, commitment and capability led to mixed transference of learning from participants. It is important that they are educated as to the overarching organisational and business purpose for the initiative and that they have access to support and resources so they can play their role of line manager appropriately – not only in tripartite meetings, but also in giving feedback to the participants on a regular basis.

7.5 Summary of discussion

In this chapter, the findings have been drawn together and discussed in relation to the extant literature firstly from the female leader participants' perspective, then from a perspective of the simultaneous experience of individual and group coaching and finally from an organisational perspective of the combined coaching as a development mechanism

for organisations. The discussion then culminated in a proposed five-factor framework for effective combined individual and group coaching as an organisational intervention. The discussion from the female leaders' perspective highlighted how the findings from the study reinforced the extant literature on the experience of executive individual coaching for developing personal impact including self-awareness, self-confidence and enhancing participants' sense of identity. This enabled increased awareness and management of self in regard to others as well as identifying the sense of collective that the group coaching engendered with the 'in vivo code' of 'feeling I am not alone' serving as a summation of many participants' feelings. The experience of simultaneous individual and group coaching was examined and discussed and found to be highly productive and constructive with an overarching synergistic impact. The range and breadth of how the individual coaching was used, coupled with the experiential and experimental safe environment the group coaching provided, served to build social capital for participants. Furthermore, the value and positive benefits that the combination of both types of coaching brought as an experience were identified.

When examined through an organisational effectiveness lens, the combined coaching approach was seen to deliver a development mechanism with a high degree of utility – at an individual, group and organisational level. The combination of the two types of coaching enabled a specific population of leaders within the organisation to be supported through individually tailored interventions delivered through the one-to-one coaching but importantly through the collective benefit of the group coaching. The group coaching engendered connections and a sense of belonging which extended beyond the formal programme, and as such developed social capital for individual participants, the group and the organisation. In this way, the organisation was evidenced to have benefitted from the dual form of coaching intervention. The study findings enabled a framework for a combined coaching effectiveness to be offered for potential use in other organisations. In the final chapter, conclusions are drawn from the research study along with recommendations regarding transferability, future research and potential future applications of the findings from a practitioner standpoint. Reflexivity is also addressed and overall reflections on the learning process are proffered.

Chapter Eight: Conclusions and recommendations

8.1 Introduction

This concluding chapter draws together the overall aims of the research, the outcomes from the findings and the resultant discussion in relation to the extant literature in order to contextualise the main conclusions.

8.2 Conclusions: Revisiting the research aim

The research was undertaken the aim of exploring the experience of simultaneous individual and group coaching of female leaders in a global organisation. Specifically the research objectives were:

1. Critically review and analyse literature on studies and concepts that already exist and identify the methodological approaches that have been applied to date, on individual and group coaching interventions within organisations
2. Explore and evaluate the experience of female leaders' participation in individual and group coaching as part of the Accelerating Difference development programme
3. Make an original contribution to the theoretical and professional knowledge base of the simultaneous use of individual and group coaching in organisations
4. Create a knowledge base for organisations about utilising the combination of individual and group coaching and evaluate the utility of this approach as a development mechanism

The first objective was fulfilled through the critical review and analysis of the literature on studies and concepts that already exist and the identification of the methodological approaches that have been applied to date, on individual and group coaching interventions within organisations, covered in Chapter Two. The second aim has been met through the exploration and evaluation of the experience of female leaders' participation in individual and group coaching as part of the Accelerating Difference development programme, findings reported in Chapter Four and discussed in Chapter Seven. The third research aim has been addressed through the findings reported in Chapter Five and discussed in Chapter Seven. The fourth aim has been fulfilled through the findings reported in Chapter Six and discussed in Chapter Seven.

The gap in knowledge which the research investigated was the experience of simultaneous individual and group coaching in a combined approach, as a development mechanism for organisations and as experienced by female leaders within GSK. This gap in understanding

was apparent as there are relatively few existing studies investigating group coaching (Kets de Vries, 2014; Ward et al., 2014; Mühlberger and Traut-Mattausch, 2015), and even fewer examining the effect of having both types of coaching simultaneously (Florent-Treacy, 2009). Group coaching has been a rather neglected area of research, except for the studies concerning the short-term group work that supports business school programmes (Kets de Vries, 2014; Ward et al., 2014). The research on combined individual and group coaching has been noticeable by its absence, save for the 2010 studies by Brown and Grant and Florent-Treacy (2008). Reasons for this include the relatively limited deployment of combined coaching forms due to cost, the lack of appropriate contexts and situations that allow appropriate research and the prolonged time requirement to complete the study. My position within GSK allowed me to identify the opportunity to research the combined individual and group coaching effect, to gain access on an ongoing basis and to engage fully in the research process, with the awareness and care required that came from an 'insider researcher' perspective. My familiarity with the practice of combined coaching coupled with my extended reading of the extant literature, highlighted the scarcity of studies examining the combined coaching effect over time and this lack of satisfactory evidential research led me to research this area.

Case study was selected as the methodology in order to examine the AD initiative comprising individual and group coaching in the context of GSK and from multiple perspectives. The boundaries for the research were set by identifying the areas of focus as the combined coaching as experienced by female leaders, the effect of the combination of experiencing individual and group coaching, and the combined coaching as a development mechanism for organisations. I took the decision to focus primarily on the experience of the combined coaching and its potential as a developmental mechanism as this was the object of my research, with the female leaders being the subject of the study. As such, I have deliberately chosen to focus on coaching literature and have put boundaries in place around this and to limit the extent to which I bring the extensive research into gender into the discussion. Whilst discussion of gender is important, for the purpose of this research, it is considered background to coaching's foreground in order to be respectful of the boundaries of the study. My conceptual framework was formulated from an ontological stance of social constructionism, and an epistemological stance of interpretivism (Saunders et al., 2011; Romanyshyn and Anderson, 2007). These stances framed the research as allowing multiple versions of the truth to exist, and for similar experiences of coaching to be interpreted and to be meaningful in different ways for participants, coaches and Steering Team members. In

conducting the semi-structured interviews, judgement was required to ensure they were appropriate in length and depth given the professional context in which they were conducted (Saunders et al., 2011). The semi-structured nature was appropriate for eliciting the personal responses and perspectives of the interviewees and allowed for free ranging meaning to be made from multiple points of view. The original purpose of doing the interviews twice was to understand the longevity of the impact of the experience of the coaching. However, following the coding of the first interviews, the completion of which by necessity had spread out over time, it became clear that it was important to utilise the second interviews as a way of examining in detail some of the main themes coming up in the first interviews. Analysing the data in a thematic way enabled prominent areas of focus to be identified by initially staying close to the interview transcriptions in a literal sense, before more conceptual themes could be identified through deeper analyses. Consequently the conceptual scaffolding that underpins the research is coherent with the methodology deployed in data collection and analysis (Creswell, 2014).

From a practice perspective, the study was positioned to help inform GSK coaching professionals, and other development departments within the organisation such as Leadership Development and Organisation Development, about the potential of both forms of coaching as a development mechanism for leaders. Whilst the generalisability of the study is not applicable, the transferability is significant and discussed later in this chapter.

8.3 Conclusions

The first conclusion to be drawn is the reported power of the combined coaching intervention as a development mechanism for organisations. Given the nature of the business world today, the uncertainty, the volatility and the complexity which defines the environment in which leaders of large, global organisations have to operate, identifying human resource development mechanisms that enable reportedly effective, targeted development is a significant find. The nature of coaching seems particularly suited to the context of our times in that it creates the much needed time and space for reflective thought through the creation of safe holding spaces (Kahn, 2001). With the emphasis on challenging the status quo through enquiry, reflection and awareness building during the coaching process, the overall experience is significant in terms of growth at an individual, group and organisation level. The combined coaching experiences amplified the beneficial effects of development and served to support the building of social capital within the organisation. For multi-business organisations, the ability to support the development of social capital provides

the potential for significant strategic advantage as inter-dependence becomes a consistent way of being and operating for global organisations (Galli and Müller-Stewens, 2012). Chuang et al. (2016) identified the significant influence that social capital has on both collective learning and absorptive capacity, reinforcing the value of combined coaching within the current highly matrixed and high pressured environment of GSK. Indicators of the presence of social exchange theory (Kim and Kuo, 2015) were also in evidence and supported the development of networks, relationships and reciprocal interactions that originated within the group coaching, and extended beyond the coaching sessions into the broader organisational operation. The combination of the theoretical constructs of social capital and social exchange theory can be seen to bring fresh insights into exploring how coaching, and in particular, combined individual and joint coaching, is experienced in organisations. The combined coaching experience appears to enable synergy to be developed between the formation of social exchange between participants, coaches and the organisation which then contributes to the formation of social capital, at an individual, group and organisational level. This combination of social exchange and social capital theories enabled further light to be shed on the experiences of the participants, specifically highlighting how the reciprocal relationships were seen as contributory to the development of social capital for female leaders. This study's remit was not to explore the extent of the organisational learning or impact over time, however, this could be a potential future research opportunity.

The synergistic relationship between individual and group coaching proved to be a significant conclusion from the study. The complex inter-play between the two types of coaching enabled individual areas of concern or interest to be explored in a one-to-one conversation with a coach, then taken and explored more broadly in a group setting allowing for other perspectives and views to be heard. Individual coaching has long been identified as having the capacity to support significant individual development and to a certain extent, group coaching has been shown to have a positive impact on the development of leaders (Florent-Treacy, 2009). In examining the simultaneous use of both types of coaching it is possible to identify several significant amplification effects. These synergistic effects are broad and varied encompassing movement from individual to group and group to individual interaction/learning often on a serial basis. Whilst personal preference for one or other types of coaching was expressed, overall, the majority of participants – coachees, coaches and Steering Team members – identified overwhelmingly that the combination had a synergistic effect on the power and significance of the coaching and hence the accelerated nature of the development.

From a strategic perspective looking at different stages of thinking and reflecting about people and organisations and the appropriate stances of leadership, it is possible to identify corresponding progression of ages with different requirements of coaching at each stage. The initial industrial age was underpinned by the original principles of scientific management (Taylor, 1914) thereby focusing on work as a series of repeatable tasks with clear outcomes. In this age, coaching was very much focused on goal setting, driving through actions to meet pre-determined goals, finding solutions and could be characterised by the GROW model (Whitmore, 1994). With the progression to what might be called the individual age, the focus shifted to high performance of the individual – on how could each person as an individual maximise their performance in their own way (Wasylyshyn, 2003; MacKie, 2014). This approach caused coaching to look towards gestalt, positive psychology and emotional intelligence to provide underpinning approaches and tools, with the focus being on personal achievement and happiness, better relationships and insights (Seligman, 2007; Boyatzis et al., 2013). As we move to what might be called an age of connection where conditions of work are necessarily calling for improvisation, of emergence and the ability to navigate constant change, coaching is required to change too. A more systemic approach is required, taking into account inter-personal relationships as well as intra-personal, group and team connections as well as transcultural and whole organisation systems perspectives (Mayer and Viviers, 2016). This requires coaching to be concerned with emergence, to be skilled in co-creation of experiments, of looking holistically at the context of the coaching, as well as the content. In this way, the use of multiple approaches to coaching – individual, group, system wide – in a flexible and fluid manner becomes necessary to support individuals and organisations. The co-creation requires the involvement of diverse viewpoints and perspectives from different backgrounds, cultures and functions as well as an openness to potential shifts in the purist non-directive executive coaching that is the norm today (Kempster and Iszatt-White, 2012).

The second conclusion to be drawn from the research concerns the level and type of coaching required to contribute to the effectiveness of the coaching intervention (Jones et al., 2015). The Job Plus Coaches' individual coaching contributions were reported as being highly effective in supporting the leaders – they were viewed as supportive, challenging and highly credible. Their status as GSK employees served to assist in the understanding of the nuance and culture of the organisation and allowed trust to be developed between coach and coachee. This conclusion asserts that coaches who are internal, and who have had some professional training and supervision as coaches, but who are not at the standard of Executive Coaches, are still able to contribute to generating change and supporting

development of leaders within the organisation. The ability of the JPCs to build trust, to create safe holding spaces where their clients can pause, reflect and spend time out of the hectic 'day job' was highly valued by the clients and by the organisation's proxy, the Steering Team members. Consequently, the JPCs could be viewed as an extremely valuable resource for the organisation as they are leaders who are paid to do their day jobs, and coach colleagues in addition to these roles. The potential value that internal coaches can bring has been demonstrated previously by Goldsmith et al. (2004) and Mckee et al., (2009), and the current research not only reinforces these findings but extends the evidence to include coaching cross-culturally, over an extended period and including group coaching. The research demonstrated that the effectiveness of this type of resource, one that is generated within an organisation and that is managed as an internal resource, can be highly effective in this type of structured development intervention. The JPCs involved in AD were supported by the Coaching Centre of Excellence staff through briefings and support calls, and attended regular supervision provided by professional, external coach supervisors. This finding could also be seen to further reinforce the emphasis there is on the coaching relationship per se being critical to the effectiveness of coaching, rather than the coach's experience or expertise (Grant, 2014a; O'Broin and Palmer, 2006).

The third conclusion from the research is the experience of the combined coaching in supporting the authentic development of women and the characteristics and strengths they bring to an organisation. The combination of individual and group coaching proved highly synergistic and powerful in supporting female leader development as it allowed individual differences to be embraced and deeper, personal development to happen at the appropriate pace and depth for each coachee. This flourishing of individuals as they recognised their identity and individuality enabled the leaders to step into their power and lead in authentic ways. Additionally, the synergistic combination of coaching methods enabled the collective development of networks and the building of social capital (Galli and Müller-Stewens, 2012). Acquiring social capital is a key requirement of leaders who have to operate successfully in highly complex, matrixed organisations competing in an increasingly global and socially responsible environment (Voegtlin et al., 2012). Social capital is also frequently cited as being particularly challenging for female or other minority leaders to develop and has therefore been identified as a potential barrier to career advancement (Mavin et al., 2014). Additionally, the combined coaching effect was particularly valuable in building the inwardly focused areas of development, such as self-awareness, self-efficacy and self-belief – areas that the majority of the female leaders, and their line managers, had identified as being

particularly important for them to develop (Mavin et al., 2014; Skinner, 2014). As such, the utility of the combined coaching appears to be efficacious in that building the interior capability of the leaders provides the required solid foundation on which to build other leadership capabilities required in today's organisations such as impact, presence and the ability to influence across boundaries. The importance of the microclimate created by the line manager and those closest to the participants was identified. Taking a systemic view of the development initiative appeared to be necessary in order to ensure the growth and success of the female leaders.

A secondary conclusion that can be drawn was the extent to which the system in which the coaching takes place plays a part in the overall efficacy of the coaching. When the organisational infrastructure is supportive and aligned, particularly through line managers, the effects of the combined coaching were reported as enhanced for participants. However, when there is a line manager who is not supportive, the perceived overall impact of the coaching is lessened. In some cases, where the line manager was particularly unsupportive, life changing decisions were prompted which included leaving GSK. The coachees reported experiencing substantial personal growth as a result of their combined coaching experience, but this was not matched by the response of their line managers or leaders playing a significant role in their immediate career opportunities. The dissonance created between the coachees and their line managers was felt to be too great and therefore the women chose to leave the organisation. This fallout of key talent is one potential disadvantage caused by the intensity of the combined coaching experience as a development mechanism and prompts considered selection before deployment by organisations, prior to implementation. However, on balance while the line managers may prove to be a potential limiting factor there are facilitating factors as those leaders who experience coaching are clearly more likely to contribute back and support organisational and community development further, demonstrating the active presence of social exchange theory (Kim and Kuo, 2015; Rutti et al., 2013).

8.4 Recommendations for GSK

The results of my research yield several clear implications for GSK regarding the use of coaching in GSK to support the growth and development of individuals and groups as well as how to utilise coaching to support organisational change. Firstly, the findings of the study clearly highlight the reported power of coaching in the development of female leaders. The argument for women only development initiatives continues to provoke

controversy and prompts the question: should the AD coaching initiative be for women only? It is still an issue for GSK and they are not alone – McKinsey's report in the series Women Matter 2012: Making the Breakthrough (Devillard et al., 2012) found that gender diversity was found to be among the top ten strategic priorities for over 50% of the 235 leading European companies studied, twice that of 2010. However, only 47% chose to offer women's development programmes as 'women-specific programmes stigmatize women. We prefer to focus on excellent talent management – for both men and women' (Devillard et al., 2012, p. 10). However, as Vinnicombe et al. (2013) identify, typically women's voices are silenced in mixed gender programmes and topics of concern to women are not addressed, women have different ways of knowing and learning, and have very different experiences at work compared to men (Vinnicombe et al., 2013). Any women's leadership initiative needs to take into account both the sex-related differences found in relationship to leadership and gender dynamics which tend to shape organisational cultures (Vinnicombe et al., 2013). The recommendation for GSK is to continue with the female-only AD initiative, and to explore the potential use of combined coaching as a way of developing all leaders and addressing specific organisational issues that are not to do with gender. It would be interesting to examine the use of combined coaching to support the development of other minority groups, for example on the basis of race or sexual orientation.

In terms of recommendations for coaching within GSK, the study highlighted the value of the JPCs – their commitment and willingness to support their clients on a long-term basis had a very positive impact – this use of internal coaches supports the pattern of the increasing use of internal coaches and their effectiveness (Passmore, 2015a; Goldsmith et al., 2004). The JPCs demonstrated their value and positive contribution to GSK and proved the contribution they can make. Given that the basis on which they operate is voluntary, and in addition to their 'day job', some form of recognition and valuing of their JPC work at an organisational level would seem appropriate and needed – rather than just relying on the principles of reciprocity inherent in social exchange theory (Rutti et al., 2013). These valuable resources have finite time and energy but deploying them more broadly on similar initiatives would be extremely beneficial to GSK, as the findings of the study demonstrate, and giving them appropriate organisational recognition and appreciation would seem fair and appropriate.

The study has shed light on the power of individual and group coaching in supporting change at an organisational level. The recommendation here is to reinforce the changes

achieved through engaging more at a business level and following through with each business lead team, e.g. Consumer Healthcare or GMS, to ensure the investment maximises its impact. The degree to which the initiative has achieved organisation-wide change is open to challenge – change has certainly been experienced by many women with 46% of the participants of the first cohort gaining promotion (Grade 5 and 6), as compared to a comparison group of female leaders at 27% and male leaders at 26%. However, this is for a specific population within the broader GSK organisation; in order for the systemic goal of shifting the gender ratio at all levels of the organisation, this AD initiative will need to run for several more years for the change to be tangible and to the extent desired. Furthermore, this mechanism of combined coaching could be deployed to address other issues concerning minorities and difference. For example, a similar initiative could be used to support the development of ethnically diverse individuals to progress their careers, or age related difference or disability related difference – supporting them in developing social capital, traditionally harder to do in minority populations (Galli and Müller-Stewens, 2012).

8.5 Recommendations for future research

This research has highlighted the potential for utilising coaching in a different format to address a key organisational challenge. In keeping with the three perspectives taken, there are potential areas of further research that relate to each one. In the area of female leader development through coaching, a future study of value would be to look at the experience of having only group coaching, rather than combined coaching. In this way, it would be possible to identify the extent of the synergistic effect of combined coaching and to determine the potential positive effect of just having group coaching, if circumstances such as cost proved prohibitive to having both types of coaching. Another area to study would be to include men as well as women in having both individual and group coaching. In this way, the context or real world of the organisation is more accurately reflected in the participant makeup, however potentially different issues would crop up. Whilst it could be argued that this would significantly change the focus of the study, it would demonstrate that the topic of female leader progression within organisations is one that is not a 'women only' issue, but is one that impacts the whole organisation (Mavin et al., 2014). Additionally, the topics that are covered in the group coaching could be seen as equally applicable to both genders and therefore men would benefit from being included (Robins and Trzesniewski, 2005; Appelbaum et al., 2003; Hyde, 2014).

In the area of the combined use of individual and group coaching, a future useful study would be to utilise this joint methodology to another population or group to see if the experience is different or similar. In this way, a study could examine the joint coaching approach as applied to a key organisational issue, for example, in bringing together people from the Audit, Compliance and Legal departments within an organisation with the purpose of creating collaboration between functions and supporting them in the way they can constructively challenge the business as part of their work. Another example would be to utilise combined coaching in the integration of two organisations following a merger or acquisition. In this way, the robustness of the model and the utility of having the individual as well as group coaching would be tested across both genders, and across a specific subset of an organisation's population on a real issue.

From the organisational standpoint, a potentially valuable research area would be to look at the use of the combined coaching as a way of addressing a key organisational issue, for example in a merger or acquisition integration phase, in support of the implementation of a new organisational structure or as a way of increasing collaboration amongst functions that need to be aligned in their operation within the broader organisation. In this way, there would be clear organisational outcomes required – i.e. the successful integration of the new organisation or establishment of the new organisation, by which to measure the impact of the coaching. Additionally, quantitative measures such as retention and synergy savings could be assessed to utilise a mixed methods approach and, in so doing, reinforce more common organisational needs to quantify initiatives and their impact (Cooper and Finkelstein, 2014). Another recommendation for future research based on the findings of this study could be to replicate the same study within other large organisations in different industries. Comparing GSK to other organisations such as BP, Unilever, KPMG, British Airways or public organisations such as the National Health Service or the Civil Service would give comparative data from a cross-organisational and cross-context perspective.

Taking a more psychological frame of reference, a potential area of further research could usefully be looking at the longer-term impact of the experience of simultaneous individual and group coaching on the individuals concerned. It would be very interesting to re-interview participants over a period of several years to ascertain the long-term impact of the coaching initiative they experienced and to see if the experience led to increased consciousness, self-determination and self-awareness in future career and life decisions (Adams and Adams, 2016; Yukl et al., 2002).

From a coaching practitioner standpoint, it would be of value to do further research into the nature of the coaching conducted within the individual coaching sessions in order to examine the impact of different styles and delivery of coaching. In this way, a form of narrative analysis from actual sessions would be required and potentially video analyses to help ascertain exactly what was said and how the coaching was conducted and the potential differences experienced by the clients. The mode of delivery of the individual coaching, whether face to face or via live meeting/webcam could then also be examined and differences of impact explored. This would take forward the practical aspects of the individual coaching. An extension to this could be reviewing in detail the differences in experiences between the coachees who attended the standard six face to face half day group coaching sessions and the two day intensive face to face group coaching session, followed by the four virtual sessions and the closing two day face to face intensive group coaching session to close. This would support the current research into different modalities of delivery for coaching (Athanasopoulou and Dopson, 2015; Linley, 2006).

8.6 Limitations of the research

The limitations of the research relate to the nature of qualitative research in general, the approach taken and the limitations inherent in case study methodology where the research findings are contextually focused. Given the nature of the sampling in terms of size, composition and the specific organisational context within which the study was carried out, the research findings cannot be generalised to the wider population. The interpretivist perspective from which this study is conducted also inherently limits the broader application of the findings as sense making limitations and vagaries may also apply, given the multiplicity of views and complexities of different stakeholders' perspectives. As the interviewees were all looking back on their experience with retrospective interpretation, they were relying on recall and reconstruction which brings complexities and variance into the findings (Evers et al., 2006).

The formulation of the research question, the philosophical stance taken and the methodology used have also impacted and may have limited the utility of the findings of this study. Alternative methodologies such as action learning could have been used, however this approach would not have allowed the investigation of the initiative as it had been deployed in the organisation – rather it would be actively designing or redesigning the initiative, which was not required or wanted by the organisation. The gaps found in the literature related to the combination of individual and group coaching simultaneously as

group coaching is sparsely examined and the combination even more rarely researched. As such, the case study approach appeared to be the most appropriate to fill these gaps and to take the literature forward from an academic and practitioner standpoint. The study has demonstrated the power and value of the combined approach and the findings could reasonably be transferable to other multinational organisations, who are seeking to explore the issue of female leader development. From a methodological perspective, interviewing 15 female leaders twice was in line with appropriate case study and business research design (Bryman and Bell, 2015), however garnering more interviews from the coaches' perspective and interviewing more Steering Team members would have given a broader perspective from the key stakeholders. Also, interviewing line managers' and sponsors of the female participants would have given some additional insights from multiple points of view to add to the rich picture created by the research (Stake, 1995).

Another limitation of the research study was the skewed ethnic background of the participants. Whilst the organisation, GSK, is a global organisation, therefore the population that experienced AD came from 20 countries, nevertheless a significant proportion came from the UK. This was because the business divisions that took part had more women in positions that were situated in the UK than in sites or local operating companies around the world. This is due, in part, to more roles at the requisite grade being located in the UK, followed by the US, and partly by the ratio of male to female leaders increases outside the US and UK, something the AD initiative is set up to address. In this way, the ethnic diversity of the study could have been broader to fully represent the diversity of the company; however, it did represent the gender split accurately.

A further limitation of the study is the choice of case study. By the nature of the inherent design being centred on one single case, case study as a methodology does not allow for generalisability, it is context specific and can only really be reflective of the interpretation of events and experiences that pertained to a specific set of people, female leaders, coaches and Steering Team Members, at a specific moment in time – during and after the first cohort of AD, with one organisation, GSK.

8.7 Theoretical contributions

This qualitative research from a social constructionist perspective enabled the meaning of the experience of combined coaching to be co-constructed between the participants and myself as researcher. As such, multiple perspectives of the experience of the combined coaching were constructed during the interviews and then interpreted through the analysis

and discussion process. The range, depth and nuance of the way individual coaching was experienced and utilised – from intrapersonal development, strategic career development and planning through to pragmatic problem solving – was captured and meaning interpreted from these constructions. The social constructionist stance has enabled multiple perspectives of the same experience to be made conscious through a thorough, robust and evidence-based enquiry into the experience of simultaneous individual and group coaching. How meaning is made from these multiple versions of real experience has been through interpretation – from individual participants and myself as researcher.

Furthermore, the research has highlighted how the combined coaching approach brings together social exchange theory and social capital theory and illustrates the synergistic impact when they are evidenced together. The underpinning theories of adult learning, person-centred development and organisational systems theory are also built upon in service of explaining and identifying the findings of the study. The experience of having combined individual and group coaching over a prolonged period of time, as part of a development programme situated within an organisation, was a gap this research has addressed and has made a “modest contribution to knowledge, that is reasonable and can be defended” (Woolliams, 2005 cited in Trafford & Lesham, 2008,p.50).

8.8 Professional contributions

The research may be seen to contribute to the practice of coaching in a professional way through the demonstration of the effectiveness of the experience of combined coaching from the coachees, coaches and Steering Team members’ perspectives. The focus on group coaching brings attention to this under-utilised form of coaching. The study enables the power and utility of group coaching to be recognised and provides accounts of how coaches can be purposeful and targeted in their use of group coaching with clients. This form of coaching can potentially be used by coaches to access clients in new and different ways and to reposition coaching as a versatile mechanism for use in many new and different situations. The finding that internal coaches can have a definite positive impact on people’s development without the need to be executive coaches has the potential to encourage the development of internal coaching more broadly. Furthermore, the positive effect of the partnership between internal and external coaches may be seen as a possible future area of growth for the coaching industry.

The study contributes to the practice of coaching within organisations and has several implications specifically for large organisations. The generation of the framework for

effective combined coaching as an effective development mechanism within organisations is a key contribution. The combined coaching approach demonstrated that it could be used by leadership and organisational development professionals, and professional coaches, as a guide to replicating or designing specific combined coaching initiatives for use in organisations. The concept of utilising both individual and group coaching simultaneously as a way of changing aspects of organisations contributes to positioning coaching as a credible organisational, as well as individual, approach to change. While the well-known saying that coaching helps change organisations one conversation at a time still remains true, it is also possible to see how it can contribute on a larger scale too. From an organisational sponsor of coaching perspective, the combined coaching gives another, powerful and generative mechanism with which to equip the leaders within the organisation to be able to handle change more effectively. Large organisations which have developed their internal coaching capability may benefit from applying the partnership model utilised in this study to build enhanced flexibility and credibility with their senior leadership.

8.9 Personal reflections

The reflexive process of observing myself as I have been completing this research has been extremely useful in developing my interpretivist approach. The separation from my role in GSK that the role of researcher has been challenging but ultimately very rewarding. To keep this separation, I have found myself continually having to pull myself back to researcher role as distinct from work role, to catch and stop myself from saying 'we' as this was a clear indication to me of where I inadvertently slipped back into my work role. At times during the research it was tempting to ignore the not-so-positive comments, or to discard the negative responses to the efficacy of the coaching. My challenge was to choose to see these for what they are in reality, all data, and as such, all valuable with no judgement attached. This reflexivity enabled me to take a fresh look at my GSK role and work – the objectivity that being both an insider researcher and a student again was highly refreshing and energising for me.

At times, I did find myself overwhelmed with the enormity of the data analyses and interpretation and the constant feeling of being a small boat on a very rough sea was an analogy I kept coming back to, with feelings of euphoria when a chapter was completed, followed by a deep trough of recognition of the enormity of the task when I commenced the next chapter. The process has taught me self-discipline and the value of going into

depth on a topic that is highly meaningful – that of the application of coaching in various forms, for the development of people and organisations. I am sharing my findings and experiences at various conferences during 2016 and plan to publish articles based on my research in 2017.

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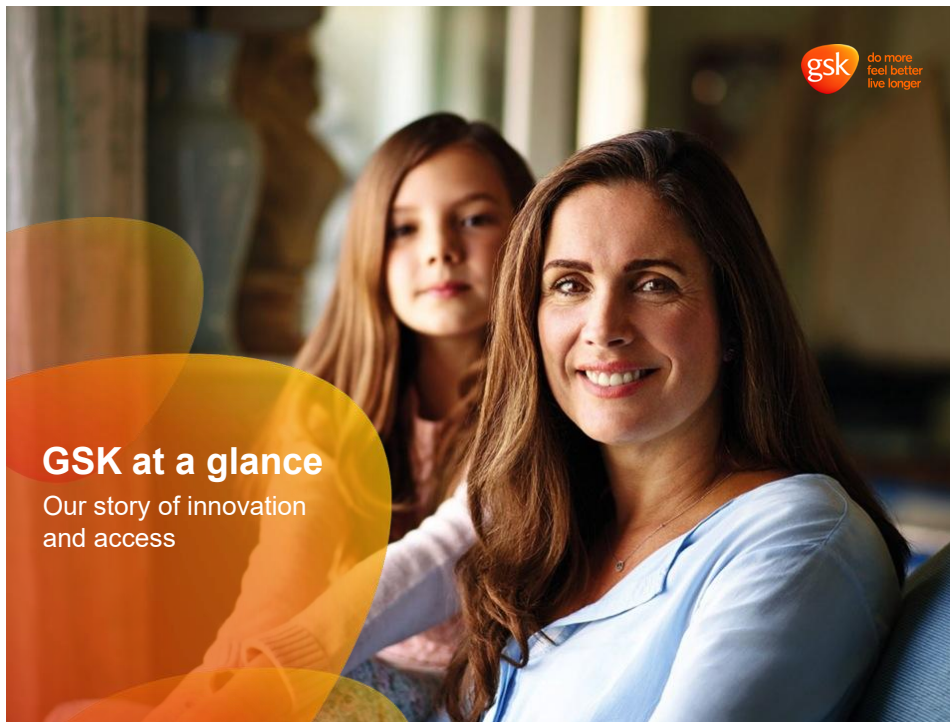
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Appendix One: GSK Company Information (supplied by GSK, 2016)



What we do



<h3>Pharmaceuticals</h3>	<h3>Vaccines</h3>	<h3>Consumer Healthcare</h3>
<p>We develop and make medicines to treat a range of conditions including respiratory diseases and HIV/AIDS</p>	<p>We research and make vaccines for children and adults that protect against infectious diseases</p>	<p>We make a range of consumer healthcare products in four categories: Wellness, Skin health, Oral health and Nutrition</p>
<p>4bn packs of medicines in 2014</p>	<p>800m doses of vaccines in 2014</p>	<p>18bn packs of consumer healthcare products in 2013</p>

1

We have a history of innovation



A 150 year legacy of helping transform the lives and futures of millions of people around the world

<h3>Developing antibiotics</h3> <p>We pioneered the development of new antibiotics, including one that is still widely used 40 years after its introduction</p>	<h3>Transforming HIV/AIDS</h3> <p>We developed the first medicine to treat HIV/AIDS.</p>	<h3>Hope for respiratory diseases</h3> <p>Over the past 40 years our scientific research and medicines have transformed the treatment of asthma and other respiratory diseases.</p>	<h3>Fighting polio</h3> <p>For over 60 years we've been supporting the battle to eradicate polio and today we provide one third of the polio vaccines used in the Global Polio Eradication Initiative.</p>	<h3>Preventing measles and rubella</h3> <p>We created the first measles vaccine in the 1960s and the first rubella vaccine in the 1970s.</p>	<h3>A world-leader in OTC medicines</h3> <p>Over the past 90 years we've helped millions of people treat their cold, flu and pain symptoms with over-the-counter medicines like <i>Panadol</i> and <i>Beechams</i>.</p>

4

Appendix Two: Natalie Woodford invitation to female leaders, Coaches and Steering Team Members to participate in the study

Email From: Natalie Woodford

Email To: Female Leaders, Coaches and Steering Team Members of Accelerating Difference Cohort 1

Dear Accelerating Difference Female Leaders, Coaches and Steering Team Members

I would like to take this opportunity to let you know of a research project that is being conducted with eligible people associated with Cohort 1 of AD. It is looking at the experience of having individual and group coaching as part of the Accelerating Difference project.

Taking part in this research is entirely voluntary and you do not have to take part if you do not want to - participation or not, will in no way impact upon your career, development or progression within GSK. The interviews will be confidential and will be with Sally Bonneywell, VP Coaching, who is conducting this research as part of a doctoral research project which she is doing as part of her own personal development – she is not doing this behalf of the TL&OD Centre of Excellence.

The results of the research are Sally's, and she will provide the participants with a summary of the outcomes upon completion and upon request.

What is required from you if you agree to participate? One interview lasting approximately an hour. These may be conducted in person at GSK House, over webcam or by telephone, whichever suits you.

Please respond to Sally directly if you would be willing to take part.

Many thanks

Natalie Woodford

Appendix Three: Consent Form



CONSENT FORM

Full title of Project: Exploring the experience of female leaders' participation in both individual and group coaching in a global organisation

Name: Sally Bonneywell

Position: Doctorate of Coaching and Mentoring Student

Contact Address: c/o International Centre for Coaching and Mentoring Studies
Oxford Brookes University, Wheatley Campus, Wheatley, Oxford, OX33 1HX

Email: 13013077@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.

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.

Please initial box

Yes

No

4. I agree to the interview being audio recorded

5. I agree to the use of anonymised quotes in publications

Name of Participant

Date

Signature

Name of Researcher

Date

Signature

Appendix Four: Organisational Approval for the Research Study from Natalie Woodford (Senior Vice President, TL&OD Center of Excellence)

Email From: Natalie Woodford

Email To: Participants of AD Cohort 1

Dear Accelerating Difference Participant,

I would like to take this opportunity to let you know of a research project that is being conducted with eligible participants of Cohort 1 of AD. It is looking at the experience of having individual and group coaching as part of the Accelerating Difference project.

Taking part in this research is entirely voluntary and you do not have to take part if you do not want to - participation or not, will in no way impact upon your career, development or progression within GSK. The interviews will be confidential and will be with Sally Bonneywell, VP Coaching, who is conducting this research as part of a doctoral research project which she is doing as part of her own personal development – she is not doing this behalf of the TL&OD Centre of Excellence.

The results of the research are Sally's, and she will provide the participants with a summary of the outcomes upon completion and upon request.

What is required from you if you agree to participate? Two interviews lasting approximately one and a half hours – one in January 2015 and one in March 2015. These may be conducted in person at GSK House, over webcam or by telephone, whichever suits you.

Please respond to me, via Giuliana Verbini and let us know if you would be willing to take part.

Many thanks

Natalie Woodford

SVP TL&OD Centre of Excellence

Appendix Five: First Interview Schedule – Female Leader

Sally Bonneywell

Interview Schedule for participants in research project:

Exploring the experience of female leaders' participation in both individual and group coaching in a global organisation

Thank you for agreeing to be interviewed by me as part of my doctoral research which I am carrying out for my own personal development. I am interviewing you in my capacity of researcher, not on behalf of GSK or TL&OD.

Can I check that you have received the Participant Information Sheet which describes the interview process, confidentiality and monitoring process and are OK to proceed on this basis?

I would like to make an audio recording this conversation and then transcribe it for use in my data analyses, are you ok with this? If you would like me to turn the recorder off at any time, please just say and I will turn it off and that part of the conversation will be excluded from my research data.

Please remember your participation is entirely voluntary and you and you are free to withdraw from the conversation and study. You have been sent a Participant Information Sheet which covers this information in more detail, should you wish to refer to it.

Are you ok to start the interview?

Please answer the questions exactly as you want to – there are no right or wrong answers, just your views, perspectives and opinions which I am very interested in finding more about.

1. Can you describe the journey of being a participant on AD?
2. Having completed the programme, what would you say you got out of it?
3. Please tell me about your experience of having individual (one to one) coaching?
(The following questions will be prompts for further elucidation)
 - What sort of things did you cover in individual coaching?
 - In what ways did the individual coaching impact you?
 - What stood out for you from the individual coaching?
4. Please tell me about your experience of having group coaching?
(The following questions will be prompts for further elucidation)
 - What sort of things did you cover in the group coaching?
 - In what ways did the group coaching impact you?
 - What stood out for you from the group coaching?
5. Please tell me about what experience of having both individual and group coaching was like?
6. Looking back, what would be your reflections on your life and work from having been a participant on AD?
7. Is there anything else you would like to tell me about the experience of being a participant on AD?

Thank you for participating in this research interview and I hope you have found it beneficial to have this conversation. If you reflect on the conversation and feel that you would like to discuss any issues raised again with me, please contact me immediately on 13013077@brookes.ac.uk to arrange a time to talk. If on reflection, you would like to receive some external support or to have a conversation with an external to GSK executive coach, please refer to the email I have sent you with the details of the external executive coach and the GSK Employee Assistance Programme.

Thank you for agreeing to the second interview, I have sent you an invitation to this and it will be in approximately three months time.

Appendix Six: Second Interview Schedule – Female Leader

Sally Bonneywell

Interview Schedule for participants in research project:

Exploring the experience of female leaders' participation in both individual and group coaching in a global organisation

Second Interview:

Thank you for agreeing to be interviewed by me a second time as part of my doctoral research, which I am carrying out for my own personal development. I am interviewing you in my capacity of researcher, not on behalf of GSK or TL&OD.

Can I check that you have received the Participant Information Sheet which describes the interview process, confidentiality and monitoring process and are OK to proceed on this basis?

Just as a reminder, like last time I would like to make an audio recording this conversation and then transcribe it for use in my data analyses, are you ok with this? If you would like me to turn the recorder off at any time, please just say and I will turn it off and that part of the conversation will be excluded from my research data.

Please remember your participation is entirely voluntary and you and you are free to withdraw from the conversation and study, You have been sent a Participant Information Sheet which covers this information in more detail, should you wish to refer to it.

Are you ok to start the interview?

Please answer the questions exactly as you want to – there are no right or wrong answers, just your views, perspectives and opinions which I am very interested in finding more about.

Please answer the questions from your position of having completed the Accelerating Difference programme approximately six months ago.

1. Has anything changed for you since our last interview that you could put down to being a participant in AD?
2. Individual Coaching is well recognised as being one method of helping leaders to develop. How effective did you find it as a development process, what made it so?
3. Individual Coaching appears to have been used to explore a broad range of areas. What were your development objectives and did you achieve them?
4. Did you also use the individual coaching to explore other topics and areas in addition to your coaching objective areas – and what were they?
5. How would you describe what the individual coaching sessions gave you?
6. Did you experience any change in your relationship with your line manager as a result of being a participant in AD? If so, what was the change?
7. Did being part of AD influence your relationship with your team and how you work with them?
8. Did it have any impact on your view and relationship to GSK?
9. What did you get out of the group coaching sessions?
10. How would you describe the impact of the group coaching sessions on you – what, if anything has changed as a result?
11. Can you describe for me the experience of having both individual and group coaching please – what stood out for you?

12. Looking back, what was it like being a participant in Accelerating Difference, Cohort 1?
13. Having completed the programme approximately six months ago, what would you say has been the impact of your participation?
14. Looking back, what would be your reflections on your life and work from having been a participant on AD, six months after completing the programme?
15. Is there anything else you would like to tell me about the experience of being a participant on AD?

Thank you for participating in this research interview and I hope you have found it beneficial to have this conversation. If you reflect on the conversation and feel that you would like to discuss any issues raised again with me, please contact me immediately on 13013077@brookes.ac.uk to arrange a time to talk. If on reflection, you would like to receive some external support or to have a conversation with an external to GSK executive coach, please refer to the email I have sent you with the details of the external executive coach and the GSK Employee Assistance Programme.

Sally Bonneywell

Appendix Seven: Interview Schedule – Steering Team members and Coaches

Sally Bonneywell

Interview Schedule for Steering Team members and Coaches in the research project:

Exploring the experience of female leaders' participation in both individual and group coaching in a global organisation

Thank you for agreeing to be interviewed by me as part of my doctoral research which I am carrying out for my own personal development. I am interviewing you in my capacity of researcher, not on behalf of GSK or TL&OD.

Can I check that you have received the Participant Information Sheet which describes the interview process, confidentiality and monitoring process and are OK to proceed on this basis?

I would like to make an audio recording this conversation and then transcribe it for use in my data analyses, are you ok with this? If you would like me to turn the recorder off at any time, please just say and I will turn it off and that part of the conversation will be excluded from my research data.

Please remember your participation is entirely voluntary and you are free to withdraw from the conversation and study, You have been sent a Participant Information Sheet which covers this information in more detail, should you wish to refer to it.

Are you ok to start the interview?

Please answer the questions exactly as you want to – there are no right or wrong answers, just your views, perspectives and opinions which I am very interested in finding more about.

1. Can you describe your experience of being a ST member /Coach on AD?
2. Thinking about cohort one, what would you say you/your business got out of it?
3. What would you say were the high points of the initiative?
4. What would you say were the low points, or what could have been improved in AD?
5. What did you experience the female leaders getting out of being a participant?
6. Thinking about the topics covered in the group coaching – self-confidence, power presence and impact, working with conflict, leadership brand – did these resonate, were these the right topics – or what in your view should they have been?
7. We deliberately chose to support the female leaders through coaching versus a typical class room/leadership development programme – on reflection what are your views on that?
8. Which elements do you believe were helpful and which were not?
9. What got in the way of it having the optimal impact?
10. Any thoughts about the line manager's role?
11. From an organisational perspective, what do you think the benefits are of AD?
12. What impact have you noticed from an organisational perspective?

13. How would you rate the effectiveness of the combined individual and group coaching as a development mechanism – what is your view on the utility of this approach?
14. Is there anything else you would like to tell me about the experience of being a Steering Team member or Coach on AD?

Thank you for participating in this research interview and I hope you have found it beneficial to have this conversation. If you reflect on the conversation and feel that you would like to discuss any issues raised again with me, please contact me immediately on 13013077@brookes.ac.uk to arrange a time to talk. If on reflection, you would like to receive some external support or to have a conversation with an external to GSK executive coach, please refer to the email I have sent you with the details of the external executive coach and the GSK Employee Assistance Programme.

Appendix Eight: Example of a transcribed interview with initial coding

Interview Template

Interview with: 2

Date: 12th February

Title: Business unit director, mass market Poland

Department: Mass market

Business: Consumer Healthcare Poland

Location: Warsaw

Country of origin: Poland

How long in current role: a month and half, previously central and eastern Europe marketing director for oral health

How long with GSK: 13 years in August

Marital Status: Married

Children: 2

Age bracket: Below 25, 25-34, 35-44, 45 – 55, 55 and

Above

Of Individual Sessions: at least 10

of Group Sessions: 4

<p>Initial coding</p> <p>Valuing being on programme</p> <p>Helping decision making Managing personal life</p> <p>Self determining</p>	<p>INTERVIEWER</p> <p>Can you describe the journey of being a participant on AD?</p> <p>002</p> <p>It has been an extremely building exercise I would say I really value this year and a half I have been on the programme it has helped me enormously my personal objectives what do I want to do how do I want to spend my time at work and how do I want to manage my personal life as well to be honest it has helped me to define my priorities and to have clarity on my priorities and this has helped me to make decisions</p> <p>INTERVIEWER</p> <p>Having completed the programme, what would you say you got out of it?</p> <p>002</p>
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<p>Importance of having personal success definition</p> <p>Self determining</p> <p>Perceive self and others</p>	<p>I think first of all in order to be successful in life however you define it the most important is to have your own personal success definition which is the starting point actually, we as women we are having so many bad years on our way – some are real and some unreal, some are facts and we have to live with it some things we are just putting on ourselves. The social roles we are having, our national values, we are mothers and there are society values and we are expected to deal with everyday things with our kids not our husbands and we have to overcome this and there are barriers we are facing that we have to overcome ourselves. I am stopping myself because I am a mother and a woman and I have my own internal values I want to be liked I want to be working in a team I want to not be controversial I don't like conflict I have a controversial relationship to power and I am overcoming these.</p> <p>INTERVIEWER</p> <p>How did the individual coaching help you think though these areas?</p> <p>002</p>
<p>Helping me to decide what I want from my life</p> <p>Gaining insight into priorities in life</p> <p>Enabling me to make career choices</p>	<p>It is especially important in helping me to define what I actually want from my life, I have been thinking about this and where it is helpful is to really nail down and put in my head the thoughts about priorities in life in choices I am making and it was very helpful for me to realise you can't have it all you have to put focus on a limited amount of things in life and you have to think about ourselves as well and the rest of the priorities and it is ok, and I worked with Robyn and this was especially designed for this. The choices I am making for my career I really want to develop in to general management and the career changes were coming from the discussion we were having.</p> <p>INTERVIEWER</p> <p>What was it about the coaching process</p> <p>002</p>
<p>Using coaching to focus on myself</p> <p>Being challenged by the questions</p> <p>Managing different roles in my life</p>	<p>it was the first time in my life I was going though the coaching programme – for one hour every four or five weeks I was focusing on myself and my objectives and I was getting challenging questions and we started with the objective to answer the question how to manage different roles in my life that I am having and how to make the outcome satisfaction and fulfilment and a feeling of success and we worked for a year and a half and I have the answer. Just sitting</p> <p>INTERVIEWER</p> <p>What was it about the coach that was particularly useful?</p> <p>002</p>
<p>Having a good chemistry</p>	<p>002</p>

<p>with my coach</p> <p>Having an experienced coach</p> <p>Coach living it as an experience with me</p> <p>Encouraging</p>	<p>We had good chemistry that was really good and R was probably I would think she was a very experienced coach and she has been coaching where I have not been sure about what I have been saying she did catch my lack of self confidence that we had been discussing and she was digging in she was giving me some homework and giving me things to think over things to practice that I could really understand what do I want and I have a feeling that she was living it as a process, it was not one time conversation and then we were starting again after the second one, I am assuming that she managed this as a building on the previous sessions. She was also very encouraging for the question we are dealing with.</p>
<p>Focusing on inner world in individual coaching</p> <p>Gaining insights from group coaching</p> <p>Gaining insights I could work with from group coaching</p> <p>Shying away from the word power</p>	<p>INTERVIEWER</p> <p>Please tell me about your experience of having group coaching?</p> <p>Group coaching very helpful in giving outside – individual focused on inner world digging into my thoughts and beliefs, group coaching giving me on a plate insights I could work with – I discovered the whole idea of women power and the fact that power is a fact that is not a feminist word – we don't like the word as women, it is negative I changed my mind after this session. Group coaching was very helpful in giving insights that I could then work with and build on this in the process. The other insight – the session on conflict, the fact how much I want to be appreciated and liked and that is why I avoid conflict and why I accept lack of acceptance. It helped me to have more distance, and more distant approach to myself as a whole. It was extremely helpful.</p>
<p>Avoiding conflict</p>	<p>INTERVIEWER</p> <p>Tell me about the First session, the foundation one where you got the results from Prism</p> <p>002</p>
<p>Gaining value from tripartite session with my manager</p> <p>Gaining new perspectives on my manager</p> <p>Seeing I was being too motherly in my leadership style</p> <p>Being too protective</p>	<p>I missed that one. I think that overall the Prism was helpful it would be interesting got repeat it right now to see the evolution or not after the year and a half, understanding – we also had the three party conversation that was very insightful. The conversation with the manager with the coach, me and line manager looking at the results – the objectives – it was very very helpful. I was lucky I changed manager half way he had a lot of women the highest number of women in his team across the world, he gave me insight in being too female in the negative perception – too motherly for the team it was quite insightful for me to see this – too protective and I am not giving them a chance to grow and it was an insight coming from him and Prism that I have been working on for the last year and a half. That design was very helpful.</p>
	<p>INTERVIEWER</p> <p>How about the Second session on self confidence and self belief</p> <p>002</p>

<p>Acting to cover my lack of confidence</p> <p>Recognising most of us are not 100% confident</p> <p>Recognising I can speak up even if I don't feel confident</p> <p>Understanding women are very critical of themselves</p> <p>Stepping out of my career path and following what I want to do</p> <p>Adding value Being courageous in making a big decision</p>	<p>Self confidence was something I have to deal with – I am not the most confident person in the world although you would not see it, I am a good actress. What I understood from this it is not only my issue most of us are not confident women at the top are not always 100% self confident and we just have to deal with it. The other thing the coaches shared with us was the TED talk with Amy Cuddy on how body language influences how we feel about ourselves this was an amazing talk and insights and it was so true and she was comparing body language of men and women how we enter rooms and how we are sitting and I am doing that now, this was really beneficial and I talked about this with my team and we talked about this the whole area of self confidence and it is a huge huge topic and what I learned personally is that you don't have to be 100% self confidence in order to speak up we have to speak up and do it this insight was that I don't have to be – I accept sometimes I lack self confidence and I still act I get to the stage and I still speak up. The other thing that was interesting was the insight that fact that women are so much more critical to themselves, the women are. The men who apply for the job 40% fulfil criteria women 90% apply for the job it is influencing the whole perception of the workplace when you are shying away from doing this job. It was very very helpful for me, the thought was planted for me in my head I can step out for me in my comfort zone for my whole career I have been in marketing and I am an expert working for more than 17 years in this and this year I completely changed my field and moved to sales I have no clue in this and it is ok, Before this programme and the support from my manager I would not have been able to do this –coming from this discussion it is ok not to know everything and I can still be successful and add value and successfully lead the team even though I am not an expert and expertise gives you safety and lack of expertise is scary and the whole thought of braveness—just go there and see if there is a success great and if not there is always a way out. Self confidence leads to me am I brave or am I scared.</p>
<p>Gaining big insights on power</p> <p>Realising power is with not over</p> <p>Changing my mindset about power</p>	<p>INTERVIEWER</p> <p>How about Session three on power, presence and impact?</p> <p>002</p> <p>The power is an amazing area I think even in the insight – power over or power through someone, that was quite a big insight for me, power is not a female work and I would not, before this I would not like to be perceived as powerful it is like a dictator, while now I understand power is about strength, confidence, convictions, visions and working through people on the outcome of this so the discussion about this and changing the mindset did change my mind set my personal power and female power.</p> <p>INTERVIEWER</p> <p>As a result what have you done differently?</p>

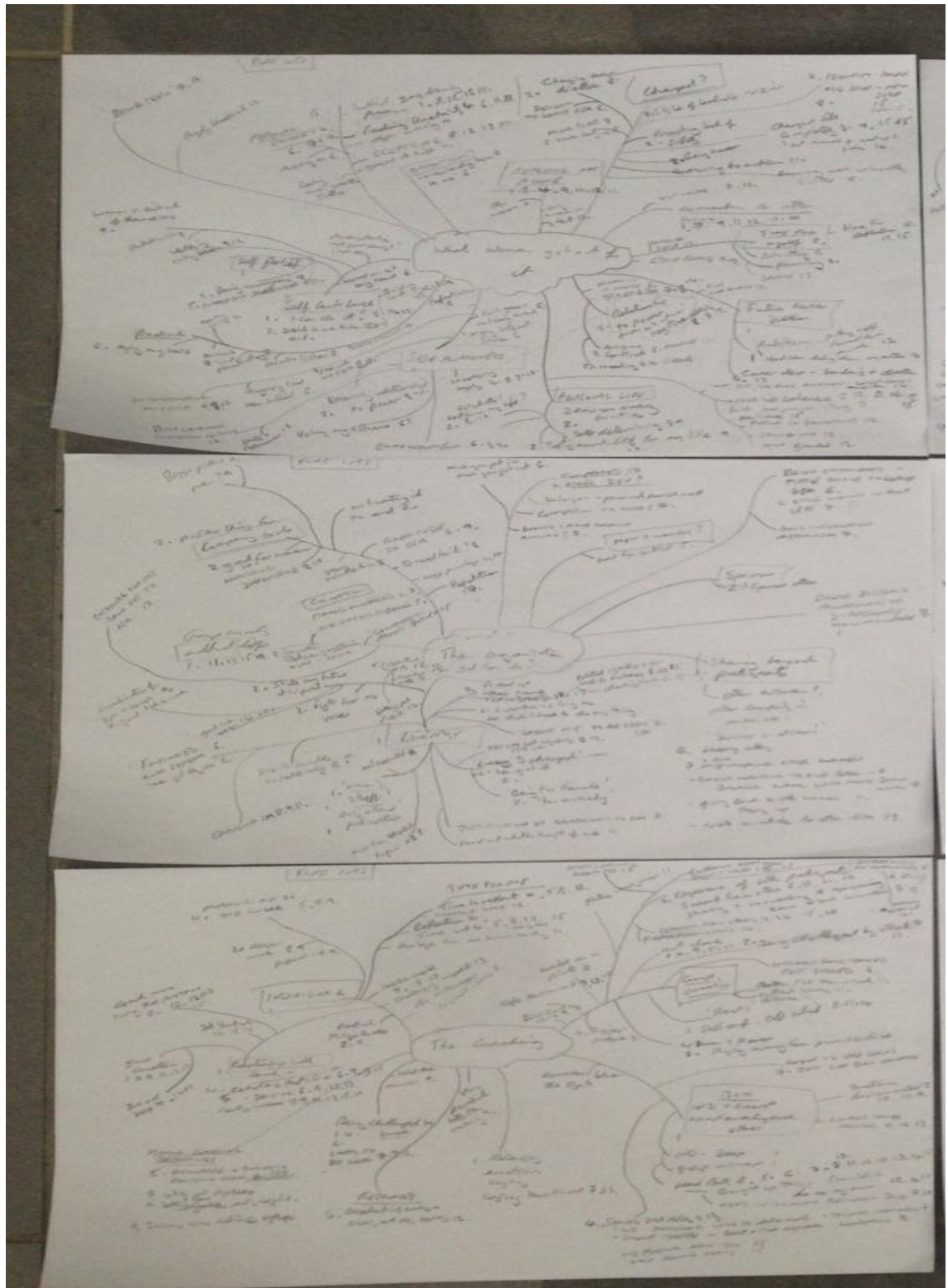
<p>Becoming a leader with clear vision</p> <p>Stating my vision</p> <p>Seeing my inner vision of me as a leader</p> <p>Developing followership</p> <p>Taking responsibility for outcomes</p> <p>Seeing my 'mothering' leadership style was hurting others</p>	<p>002</p> <p>I think from the caring mothering leader I Moved to a leader who has a very clear vision I think I always have but I have executed it differently, I have accepted that I should be strong and very clearly and loudly state my vision and that resistance is ok it is a natural part of the whole leadership experience and I simply have to accept it and deal with it and conflict. In the past I have been much more, I wanted to be an equal leader, I wanted to be a leader people liked and people agree with and I am more inclusive, nice atmosphere and they follow me because they like me, now I am thinking about my inner vision of me as a leader, one that they follow they may not always like but that is ok, it is a tremendous – what else has changed – this was the biggest change the other very important area for a leader is taking responsibility, I am thinking, challenging myself have I changed, I think so, I touched on it earlier – taking responsibility for the ultimate outcome I have want, I want my team to develop the most, I understand my conversation with the manager and from prism my ultimate outcome was for the team to develop to challenge to grow and applying this kind of 'I like you leader and very nice atmosphere' this kind of mothering approach was hurting and was against my ultimate objective of wanting for them. I have changed and it became more difficult I have challenged them to grow and to go for difficult experiences I am not the way I was, I am still perceived as a person who will take care of the people and there will be a nice environment but I am working on it and I am conscious of it.</p> <p>INTERVIEWER</p> <p>Tell me about session four, Managing Conflict</p>
<p>Avoiding conflict</p> <p>Recognising conflict can be good</p>	<p>002</p> <p>I think naturally I understood I have naturally been avoiding conflict – I was not necessarily bad in managing it – I am very empathetic and I understand that to other people have their own truth, I never assume I know and I am enlightened with the ultimate truth of the world and this is the only truth this have never been me, and I have not have had lots of conflict, I van talk with people and we will find a solution. However I have had a couple of conflicts and they come from the egos and how they want to build themselves, the insight from this session was that actually conflict can be good and lead to positive outcomes – and this was new to me, and I do know how to do this and now I am approaching conflict as a positive end not just to finishing it my objective is at another level am I able to do this yet no but I am working on it and this is very helpful.</p> <p>INTERVIEWER</p> <p>How about Session Five, Leadership Brand</p> <p>002</p>

<p>Deciding what sort of leader I want to be</p> <p>Becoming authentic Making life and work decisions</p> <p>Realising I have to be believed as a leader</p> <p>Understanding resistance</p>	<p>I had not attended but I had a conversation with A (group coach) and with R – and I had a lot of thoughts about this – I have touched on them what sort of leader I wanted to be for myself, what do I want for myself from my life and my work from me, basically and what do I want to say about myself in 25 years from now, where do I want to go and the other thing was about, thinking about the leaders I have met in my life, who do I admire, who do I remember – I have been defining myself as a leader who creates a very warm and inclusive and supportive environment which when I thought about when I thought about my objectives was not necessarily right for my objectives – I am changing my style and accepting things that I wouldn't before – like that people will disagree with me, that people will not at times understand where they are going until they have a full picture in my new role it is a great field for experimenting – I took over a team who had a leader who they really liked, I was liked too by my team, I am coming into this position with lack of expertise I am an experienced manager but not I have to build my brand as a leader who knows where they are going and who knows where she wants to lead them and who is appreciated – actually like was at the end of the list it was not the first thing that was coming to mind, I am changing my view of a successful leader and I am not assuming they have to love me, they have to trust me and they have to believe I am taking them to the right direction and that I will help them achieve their objectives and this is where the discussion of leadership brand was helpful to ask me, myself I have often been asking myself 3 years ago, o raising this was important I the group and in the individually one, and I talked about it with my manager – the options were building on each other, the moment I realised I don't have to be 100% confident it was helping me to accept not always people will like me or disagree with me, it is its difficult, understanding resistance now and where it may have come from is important.</p>
<p>Accepting lack of safety</p> <p>Being braver in my decision making</p> <p>Going into roles without experience</p> <p>Changing my career path</p>	<p>INTERVIEWER</p> <p>What about the Final session</p> <p>002</p> <p>This was a very good summary, so what does it mean for me personally, there are two very important outcomes for me personally, I decided I will accept lack of safety, I will not fear the change and lack of expertise and I will be braver in my decisions and let's see what comes out of it and I think when I look at my life and my decisions of career and life I have been playing safe and limiting my choices I have been thinking where is the biggest risk and immediately crossing out these options, not thinking about the long term options, my career choices have been often, building on my experience and expertise which was giving me a safety net you can deal with resistance because you are an expert because you know the moment you step out of the field of expertise and I decided I wanted to be a GM the most important decision was to say I want to be a GM and this has led to many different decisions later and this last session when we closed individual and group coaching this</p>

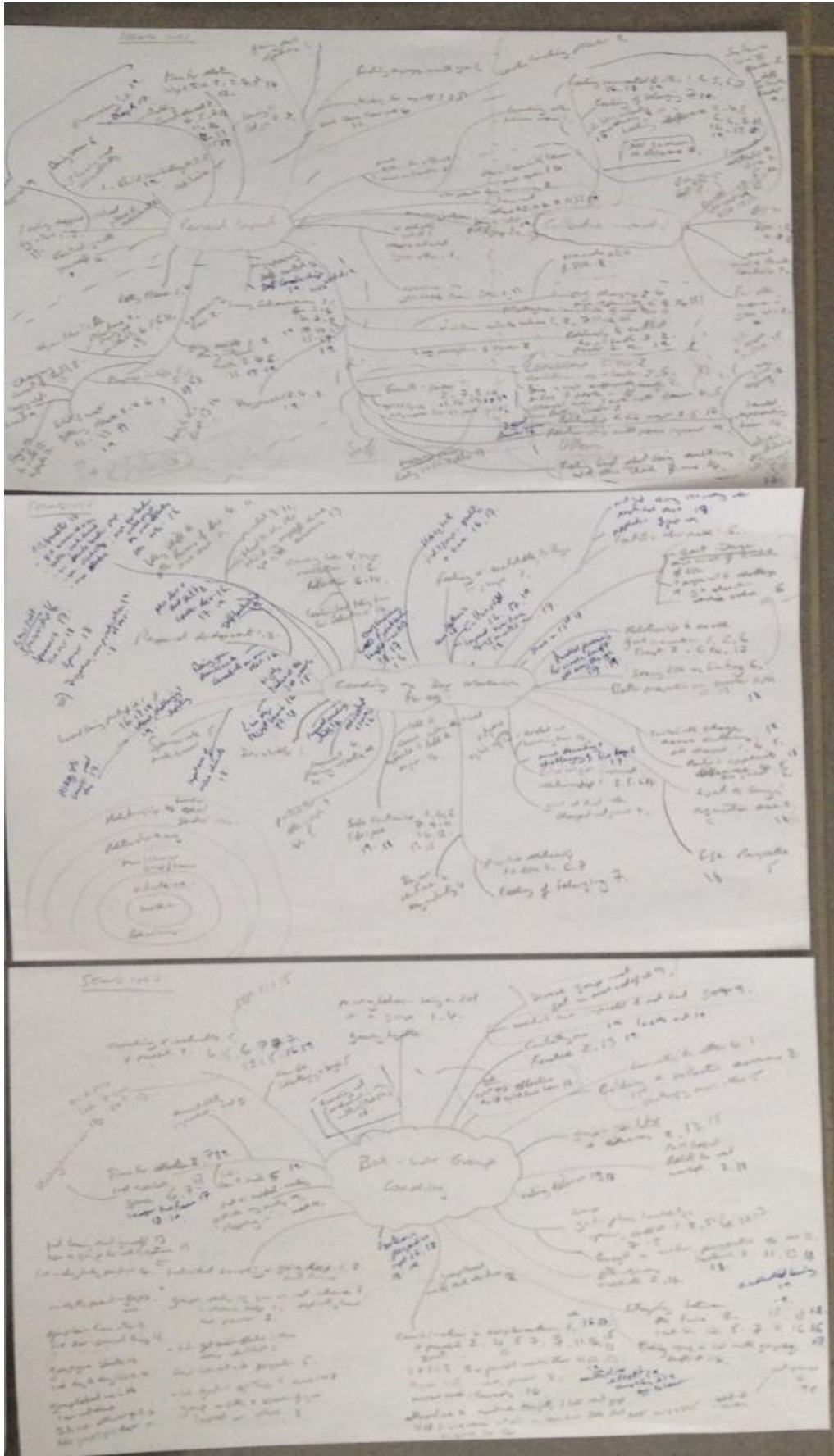
Deciding on being a GM	gave me the two so they were the most important things 1. Summary on a page, written down, I want to be a gm and to do this I have to step out of my comfort zone of being an expert, and I had to accept that I had to move a place to where I am not an expert and the 2 nd thing I decided I would do something for others, for other women, and in an hour we are kicking off the women's leadership initiative and my joining and exec sponsor of this programme to show them this journey that I have been on, I want to build on those things I have learned and things over a year and a half and my career also, to inspire them to step up and I will do this in my garden in Poland. My leader of this programme I am the sponsor.
Going out of my comfort zone	In the last session the individual and group learning came together and we had been preparing ourselves for the last session – 4 way session, our coach, hr and manager etc. to summarise the programme. Mid way trip partite, didn't have this
Individual and group coming together	INTERVIEWER
Final tripartite coming together	What about the final 4 way meeting?
Gaining buy in for the next cohort	002
Stating my future	For me the ultimate objective was to describe the experience for A my boss and somehow have his buy in for the next cohort he is supportive he enrolls women for our region so he does this. My objective I clearly state my future an person I goals for the future and this was not easy, he is absolutely great but he has a very strong point of view himself about others and himself and where they should go so I had to really fight for my voice in this conversation and it was so he could hear and this was a good experience so I have very really clearly stated this for him and this was very good. I think it was helpful for them – of my boss and the hr lead to listen to the experience of us women they had couple of those conversations through the programme and they understood the benefits of the programme they understood what it can give to them
Helping others to see the benefits of AD	INTERVIEWER
Giving my time to think about myself	Looking back, what would be your reflections on your life and work from having been a participant on AD? What has changed for you as a result?
Dealing with the same	002
Giving my time to think about myself	The whole programme gave me food for through we are living in such a fast world , as a women I am having so many things to do and it is very difficult to do everything – we had the very first tc and I remember I said this programme will give me a chance to just stop, for one hour and for four hours at the group coaching session for me to think about myself because I don't do it – the design, the topics were very helpful in giving me a trigger to build on, it didn't give me a solution this has to come from me it gave me the trigger to think of myself, it also gave me tremendous value, to meet other women in leadership teams and understand that we are dealing with the same challenges that I am not

<p>challenges</p> <p>Not being alone</p> <p>Juggling work and home life</p>	<p>the only one, that we are facing the same issues and we will deal with them and that is it's ok, it is not me who is worse than the others and that is why I have challenges or I am not dealing perfectly with housework or kids but we are all dealing with this we don't have to be perfect we are good as we are and we have called the right to get what is the best for us.</p> <p>INTERVIEWER</p> <p>Could you have just had individual or just group Coaching?</p> <p>002</p>
<p>Needing both individual and group</p> <p>Gaining challenge from others in group</p> <p>Being complementary</p>	<p>Not definitively worked if just group, huge amount to be done individually, without that I would not have not been able to do it, group coaching the insight and the topics that have been chosen, I didn't think about it I had not been considering it as an issue of challenge – the group was adding a lot to the individual sessions, the other thing was the experience of the other participants, we were having different but similar challenges, both of them have been complementary to each other for each other.</p> <p>INTERVIEWER</p> <p>Is there anything else you would like to tell me about the experience of being a participant on AD?</p> <p>002</p>
<p>Not wanting it to end</p> <p>Wanting to get back together</p> <p>Being pleased company is interested in women</p>	<p>I think where are the next steps where and we have been talking about it – it is a pity it is ending, it is a pity it is over when we are seeing the amount of work we have in front of it, I am sad my coaching session are all over I know there is a beginning and an ending and I have to deal with it and I accept it but it is a pity maybe it would be worth in a half of a year, or in a year a check in on how we are going and what are the other challenges we are faced with. It would be helpful to have a second round of Prism to see if there a change in our eldership brand actually as this was understood there to a large extent, this would be helpful to see this and to see where we should focus still. But I think overall, the third thing I would say I think that in a way it would be great to advertise this programme a bit – people don't know, women don't know unless I tell them – in my new team in Poland they don't know it is a great benefit that the company is giving to women, even if not everyone can go on it, the company is interested in female talent we want to drive the female or diversity agenda I don't think people know actually. We are launching here in Poland the women's leadership initiative, to women and men who are leaders of women they are challenged in a similar way, we can do more and Emma would be a great spokes person for the support GSK is giving to women.</p>

Appendix Nine: Example of a First Analyses Map



Appendix Ten: Example of a Second Analyses Map



Appendix Eleven: Female Leader Participant Information Sheet



Participant Information Sheet

Researcher: Sally Bonneywell
Email: 13013077@brookes.ac.uk
Phone: +447802531821

Study title:

Exploring the experience of female leaders' participation in both individual and group coaching in a global organisation

Thank you for expressing an interest in this doctoral study. Before you decide whether or not to take part, 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.

Background and Aim

The aim of the study is to explore and understand the experience of participating in both individual and group coaching as part of a targeted development initiative – Accelerating Difference (AD). The study will focus on the reflections of female participants about their experience of the both types of coaching. The findings generated from the study will inform future research and practice within coaching as well as helping to develop the theoretical perspective of combining individual and group coaching in supporting women in their development.

You will be one of twelve participants, all of whom have had individual and group coaching as part of the AD project. To ensure privacy and identity, I will not be using the name of GSK in the study; the company will be given a pseudonym. Your confidentiality will also be safeguarded and you will be given a pseudonym as well, with only myself knowing the key. I am really interested in finding out what your experience was like in both the individual coaching, the group coaching and the project overall. I will be asking some very broad questions about your journey as you moved through the programme, and about your reflections after the end of AD.

The research model I am conducting is a qualitative one and is only concerned with female leaders within GSK from AD. I will be interviewing you twice, each time for approximately an hour and a half. The first interview will be in January 2015, which will be approximately three months after completion of the AD programme. The second interview will be approximately six months after the completion of the AD programme. The interviews will take place either in GSK House and be face to face, or if this is not convenient, they will be via webcam or over the telephone. I will send you an invitation to the interviews at least a month in advance.

As I will be asking questions about your experiences, including your feelings and perspectives it is unlikely, but may be possible that some sensitive recollections will be recalled and cause anxiety for you. In the event of this becoming problematic for you I will ensure you have access to a coaching session with an executive coach and supervisor approved for GSK. I will be receiving regular coaching supervision throughout the research process, as well as supervision from my university to support the management of risk and any adverse or unexpected issues. Should these circumstances arise, you will be reminded that your participation is voluntary and that you are free to withdraw from the research at any time.

Why you?

You have been invited to participate as one of the female leaders who were in Cohort 1 of AD. There will be 12 participants taking part in the study, each of whom will be interviewed twice. They will comprise a range of grades and will be from Consumer Healthcare, Global Manufacturing or Core Business Services.

You do not have to take part

It is up to you to decide whether or not to take part. If you do decide to take part you will be asked to sign a consent form. If you decide to take part you are still free to withdraw at any time and without giving a reason. Your decision to take part, or not, will in no way impact on your career, your development or your progression within GSK.

The 'cost' involved in taking part in the study is your time, which will be approximately three hours in total.

The benefits of taking part in this research are that you will have the opportunity to review experiences of AD through informal, conversational interviews. You will be able to talk about how you experienced the individual and the group coaching as well as what it felt like to be a participant in AD. By taking part you will be contributing to the knowledge and understanding on the combined use of individual and group coaching as well as to the body of knowledge and practice on developing female leaders in organisations.

Confidentiality

All information collected in the course of this research will be kept strictly confidential (subject to legal and GSK policy limitations).

When I interview you I will ask your permission to record the conversation. Any part of the interview that you do not want recorded or transcribed will not be included in the data. You are free to let me know this at any time. I will transcribe the interviews and will analyse the data. Immediately following its collection, all data will be de-identified to ensure anonymity i.e. pseudonyms will be used to identify research participants in place of names. Nothing will be attributable to you in the final report as the use of pseudonyms will ensure complete anonymity for all participants. All transcriptions will be kept on my password enabled laptop in an encrypted file, and the recordings will be kept on an encrypted flash drive. Any highly sensitive personal or company information that is shared within the interviews will be checked with you prior to transcription. In accordance with Oxford Brookes University's policy on Academic Integrity the data generated will be kept securely for a period of ten years following the completion of my research.

The results of the research interviews will be used in my thesis for my doctoral degree. Participants and organisations will be referred to by pseudonym in any publication arising from this research. Whilst all steps will be taken to ensure the anonymity of participants, their positions held and the organisation, due to the relatively small sample size, this cannot categorically be guaranteed once the thesis becomes available for access by any interested parties. Copies of any articles accepted for publication will be made available should you wish to receive them. In addition a summary report will be available on request following completion of the project.

I am conducting the research as a doctoral student of the Business School at Oxford Brookes University. GSK is funding my research only as part of my personal development, I am not conducting the research on behalf of TL&OD or GSK.

The research has been approved by the University Research Ethics Committee, Oxford Brookes University. I am being supervised by Dr Judie Gannon and Dr Adrian Myers, both senior members of the Business School. The research programme, which began in October 2013, will run for approximately three years.

Should you require any further information I can provide this and my contact details are: Sally Bonneywell, c/o International Centre for Coaching and Leadership Development, Oxford Brookes University, Wheatley Campus, Wheatley, Oxford, OX33 1HX. (email: 13013077@brookes.ac.uk). My mobile number is +447802531821. If you have any concerns about the way in which the study has been conducted, you should contact the Chair of the University Research Ethics Committee on ethics@brookes.ac.uk.

Thank you for taking time to read this information sheet.

November 2014.

Appendix Twelve: Steering Team member and Coaches Participant Information Sheet



Participant Information Sheet

Researcher: Sally Bonneywell
Email: 13013077@brookes.ac.uk
Phone: +447802531821

Study title:

Exploring the experience of female leaders' participation in both individual and group coaching in a global organisation

Thank you for expressing an interest in this doctoral study. Before you decide whether or not to take part, 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.

Background and Aim

The aim of the study is to explore and understand the experience of participating in both individual and group coaching as part of a targeted development initiative – Accelerating Difference (AD). The study will focus on the reflections of female participants about their experience of the both types of coaching. The findings generated from the study will inform future research and practice within coaching as well as helping to develop the theoretical perspective of combining individual and group coaching in supporting women in their development.

You will be one of four Steering Team members and Coaches who have been involved in the AD project. To ensure privacy and identity, I will not be using the name of GSK in the study; the company will be given a pseudonym. Your confidentiality will also be safeguarded and you will be given a pseudonym as well, with only myself knowing the key. I am really interested in finding out what your experience was like as a person involved with AD overall. I will be asking some very broad questions about your journey as you moved through the programme, and about your reflections after the end of AD.

The research model I am conducting is a qualitative one and is only concerned with female leaders within GSK from AD. I will be interviewing you for approximately an hour and a half. The first interview will be in May 2015. The interview will take place either in GSK House and be face to face, or if this is not convenient, they will be via webcam or over the telephone. I will send you an invitation to the interview at least a month in advance.

As I will be asking questions about your experiences, including your feelings and perspectives it is unlikely, but may be possible that some sensitive recollections will be recalled and cause anxiety for you. In the event of this becoming problematic for you I will ensure you have access to a coaching session with an executive coach and supervisor approved for GSK. I will be receiving regular coaching supervision throughout the research process, as well as supervision from my university to support the management of risk and any adverse or unexpected issues. Should these circumstances arise, you will be reminded that your participation is voluntary and that you are free to withdraw from the research at any time.

Why you?

You have been invited to participate as one of the Steering Team or Coaches who were involved in Cohort 1 of AD.

You do not have to take part

It is up to you to decide whether or not to take part. If you do decide to take part you will be asked to sign a consent form. If you decide to take part you are still free to withdraw at any time and without giving a reason. Your decision to take part, or not, will in no way impact on your career, your development or your progression within GSK.

The 'cost' involved in taking part in the study is your time, which will be approximately an hour and a half in total.

The benefits of taking part in this research are that you will have the opportunity to review experiences of AD through informal, conversational interviews. You will be able to talk about how you experienced being involved in the individual and the group coaching as well as what it felt like to be a colleague involved in AD. By taking part you will be contributing to the knowledge and understanding on the combined use of individual and group coaching as well as to the body of knowledge and practice on developing female leaders in organisations.

Confidentiality

All information collected in the course of this research will be kept strictly confidential (subject to legal and GSK policy limitations).

When I interview you I will ask your permission to record the conversation. Any part of the interview that you do not want recorded or transcribed will not be included in the data. You are free to let me know this at any time. I will transcribe the interviews and will analyse the data. Immediately following its collection, all data will be de-identified to ensure anonymity i.e. pseudonyms will be used to identify research participants in place of names. Nothing will be attributable to you in the final report as the use of pseudonyms will ensure complete anonymity for all participants. All transcriptions will be kept on my password enabled laptop in an encrypted file, and the recordings will be kept on an encrypted flash drive. Any highly sensitive personal or company information that is shared within the interviews will be checked with you prior to transcription. In accordance with Oxford Brookes University's policy

on Academic Integrity the data generated will be kept securely for a period of ten years following the completion of my research.

The results of the research interviews will be used in my thesis for my doctoral degree. Participants and organisations will be referred to by pseudonym in any publication arising from this research. Whilst all steps will be taken to ensure the anonymity of participants, their positions held and the organisation, due to the relatively small sample size, this cannot categorically be guaranteed once the thesis becomes available for access by any interested parties. Copies of any articles accepted for publication will be made available should you wish to receive them. In addition a summary report will be available on request following completion of the project.

If you would like to take part, please email me at 13013077@brookes.ac.uk.

I will then send you a consent form and this Participant Information Sheet for your records. I will also send an invite out for the first interview and one for the second one, three months later.

I am conducting the research as a doctoral student of the Business School at Oxford Brookes University. GSK is funding my research only as part of my personal development. I am not conducting the research on behalf of TL&OD or GSK.

The research has been approved by the University Research Ethics Committee, Oxford Brookes University. I am being supervised by Dr Judie Gannon and Dr Adrian Myers, both senior members of the Business School. The research programme, which began in October 2013, will run for approximately three years.

Should you require any further information I can provide this and my contact details are: Sally Bonneywell, c/o International Centre for Coaching and Leadership Development, Oxford Brookes University, Wheatley Campus, Wheatley, Oxford, OX33 1HX. (email: 13013077@brookes.ac.uk). My mobile number is +447802531821. If you have any concerns about the way in which the study has been conducted, you should contact the Chair of the University Research Ethics Committee on ethics@brookes.ac.uk.

Thank you for taking time to read this information sheet.

November 2014.

Appendix Thirteen: ISTRA Model

Common Format for All Six Sessions – 5 stage 'ISTRA' Model



Intention

- The topic flow is made known/agreed in advance with the group to give time for both preparation and activities with an intentional focus on the particular aspect pre and post group coaching session. In this way, people are bringing live and action inquiries to the group and time for deeper reflection than they might manage on their own.

Stories

- Beginning with a group conversation associated with the topic in order to surface critical questions/recent experiences that they wish to unpack and goals that they have in this area – there are tight boundaries on this and expecting the group will get better at precision, brevity and getting to the essence as we progress.

Themes

- The group are encouraged to listen for themes in the discussion and gain a sense individually about how these themes connect to their own personal goals.

Resources

- Checking with the group what coaching they can offer to their peers and if necessary, using a tool or a model to inform the group conversation - this will necessitate having and developing several associated models with each topic strand, but without a strong attachment to using them every time.

Actions

- Identifying action approaches as individuals shared within the group and then reflecting on the value of the session – Here it is possible that some individuals will need further support, or may need some feedback about their ability to participate fully. This can be given offline, diverted back into individual coaching, or ~~—picked up at appropriate topic streams later on in the process.~~