TOWARDS A COACHEE-CENTRED APPROACH
TO COACHING ACADEMIC LEADERS

By

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Abstract

This thesis unifies the five elements of the research portfolio into a coherent whole. These elements comprise a small scale research project, an applied research project followed by a report on professional practice. In addition to these three distinct projects, a comprehensive literature review and reflective account are also part of the various elements of the portfolio. The above elements of the portfolio are organized into five chapters. The entire research is carried out in an organization that is a leading institution of higher education in the Middle East.

The first element of the portfolio is the literature review which is guided by the purpose of this qualitative research that aims to explore a learning-informed coaching framework for academic Deans. Guided by the objective and gap in the existing research, a comprehensive literature review on learning theories and coaching models is undertaken. Later, it was extended to include coaching competency frameworks. The small scale research project explores the lived experiences of two executive leadership coaches who coached 11 professional managers at the university to improve their leadership potential. It examines the literature on organizational leadership coaching in a university context. While using the Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) methodology, the data analysis resulted in five themes: commitment to evolve and grow, role of goal-setting in coaching, impact of self-efficacy on goal attainment, 3-way meetings for accountability and support, and coaching for organizational leadership development. The research offers learning for practitioners such as coaches and managers of coaching engagements. The results of this study cannot be generalized, however, it advances the research conversations on the coaching for leadership development in universities. The small scale research project proved to be an excellent opportunity to practice methodology, data collection and analysis, and most significantly writing a research report. These learnings proved extremely beneficial during the main applied research project. In the applied research project, I explored the lived experiences of academic

Deans in the university using the same IPA methodology. The analysis of the interview transcripts resulted in five themes: attract and retain faculty, disciplinary background, learning by observation, reflection, and thinking clearly while relaxed. By understanding the role, context and experiences of Deans, through the lens of classic learning theories, it informs a heuristic framework that is particularly relevant to coaching academic Deans. While this study is exhaustive, it is simply a tentative framework; additional research is required to develop a more complete framework. The key finding of the applied research project is that coaching academic Deans is a complex and context driven process. This finding, combined with some supporting evidence in the literature, led to the possibility that the current coach competency frameworks recommended by professional bodies may not be sufficient for coaching academic Deans. Therefore, the research was extended to explore that with the question: do existing coaching competency frameworks adequately address the complex task of coaching academic deans? The unit of analysis of this interpretative and evaluative case study is the coaching practice that is based on the core competencies as prescribed by International Coach Federation (ICF) and European Mentoring and Coaching Council (EMCC). It uses five different sources of evidence that converge to address the research question. The report concludes that an evidence-based approach to coaching that integrates scientific knowledge with the expertise of practitioners can be more effective, especially at the executive level such as Deans. Therefore, a competent coach is not enough to generate inspired insights for complex coaching of Deans. A deeper understanding of the purpose, relevant learning theories and context are other additional conditions for the coaching engagements. These are certain limitations to the study. It has been conducted in a single university with a single coach and five Deans. Therefore, the findings may not be generalized to other leaders and industries.

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List of Abbreviations

AC – Abstract Conceptualization

AE – Active Experimentation

ARP – Applied Research Project

CE – Concrete Experience

ELT – Experiential Learning Theory

EMCC – European Mentoring and Coaching Council

GROW – Goal, Reality, Options and Will

ICF – International Coaching Federation

IPA – Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis

RPP – Report on Professional Practice

RO – Reflective Observation

SSRP – Small Scale Research Project

UAE – United Arab Emirates

INTRODUCTION

This thesis unifies all five elements of the portfolio into a coherent whole. These elements include the literature review, the small scale research project, the applied research project, the report on professional practice and the reflective account. The overarching purpose of the research is to explore the roles of academic leaders in a leading Middle Eastern university and how learning theories may inform a framework for coaching of academic Deans. The research was extended to conduct a critical review of the coaching competencies frameworks of the European Council of Mentoring and Coaching (EMCC) and the International Coaching Federation (ICF) for coaching academic Deans.

This chapter provides an overview of leadership development and coaching for academic leaders in higher education institutions. It then presents a brief overview of the purpose, context and questions of this research. It also outlines the structure of the thesis and its constituent components, which are the main elements of the portfolio.

1.1 The Leadership Challenge in Academic Institutions

According to Butler (2019), Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) are facing the greatest challenges in the areas of student enrolment and retention, revenue generation, institutional effectiveness, and globalization. Anthony and Antony (2017) argue that technological advancements enable institutions to deliver education in a borderless world, but it also poses a challenge to the leadership of HEIs. Gonaim (2019) underlines the need for effective leadership in dealing with great challenges that all academic leaders encounter at various levels in an academic institution. According to Anthony and Antony (2017), there are two major levels of leadership in HEIs: at the institutional and college levels. However, Witchurch (2008) argues that there is a third space of leadership at HEIs that is blurring the boundaries between academic and professional

domains. This space is at the intersection of academic and managerial responsibilities.

Saudi universities are undergoing major reforms as part of the Vision 2030 Program. According to Bakr and Alfayez (2021), the National Transformation Program aims to increase women's leadership participation up to 30% in all sectors including higher education. However, Alsuood and Youde (2018) caution that although Saudi HEIs are facing similar problems as the rest of the world due to globalization, however, the societal and organizational cultures characterized by language, power distance and gender make the leadership challenges considerably more difficult for the Saudi leaders of HEIs.

In order to deal with both strategic and operational challenges, leaders in higher education need a combination of leadership and management competencies (Black, 2015). Gigliotti and Ruben (2017) recommend a portfolio of collaborative leadership programs that cut across conceptual, operational and strategic dimensions of leadership development. Spendlove (2007) argues that academic credibility and experience of university life play a crucial role in success as a university leader. He also claims that university leadership is fundamentally different from other types of leadership due to the inherent organizational complexity, necessitating the acquisition of additional competencies. Drew (2010) supports the argument of Spendlove (2007) and suggests the development of customized individual development plans for leaders, recognising that each leader faces different challenges.

Organizational leadership is about interpersonal behaviours focused to shape structural features of organizations (Kaiser et al., 2012). According to Dubin (1979), the majority of leadership research focuses on interpersonal influence, but he argued that it is less prevalent and less relevant when it comes to influencing business strategy and operations. Zaccaro and Horn (2003) complement the argument made by Dubin (1979), claiming that impersonal and indirect influences in terms of well-established goals, plans and policies are critical for effective leadership. Kilburg (2012), however, provides a more

practical perspective on leadership practice by reducing it down to two basic questions of *what* and *how* for organizations. According to Kilburg (2012), "the *what* is a matter of setting a strategic direction that creates both purpose and identity for an organization whereas the *how* concerns steering people toward the implementation, execution, and ultimate realization of the strategy". Leadership development is about expanding the overall capacity of organizational leaders to perform their roles effectively (McCauley et al., 1998).

1.2   Leadership Coaching in HE Institutions

According to Spendlove (2007), effective leadership and management is a crucial issue for policy makers and leaders of HEIs because it improves social and operational efficiency. Academic leadership environment is characterised by academic autonomy, networking, collegiality and individuality (Dopson et al, 2018). According to Butler (2020), competency models are popular for leadership assessment and development in HEIs. The leadership competencies may be developed through coaching. Leadership coaching is a one-on-one partnership that enhances the self-efficacy and performance of a coachee and consequently improves effectiveness of his/her organization (Baron and Morin, 2009; Harper, 2010). According to Anthony (2017), coaching is becoming an increasingly popular intervention for organizational leadership development to bring about the desired behavioural outcomes by coachees. Coaching could also support the personal growth of deans since they would learn how to deal with stress, time management and intercultural communications. Over the years, professional services departments of universities have become increasingly important for effective delivery of teaching and research activities. Professional managers in non-academic areas such as human resources, finance, estate management, sport facilities, etc. are more focused on delivering operational efficiencies (Black, 2015). Jones et al. (2016) also agree that unlike other developmental interventions, coaching has a larger and more consistent positive effect on outcome criteria. However, Barner and Higgins (2007) caution that coaching must be provided to carefully selected managers who are worth

the investment. Since professional managers in a university have specific development needs, coaching supports individual leadership development plans (Barner and Higgins (2007).

According to Ely et al., (2010) leadership coaching differs from traditional leadership development. Leadership coaching focuses on the unique needs of a coachee and his/her organization, and requires coaches to have specific skills such as listening and trust building. "Leadership coaching demands process flexibility to achieve desired results" (Ely et al., 2010, p. 586). Stevens (2005) also emphasizes on the competence of leadership coaches. He argues that coaching is a multidimensional intervention process, and it requires a good understanding of business, organizations, management, leadership, among other relevant issues. Gentry et al., (2013) joins Stevens by saying that coaches need to be well prepared for an engagement to be result-driven. According to Huggins et al., (2021), coaching offers more benefits than other professional development methods due to its personalized nature of the relationship with a coachee. However, in Saudi HEI, some internal coaching and mentoring engagements are challenged by hierarchical relationships and academic ranks (Alkhatnai, 2021).

In this research, the small scale research project is focused on administrative leaders who are professional managers. However, the principal applied research project is dedicated to academic deans in the university.

1.3   Purpose and Context of the Research

The overarching purpose of this research is to explore the learning experiences of the administrative and academic leaders as well as those of the coaches who worked with them in order to develop leadership in the university. Based on the conclusions of the above research, the professional practice report presents a review of the competency frameworks of the professional coaching bodies. The principal research, however, focuses on an exploration of the learning

experiences of Academic Deans to inform a coaching framework in the form of an heuristic.

The entire research is carried out in a leading Middle Eastern university where two separate coaching engagements provided a great opportunity to explore the experiences of the academic leaders and the coaches. The university has a mature leadership development program based on a competency model. These competencies were developed through a series of training workshops, action learning programs and coaching engagements. The university administration is keen and supportive of any endeavour that helps explore the customization of its academic leadership coaching program. This research is expected to provide insights to further improve the leadership coaching programs at the university.

1.3.1   My Professional Role and Motivation for the Research

I have a long association with the university that dates back to my career that started as a student. I completed my Master of Sciences (MS) degree from the same university and then worked as a specialist staff and professional manager in various roles over a period of almost three decades. During the last decade, my role included managing the leadership development programs for professional managers of the university. For the last few years, however, I was playing a much broader role at a senior level to manage the strategic organizational excellence programs.

My interest in coaching developed while I was managing the leadership development programs for professional managers. This responsibility offered me a great opportunity to interact with many professional coaches. I enrolled myself in the coach training programs and acquired coaching credentials from International Coach Federation (ICF). It was in 2015 that I decided to learn evidence based coaching and thus registered myself as a Ph.D. student to study the art and science of coaching and how it could be applied to the academic leaders, among whom I grew up.

1.3.2 Context of the Research

As mentioned earlier, this research is carried out in the context of the organizational aspirations of improving leadership coaching practice for the academic leaders especially the deans. The university is a globally ranked institution of higher education focusing on science and technology though many other faculties are offering academic programs at the graduate and post-graduate levels. This research is expected to provide critical input to understand the complexities of the coaching process and engage coaches who can look beyond the predefined competency frameworks and models for the academic leaders.

In addition to the above, the study is offering a critical review of the coaching competency frameworks prescribed by two leading professional bodies, ICF and EMCC, to find out about their adequacy for coaching of academic Deans. The review is expected to provide some insights for novice coaches about the involved complexities in the process of coaching of Deans. Overall, this research may add some sophistication to the coaching process and evoke awareness among coaches on the perceived limitations of the coaching frameworks and models.

1.4   Research Questions

This research seeks answers to multiple interconnected questions led by its research objectives and the opportunities identified in the literature. This research is centered on three main research projects that form the key elements of the portfolio, each one with its own set of research questions. The first research project is the Small Scale Research Project (SSRP). The purpose and literature of the SSRP led to the following three research questions:

- What are the lived experiences of the executive leadership coaches in the context of professional managers of the university?
- How does goal setting help in a coaching process?
- What is the role of self-efficacy in goal attainment?

Though the SSRP was a learning experience for the large scale applied research project, it did provide insights into the role of goal setting and self-efficacy in achieving those goals. This perspective of goal setting was challenged in applied research that resulted in a much better understanding of goal setting in coaching.

The following three research questions that guided the Applied Research Project (ARP) are derived from the literature review and are consistent with the goal of the research for this project that focuses on the learning experiences of the academic Deans:

- What are the learning experiences of academic Deans that contribute to their role?
- What are the learning opportunities for Deans that may be addressed through coaching?
- How may the learning experiences of academic Deans inform the design of a leadership coaching framework?

As established in the large scale research, the coaching of academic Deans is complex and context driven which may or may not be addressed adequately by the competency frameworks. Therefore, the main research question for this study is as follows:

Do existing coaching competency frameworks adequately address the complex task of coaching academic deans?

The above main question has the following four sub-questions:

- Are the current competency frameworks evidence-based?
- Do these frameworks address the significance of context and conditions?
- Do these competency frameworks address complexity in the coaching process?
- Are current competency frameworks coachee or coach-centred?

The research questions posed above provided direction and guidance in exploring answers to the research questions, which are relevant to the theory and practice of coaching academic leaders.

1.5 Relevance and Significance of the Research

The elements in this portfolio have direct relevance for both the research and practice of coaching. The principal research is directly related to the important issue of leadership development of academic leaders more importantly the Deans in the universities. These Deans are at the centre of the academic decision-making process and, potentially at least, add immense value to the vision and outcomes of learning and research in their respective faculties. This project is therefore expected to contribute to the development of leaders as well as the institution. Specifically, it will offer a well-researched, customized and sophisticated coaching framework that is grounded in the learning experiences of the academic Deans. The Report on Professional Practice (RPP) extends the principal research project to explore the adequacy of the coaching competency frameworks by two leading professional bodies: ICF and EMCC. This case study based research concludes that evidence-based practice that integrates scientific knowledge with the expertise of practitioners may be a more effective approach to coaching at the executive level such as Deans. Therefore, a competent coach is not enough to generate inspired insights for the complex task of coaching Deans. A deeper understanding of the purpose, relevant learning theories and context are other sufficient conditions for effective coaching engagements. The study has some limitations but with possible implications for practice and research. Overall, the entire portfolio of the research projects is expected to add value to the current body of knowledge on coaching and its practice specifically for coaching academic deans and other leaders in higher education institutions. And to this end, this research has resulted in one peer-reviewed publication with a second currently in review and three international webinars.

1.6   Structure of the Thesis

This thesis is organized into six chapters. Five of these in-between chapters represent each element of the portfolio, while the first, chapter one, serves as an overall introduction to the research.

The second chapter presents the literature review conducted for three research projects namely the Small Scale Research Project (SSRP), Applied Research Project (ARP), and Report on Professional Practice (RPP).

The third chapter presents the SSRP. It focuses on coaching university administrative or professional leaders. The SSRP was a great source for learning about research methods and data collection. However, the most important learning was in the direction, it provided for the rest of the research projects, including the ARP and RPP.

The fourth chapter is dedicated to the ARP that represents the principal research carried out in this portfolio. It is about exploring a framework for coaching academic Deans that is informed by learning theories. The chapter presents research questions, the method of research and a rich discussion on the results and findings.

The fifth chapter contains the RPP which is a direct follow up of the ARP and focuses on an analysis of two leading coaching competency frameworks.

Chapter six provides a reflective account of the portfolio of research using Kolb's experiential learning cycle. The chapter also provides a coherent overview and the learning experience of the researcher. This chapter also discusses the key conclusions and implications of this research on further research and practice of coaching in higher education.

Due to the nature of the portfolio-based research that comprises multiple projects, it is important to maintain some visible coherence among its elements. The organizing structure of the thesis is aiming to achieve that coherence whole.

Chapter 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1   Introduction

The literature review has been guided by the purpose of the research and the relevant research questions in the three following major domains that form the three studies reported in this thesis:

- What are the learning theories relevant to coaching?
- What are the learning needs of academic leaders specifically the Deans and how do they learn to play their roles?
- Are competencies-based frameworks sufficient for coaching academic Deans?

In search of the answers to the above questions, I reviewed relevant literature in the three domains of academic deans, learning theories and coaching frameworks and models. I carried out the library SmartSearch in all major databases including ProQuest ABI/Inform, EBSCO, ERIC, Elsevier Scopus, Springer Link, and Google Scholar. The keywords included academic dean, academic leader, learning theories, coaching models, and competencies. I examined the theory and research related to learning to identify their potential contribution to the coaching process and opportunity for learning by academic leaders and deans. The learning theories, presented in this literature review, are grouped into adult learning, transformative learning, intercultural learning, and social learning by leading theorists. I have included the literature guided by the aims of this research as well as the one that supports my arguments as discussed in the following sections.

2.2   Relevance of Learning Theories for Coaching

According to Cox (2013), coaching is a facilitated, dialogic learning process and its demand has risen due to the need to overcome increasingly complex

problems in the world. The theories that highlight how adults learn and take ownership of their learning processes have direct relevance to coaching practice. Therefore, this part of the literature review examines various learning theories and their potential contributions to improve the learning experiences of academic deans through coaching. I have grouped these learning theories, in this literature review, into the following domains:

- Adult learning
- Transformative learning
- Intercultural learning
- Social learning

2.2.1 Adult Learning

Adult learning theories comprise the largest set of theories that has critical relevance for the coaching process and coaching models. An understanding of adult learning principles and theories could therefore support the learning processes of both coaches and coachees. Several theorists including Knowles (1980), Schon (1983), Kolb (1984), Lindeman (1926), Maslow (1987) and Rogers (1989) have made a major contribution to the understanding of adult learning.

Knowles (1980) introduced the term andragogy to distinguish it from pedagogy so that he could contrast the learning needs of adults from those of children (Knowles, 1980, p.43). He supports the key assumption made by many other learning theorists that accumulated experience plays a central role in forming habits and openness to new learning. The lifelong experiences of learners can have a great influence on attitudes of learning and meaning making about their lives (Knowles, et al, 1998). Knowles (1980) claims that adults draw their resources and readiness for learning from their reservoir of experience. His definition of andragogy assumes that the learner is mature, motivated, voluntary and an equal participant in a

learning process. Such a process is aided by a trusted facilitator or partner to achieve the agreed upon agenda set by a coachee.

Knowles et al (1998) present assumptions about adult learners as follows:

- Adults are self-directed in their learning
- Adults are goal-oriented in learning
- Adults have a reservoir of life experiences to learn from
- Adults are interested to learn to solve real-life problems
- Adult have practical orientation –they learn to apply knowledge
- Adults respond more to intrinsic motivators than extrinsic

Cox (2013) argues that andragogy offers a philosophy for coaching since elements of coaching reflect the principles of andragogy. She compares corresponding principles of coaching with those of andragogy by referring to well established coaching models. In andragogy, adults are self-directed and goal-oriented in learning, and so is coaching, where the agenda and commitment are controlled by the coachee. Adults learn from their experiences to solve real life problems. The corresponding principles in coaching are that coachees are resourceful and coaching is a result-oriented and systematic process. As per the above theory of andragogy, adults respond to intrinsic motivators. This is similar to coaching where a coachee connects to his or her inner sense of purpose to maximize performance.

Schon (1983) conceptualized reflection-in-action as an artistic process in which a professional practitioner assesses a situation intuitively, using professional judgement and acquired knowledge. He concluded that many professionals consider knowledge as being "mismatched to the changing character of the situations of practice – the complexity, uncertainty, instability, uniqueness, and value conflicts which are increasingly perceived as central to the world of professional practice" (Schon, 1983, p. 14). He emphasizes the importance of understanding a context for action as the key to effective professional practice. He suggests that together, the reflection

in action and experimentation of an intuitive practice constructs a theory of a new case (Schon, 1983, p.68).

Donald Schon and Chris Argyris worked together on integrating the concepts of knowing-in-action and reflection-in-action which is also known as double loop learning. They argue that people have mental maps that determine how they plan, implement and review their actions. These mental maps determine people's behaviours from the theories they espouse. "In single loop learning, we learn to maintain the field of constancy by learning to design actions that satisfy existing governing variables. In double loop learning, we learn to change the field of constancy itself" (Argyris and Schon, 1974, p.19). By altering the mental maps that guide the meaning we attach to our experiences, adult learners permit information to extend beyond the reason it was assigned. They can thus create alternative possibilities of thinking and action. Double loop is therefore a theory and practice that integrates thought and action for the learners.

Schon worked on the importance of overcoming resistance to new learning that challenges existing cognitive structures. This resistance stems from previous experiences and forms a basis for not assimilating new information. It has direct relevance to learning situations like coaching where coachees may have a tendency to resist new learning to make informed choices in an uncertain business environment. Reflection-in-action can challenge the assumptions of a coachee while performing an action leading to the generation of various choices as well as different ways of framing situations.

David A. Kolb is one of the most influential contributors to the theory of adult learning based on experience. He furthered the Experiential Learning Theory (ELT) which was originally developed by Dewey, Lewin, and Piaget. Kolb (2015, p.15) confesses that Dewey, Lewin, and Piaget stand as "foremost intellectual ancestors of experiential learning theory". Kolb (2015, p.49) defines learning as a process to create knowledge through the

transformation of experience. He describes his ELT as a dynamic view of the learning cycle where knowledge results from the combination of grasping and transforming experience. As shown in Figure 2.1, the ELT learning model depicts two dialectically related modes of transforming experience known as Concrete Experience (CE), and
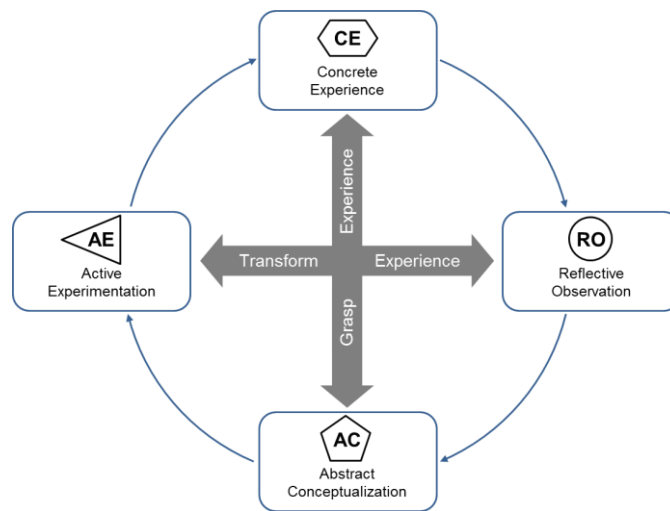
Figure 2.1: Experiential Learning Cycle (Kolb, 2015, p. 51)

Abstract Conceptualization (AC). Similarly, there are two dialectically related modes of transforming experience known as Reflective Observation (RO) and Active Experimentation (AE). According to Kolb (2015, p.51), this is an idealized learning process whereby learning results from the resolution of the creative tension among the four modes. Therefore, by its very nature, learning is a conflictual and tension-filled process. Kolb (2015, p. 37-48) has formed a unique perspective on learning and development that can be characterized by the following propositions:

- Learning is best perceived as a process rather than outcomes. This proposition distinguishes ELT from behaviourists' theories since learning is not fixed and elements of thought are formed and re-formed through experience.

- Learning is a continuous process grounded in experience. It means that learning is relearning. If we address the learner's belief system

before imparting knowledge, it's likely to be more effective because our belief systems resist new learning.

- The process of learning necessitates the resolution of conflicts between dialectically opposed modes of experiential learning. These modes are described above.

- Learning is a holistic process of human adaptation to the social and physical environment. It means that learning is limited to human cognition or perception. It is rather an integrated function of thinking, feeling, perceiving and behaving.

- Learning involves transactions between the person and the environment. The relationship between a person and the environment is symbolized as an experience that is interaction between a subject (person) and object (environment).

- Learning is the process of creating knowledge.

Several researchers have scrutinized Kolb's ELT. For example, Jarvis (1987) argues that not all experiences result in learning and not all learning leads to changes in behaviour. Chapman (2010) developed an integrated experiential coaching model based on Wilber's (1995) Integral Model. He argues that Wilber's (1995) model is more holistic than that of Kolb's (2015) ELT model and hence it's more suitable for comprehensive human growth and development. However, he agrees that Kolb's model is far more practical.

Kolb's model is useful for designing and implementing learning experiences such as coaching. Experiential learning theory is central to understanding how coachees learn from their past and current experiences and use that learning to take action. Many coaching models have sought guidance from Kolb's learning theory. For example, the GROW (Goal, Reality, Options and Will) model by Whitmore (2009) corresponds directly to the learning modes of Kolb (2015, p. 51). "Goal setting" and "Reality" maps onto concrete

experience and reflective observation modes of the ELT, whereas, "Options" and "Way Forward" correspond to the abstract conceptualization and active experimentation respectively.

Chapman (2010) has built his Integrated Experiential Coaching Model by integrating Wilber (1995) and Kolb (1984). He hypothesizes that Kolb's genius lies in mapping out a very natural unconscious learning process. "All that is needed to facilitate learning is to make it conscious and give it some structure" (Chapman, 2010, p.211). Chapman (2010) believes that Kolb's experiential learning theory is very deep and unfortunately, most researchers use it superficially.

In order to understand the adult learner's behaviour, it's important to recognize the adult's orientation towards a problem and problem solving. Lindeman (1926) introduced a process of adult education in which learners recognize their major experience, evaluate it, and find related meanings pertinent to their daily lives. He argues that adults like to apply their learning to practical situations and their motivation to learn is driven by the potential of the knowledge to solve their problems. "Every adult person finds himself in specific situations with respect to his work, his recreation, his family life, his community life, etc. – situations which call for adjustments. Adult education begins at this point" (Lindeman, 1926, p.8-9). Lindeman shared his commitment to human development through education with his colleague and friend John Dewey.

Lindeman (1926) provides a useful foundation for coaching since it emphasizes the pragmatic nature of adult learning and the self-determination of learners. The theory supports the problem-centred and performance-oriented coaching engagements which are becoming increasingly popular in all kinds of organizations. According to Whitmore (2009), coaching for performance is more effective when coachees believe in voluntary learning because performance, learning, and enjoyment are "inextricably intertwined" (p.99).

Humanist theorist, Abraham Maslow discovered that conditions of the socio-cultural environment can enable, encourage and nurture human learning. Maslow introduced his theory initially known as the *hierarchy of needs* in 1942 and later extended to include innate curiosity. He recognized that humans move through staged levels of physiological, safety, belonging and love, and esteem to reach their goal of learning that is self-actualization (Maslow, et al, 1987). Maslow observed that people feel autonomous and ready to act in an ambiguous environment only if it meets their conditions of safety, a sense of belonging, and esteem (Maslow, et al, 1987, p. 150). Maslow realized that at the deep level, all individuals want to grow towards higher psychological health (self-actualization) provided their socio-cultural environment is supportive and provides an opportunity for development and self-expression.

Several researchers have underscored the relevance of Maslow's theory to coaching. Stober (2006) argues that Maslow's theory is critical to coaching because it supports a coachee's journey towards their ultimate innate motive – self-actualization. He recognizes that Maslow's theory helps us understand that under what conditions a positive change is likely to occur. The theory underpins the well-known notion that coachees make progress when their fears are addressed. Spence (2007) argues that coaches can learn a lot to support the evidence-based movement by building their models that are informed by solid learning theories like the one by Maslow. He foresees a brighter future in the coaching profession if psychologists assume a lead role in the coaching industry.

Carl Rogers is another noted humanist theorist. Rogers (1989) worked on the development of the fully functioning person whose learning becomes efficient when the threats to the self of the learner are reduced. He focused on the value of making the climate psychologically safe for learners. A positive learning environment is key to learning because these are congruent with the values and interests of the learners. Rogers believed

that the real purpose of education is the facilitation of change and learning. He found his solution to boredom in learning. He argues that "the major reason I am willing to take chances is that I have found in doing so, whether I success or fail, I learn" (Rogers, 1989, p. 42).

Many researchers have studied Rogerian techniques for their relevance to coaching. Among those researchers are Peltier (2001) and Zeus and Skiffington (2005). According to them, Rogers' theory helps in the understanding of collaborating coaching relationships, which is vital for the success of any coaching engagement.

The learning theories by Knowles (1980), Schon (1983), Kolb (1984), Lindeman (1926), Maslow (1987) and Rogers (1989) offer an opportunity to understand the learning experiences of academic deans, and how may their learning experiences inform the design of a coaching model. Academic deans are exposed to the characteristics of the adult learning environment, such as goal setting, intrinsic motivation, intuitional sense of professional judgement, tensions-filled situations, accumulated experiences, problem-solving, and need for self-actualization and congruence with their values. During this research, it would be interesting to explore the impact of adult learning behaviours of academic deans on the effectiveness of their roles.

2.2.2   Transformative Learning

Understanding of transformative learning theories inform us about the importance of reflection on our assumptions, beliefs and action choices in a coaching context. Though there is little research to determine direct relations between coaching and transformative learning, transformative learning theory appears to come closest to the coaching process (Sammut, 2014). Transformative learning theory emerged from the work of Jack Mezirow (1991). The theory describes the conditions and processes essential for adult learners to make a transformative shift. Mezirow (1991) introduced that experience, critical reflection and rational discourse are key

parts of the process of the meaning structure. However, with the evolution of his theory, he added holistic orientation, awareness of context and authentic practice to the original themes of the above theory. (Taylor, 1998). In a transformative learning process, adults move away from childhood roles and reframe their perspectives and become more engaged in life with a sense of self-direction. It focuses on a learner's mental construction of experience and meaning. Transformative learning also involves a deep shift in beliefs, values, principles and feelings (Mezirow, 1991).

According to Cox (2013), Mezirow (1991) has proposed three types of meaning perspectives including psychological, sociolinguistic, and epistemic. A perspective is a "habitual set of expectations that constitutes an orientating frame of reference that we use in projecting our symbolic models and that serves as a (usually tacit) belief system for interpreting and evaluating the meaning of experience" (Mezirow, 1991, p. 42). Mezirow (1991) suggested three types of reflection: content reflection, process reflection and premise reflection. Cox (2013) claims that "through premise reflection, assumptions, beliefs and values are questioned and this questioning process leads to transformative learning" (p. 198). She also finds techniques such as critical incident analysis, role-play, journal, and biography useful for transformative learning. However, questioning remains a major coaching technique for perspective shifting and deep learning. A study concluded by Sammut (2014) shows that all coaches, who were included in the research, are actively using Mezirow's (1991) six core elements of transformation learning: individual experience, critical reflection, dialogue, holistic orientation, awareness of context and authentic relationships even though these coaches were not aware of the theory.

In contrast to Mezirow (1991), who focused on personal transformation, Brazilian educator, Paulo Freire paid attention to social transformation.

Freire's (2000) theory of education for a social change introduced the concept of praxis, a process of dancing between action and reflection. The process aims to enhance learners' awareness of the socio-cultural dynamics playing a major role in their lives. Freire's (2000) concept of 'conscientization' is underpinned by a process of moving between the lowest to the highest level of consciousness through dialog and action – praxis. Both reflection and action play a pivotal role in any coaching model for a coach as well as for coachees who experience an elevation in their consciousness as a measure of learning.

Since transformative learning involves an understanding of beliefs, values and principles and measuring their impact on one's role in real life such as that of an academic dean, theories by Mezirow (1991) and Freire (2000) may be very helpful to develop a coach-assisted dialogic process. Buller's (2018) value-based approach for college administration is consistent with Mezirow's (1991) personal transformation. He argues that the essence of personal transformation journeys of authentic academic leaders "is knowing who you are as a person, particularly with regard to your values, perspectives, personal opinions, and the system you used to apply all of these to your work and life" (p.171). Cranton (1996) argues that it is these perspectives of making meaning that are essential to be challenged for deep learning to occur. He also highlights the importance of asking questions for growth because it's not easy to identify assumptions without the help of someone like a coach. This research will also explore how academic deans construct their meaning for deeper learning.

2.2.3   Intercultural Learning

Several theorists including Hofstede (1997), Ting-Toomy (1999), Singer (1998), Adler (1998) and Langer (1989) have worked on the role of cultural and/or intercultural communications and relations on learning. Principles of intercultural theories inform about individual and cultural differences.

These theories may help us understand some of the learning patterns in academic deans.

Social scientist, Geert Hofstede studied differences and similarities in cultural values in a large-scale research project at IBM Corporation in 50 countries across regions. Hofstede (1997) surveyed 116,000 IBM executives twice and concluded that there are four cultural value dimensions as follows:

- Affiliation-achievement
- Certainty-uncertainty
- Individualism-collectivism
- Low power distance-high power distance

Among the above four cultural value dimensions, the certainty-uncertainty dimension specifically informs us about the learning experiences of people with different cultural backgrounds. This dimension distinguishes people who are comfortable with making decisions in ambiguous, unstructured and risky situations, from those who prefer to play by rules and controls. Hofstede (1997) clarifies that uncertainty avoidance is different from risk avoidance. "Fear and risk are both focused on something specific: an object in case of fear, an event in case of risk. As soon as uncertainty is expressed as risk, it ceases to be a source of anxiety. Uncertainty avoiding cultures shun ambiguous situations. People in such cultures look for a structure in their organizations, institutions and relationships which makes events clearly interpretable and predictable" (Hofstede, 1997, p. 116).

In the academic leadership context, Hofstede's (1997) research creates awareness about the dimensions of cultural differences and impact of cultural values on behaviours. Hofstede's (1997) research has a great potential to know how the cultural orientation of college deans influences their actions and reflections for effective learning. According to Abbott (2010) who applies Hofstede's cultural value dimensions, intercultural

learning needs a vocabulary to make sense of a learner's stories and to understand cultural influences in complex learning situations such as faced by the academic Deans.

Ting-Toomey (1999) identified eight identity domains that play a significant role in intercultural situations. Four of these domains belong to self-image domains and these are cultural, ethnic, gender, and personal identities. The other four domains of identity are situational. The situations include role, relational, facework, and symbolic interactional identities. She argues that there is a complex diversity of identities within every individual. "Identity is viewed as reflective self-images constructed, experienced, and communicated by the individuals within a culture and in a particular interaction situation (Ting-Toomey, 1999, p. 39).

The work of Ting-Toomey (1999) highlights the importance of intercultural communication in learning. She emphasizes that effective intercultural communications necessitate learning of the value systems that influence others' self-concepts. She found that individuals with a high tolerance for ambiguity and personal flexibility promote identity security and inclusion. Hence, the theory of identity negotiation informs us how academic deans may construct their self-images influenced by their cultural norms and value systems. The understanding of the coachees' cultural context is therefore relevant for a coach.

Marshall Singer studied the role of perception and identity in intercultural communications. Singer (1998) claims that all interpersonal communications are intercultural communications since no two individuals share the exact same group membership. He believed that culture is a group based phenomenon. Singer (1998) advocates the concept of cultural uniqueness in his theory of intercultural communications. He argues that every identity group has a culture of its own and everyone simultaneously belongs to many identity groups and cultures. According to Singer (1998), "because no person is a part of all and only the same groups as anyone else

and because each person ranks the attitudes, values, and beliefs of the groups to which he or she belongs differently, which is what culture is all about, *each individual must be considered to be culturally unique"* (p. xiii)

Bennet (2013), in his review of Singer's (1998) perceptional model says that the fewer group identities an individual shares with whom he/she communicates, the more intercultural communications are. Therefore, we are dealing here with continuum rather than dichotomies. He argues that some international communications can be far more intercultural than other international communications.   Singer's (1998) intercultural communications theory teaches us that the academic Deans should be aware of not only the cultural uniqueness of the chairs and faculty but also be sensitive to their own cultural assumptions for an effectiveness of learning conversations.

Peter Adler studies the complexity of cultural identity. Adler (1998) introduced the term 'multicultural man' who is continuously learning and unlearning through a series of experiments and explorations. Such a man keeps aligning himself by adapting to new realities in the world. The multicultural man transcends the constancy of structure of the cultural identity and keeps renewing his values and expectations. Adler (1998) compares his multicultural man with great philosophers who don't accept all demands of any one culture but do embrace some conditioning by the culture they live in. "This tension gives rise to a dynamic, passionate, and critical posture in the face of totalistic ideologies, systems, and movements" (Adler, 1998, p. 236).

Not everyone fully agrees with Adler (1998). Sparrow (2000) discovered through her research that Adler did not adequately address all complexities of multicultural identity development. She claims that there is a need for a broader study on the nature and value of multicultural experiences and identity development in wake of post-modern views of chaos, relativity and social constructionism. Regardless of some limited criticism, Adler's (1998)

theory of cultural identity development offers great value to coaches who would like to coach academic deans from different cultural backgrounds. The theory supports the notion of staying open and recognizes a unique and full range of individual experiences in managed learning conversation for productive outcomes.

Langer (1989) researched the role of mindfulness in learning. Langer (1989) saw the positive side of uncertainty and recognized its usefulness to create possibilities. She argues that when we mindfully encounter uncertainty, it creates conditions to discover meaning. Langer (1989) says that "when we are mindful, we implicitly or explicitly (1) view a situation from several perspectives, (2) see information presented in a situation as a novel, (3) attend to the context in which we are perceiving the information, and eventually (4) create new categories through which this information may be understood" (p. 111). Ting-Toomey (1999) has been inspired by the mindfulness work of Langer (1989), and its effect on intercultural communications. According to her, the practice of mindfulness intercultural communication needs to be aware of your own values, beliefs and assumptions, behaviours as well as of others.

Mindfulness has a direct relation to new learning. When we know something, we don't pay attention to what we don't know and thus we limit our learning. When we are mindful, we are also non-judgmental because we just try to learn it as we see it. Both mindful openness to learning and being non-judgmental are essential in coaching situations. Kets de Vries, M. (2014) also supports mindfulness in coaching. He argues that when mindfulness is used in coaching sessions, it can be a very powerful method to stimulate insight and behavioural change. "Mindfulness, and the capacity to coach in-depth, are closely intertwined" (Kets de Vries, M. ,2014, p. 10). The works of Langer (1989) and Kets de Vries, M. (2014) may be relevant to this study in helping to improve the learning experiences of the academic Deans.

2.2.4   Social Learning

Social learning theories explain how individuals learn new behaviours, values and attitudes by observing others. Several theorists including Lave and Wenger (1991), Vygotsky (1978), Jarvis (1987) have studied learning in social context. Jean Lave and Etienne Wenger introduced the concept of learning through participation in a community of practice. Lave and Wenger (1991) proposed the theory of *situated learning* while focusing on the relationship between learning and the social situations in which learning actually occurs. These situations are some forms of co-participation in an interpersonal context, also known as communities of participation. "A person's intentions to learn are engaged and the meaning of learning are configured through the process of becoming a full participant in a sociocultural practice" (Lave and Wenger, 1991, p. 29). Situated learning emphasizes learning from daily experiences while constructing identity and meaning in the process of practice.

The work of Lave and Wenger (1991) informs that learning will occur naturally when a college dean performs action(s) to achieve a goal. After all, in organizations, the ultimate purpose of learning is to improve the ability for performance and reflection on the performance may lead to higher learning. The theory also supports that action makes a learner unstuck and move forward, and that an academic dean is more likely to take action when supported in a community of shared practice within his college and/or university or even an association of college deans.

Lev Semanovich Vygotsky is a constructivist thinker who believed that learning is dependent on social interaction and it precedes cognitive development. Vygotsky (1978) introduced the concept of 'Zone of Proximal Development' (ZPD) as a distance between what a learner can do independently to solve a problem and his/her level of potential ability to solve a problem under adult guidance or with support from more capable peers. One criticism of Vygotsky's (1978) concept of ZPD is that it was

developed for the development of children rather than adult learners. However, it has been successfully applied to measure the distance of potential development of teachers (Fani and Ghaemi, 2011). Any coaching framework for academic deans may benefit from Vygotsky's concept of ZPD because it is based on the social process in which a coach facilitates learning of a coachee so that the coachee could perform higher than they could do by themselves.

Jarvis (1987) studied Kolb's (1984) model and evolved a comprehensive learning model to show that there are several possible responses to a learning experience. For developing his model, Jarvis used the method of consultation with adult groups whom he asked to explore Kolb's model based on their own experience of learning. Thus he was able to develop a model which allowed different routes taken by learners in an experiential learning situation. Depending upon the route taken by a learner, the end product is either non-learning, non-reflective learning, or reflective learning. This could be better understood by a study of the trajectories on the diagram produced by Jarvis (1987) as shown in Figure 2.2.
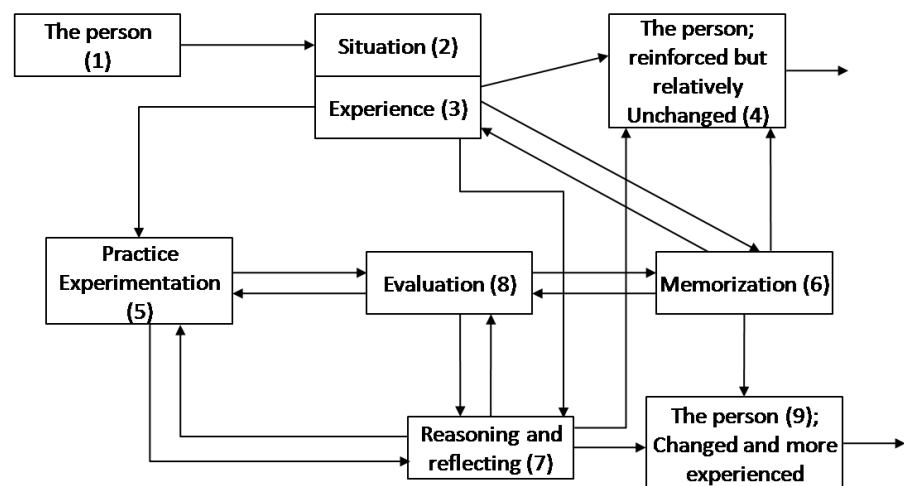
Figure 2.2: Typology of Learning (Jarvis, 1987)

Non-learning:	The trajectory indicated in boxes 1 to 4 is indicative of non-learning. This is where a person either does not respond to a potential learning situation or responds through patterned behaviours only.
Non-reflective Learning:	The non-reflective learning occurs in more than one ways. Several experiences in daily life are not really thought about and where the practice is not involved (boxes 1-3 to 6 to either 4 or 9). Acquisition of manual and physical skills as evident in a training situation where reflection is not necessarily involved is another instance of non-reflective learning (boxes 1-3 to 5 to 8 to 6 to either 4 or 9). Memorization is another instance of non-reflective learning (boxes 1-3 to 6 to 8 to 6 to either 4 or 9).
Reflective Learning:	Just as in the case of non-reflective learning, there are several ways in which reflecting learning occurs in people. 'Contemplation' is when one considers an experience and makes intelligent decisions about it (boxes 1-3 to 7 to 8 to 6 to 9). 'Reflective practice' occurs when a person makes a reflection on and in action. (boxes 1-3 to 7 to 5 to 6 to 9). Lastly, 'Experiential learning', according to Jarvis refers to how pragmatic knowledge may be learned (boxes 1-3 to 6 to 5 to 7 to 8 to 6 to 9).

Jarvis (1992) argues that Kolb's model has a neat simplicity but the real learning process is far more complex. He claims that if we could understand all aspects of the learning process, this could manipulate people and also understand life to the full. Jarvis admits that humans would never be able

to understand the learning process fully (p. 199). Gray et al. (2016) have critically reviewed the relevance of Jarvis' typography of learning to coaching. They argue that all nine categories of responses to experiences explain a coachee's possible actions or lack of action thereof. This may inform us about the behaviours of academic deans who sometimes take no action or reject new learning. Non-reflective learning informs how guided activity helps a learner solve a problem or learn new skills. Reflective learning, the third element of Jarvis's typography, may help us understand that how deans learn when they are exposed to some internal tension due to conflicts in their roles. According to Gray et al (2016), "both coaching and mentoring often work in these tensions in order to help people resolve, reframe or develop strategies for the paradox of change" (p. 106).

2.3   Learning-Informed Coaching in HEIs

Since both coach and coachees are learners, learning plays a critical role in the process of coaching as well as contributes to the development of coaching models. In this literature review, these learning theories are grouped into four domains: adult learning, transformative learning, intercultural learning and social learning. Adult learning theories comprise the largest set of theories that has critical relevance for the coaching process and coaching models. Knowles (1980), Schon (1983), Kolb (1984), Lindeman (1926), Maslow (1987) and Rogers (1989) have made a major contribution to understanding of adult learning. Similarly, Mezirow (1991) and Freire (2000) help us understand the importance of reflection on our assumptions, beliefs and action and how to make a deep shift in beliefs, values, principles and feelings. Their theories describe the conditions and process essential for adult learners to make a transformative shift. Hofstede (1997), Ting-Toomy (1999), Singer (1998), Adler (1998) and Langer (1989) have worked on the role of cultural and/or intercultural communications and relations on learning. Principles of intercultural theories inform about individual and cultural differences. Social learning theories explain how individuals learn new behaviours, values and attitudes by observing others.

Several theorists including Lave and Wenger (1991), Vygotsky (1978), Jarvis (1987) have studied learning in a social context that may help to inform leadership coaching as social discourse.

The learning theories discussed above may help inform how academic and professional leaders in Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) learn about themselves and the roles they play in their institutions. These learning experiences of the leaders may then inform the architecture of the learning process in the shape of a staged conversation and a journey. The unique value this research will add is contributing to an understanding of how academic deans learn to be more effective in their roles, as well as how the leadership coaching for professional managers may be used as an effective leadership development tool.

The role of an academic dean and professional leaders varies from institution to institution. Nonetheless, there are a lot of similarities in what they do. Academic deans play a middle management role and are the backbone of academic decision-making. They face ambiguity and deal with conflict due to contrasting demands from their supervisors and direct reports. Many deans complain about stress and burnout in their roles that lead to lower productivity. They are driven by their values, past experiences and academic backgrounds. Academic deans may learn from their lived experiences, sociocultural interactions, and through challenging their own assumptions, beliefs and values. Coaching may offer an opportunity to help deans accelerate their learning for improving their ability to cope with the challenges of the role, reduce stress or have a more balanced life.

The learning theories may help us understand some of the learning patterns in academic deans and non-academic leaders. There is a clear lack of research on the role and person-side of leaders in HEIs. There is almost no research conducted to understand how leaders in HEIs learn and then how to use the outcome of such research in developing a model for coaching these leaders. In view of the above, this research aims to address the big gap in the literature on

the learning of both academic and non-academic leaders who are at the centre of academic decision-making in the institutions of higher education.

2.4   Academic and Professional Leaders in HEIs

According to Anthony and Antony (2017), there are two major levels of leadership in HEIs: the institutional level and the college level. However, Witchurd (2008) argues that there is a third space of leadership in HEIs that is blurring the boundaries between academic and professional domains. This space is a blended space where the roles and responsibilities of these leaders overlap. The literature review focuses on academic Deans as academic leaders and professional managers who support the delivery of various services in a university. The word *dean* entered the English language via Norman French, though originally a Latin word *decanus* which means an officer commanding ten people (cf. Latin decem or Greek deka," ten"). For a long time, the word Dean was meant to represent a supervisory member of the clergy, a head of a chapter of a cathedral or someone through whom a group of priests reported to an archbishop (Buller, 2007, p. 1). The academic deanship evolved out of the secretary to the faculty, an office responsible to assist university presidents in some of their work. In the middle of the 19th century, Harvard University was among the pioneers who appointed a formal dean of arts & sciences (Walker, 2012). According to Sarros, et al (1998), an academic leader is the least researched and most misunderstood role in the higher education enterprise. There is a large body of research on organization and governance of higher education institutions. However, very little is written about the academic leaders like deans who lead the colleges. An academic dean is a head of an academic college, thus, also known as a college dean. In this section, I review the literature on the academic leaders and contrast it with the professional managers in terms of their roles, leadership competencies and how do they learn.

2.4.1 Roles of HE Leaders

The role and responsibilities of Higher Education (HE) vary widely from institution to institution. According to Buller (2007), most leaders play a middle management role whereas they report to a provost or directly to a president and at the same time they supervise chairpersons of academic departments and their institutional staff at their college. Performing both upward and downward roles creates a significant middle management challenge for a dean since he/she is the backbone of academic decision-making. A major study conducted by Wolverton and Wolverton, (1999) explored the roles of 786 academic deans in the United States. Their research concluded that Deans link central administration with academic departments and they are often caught between the expectations of their college's constituents such as faculty and staff on one hand and senior management of the universities on the other. These expectations are often opposing and thus lead to ambiguity and conflict in the role played by a dean. A similar study conducted by Sarros, et al (1998) and participated by 195 deans from Australian universities also found role ambiguity was consistent across the sample. Deans were only moderately satisfied with the clarity of their role and most of them were dissatisfied with the pace of work and level of workload. According to Wolverton and Wolverton (1999), role ambiguity not only causes stress and burnout, it also results in higher turnover, low productivity and ultimately lower job satisfaction.

Both of the above studies highlight the significance of an inherent conflict in the position of an academic dean in a higher education institution. The inherent conflict can lead, according to Sarros, et al (1998), either to a desire to move to higher positions or want to return to their previously held positions.

A study by Montez et al. (2015) reported that role conflict and ambiguity occur where leaders are faced with incompatible expectations from senior leadership. It labels the role of a dean as "enigmatic within the complex

web" of dean's constituents including but not limited to faculty, students, board members and administrators (Montez et al, 2015). An academic dean, therefore, has high chances of success if he or she maintains a balance between their prevailing situations and personal values.

The roles and responsibilities of academic and professional leaders vary widely from institution to institution. It differs from country to country and is not standardized even in colleges within a single institution (Arntzen, 2016). Arntzen (2016) argues that over the years the role of an academic leader such as a college dean has transformed into that of a manager. In the early years, deans were elected distinguished professors who were coalition builders and coordinators of a college. The present-day dean is the one who increasingly exercises managerial control over the college through chairpersons of academic departments and quite often communicates to the faculty members through their subordinate chairpersons. Therefore, chairpersons are the important people in a dean's professional sphere. They play a major role in a dean's selection and development. Since a college is as good as its faculty, a dean's most important responsibility is his/her relations with the faculty (Walker, 2012). Deans are also involved in the final selection of faculty members though they don't serve on search committees. (Tucker, 1988).

Professional managers

The role of professional leaders in universities is becoming increasingly important in the achievement of their mission. These leaders support the delivery of teaching and research programs. Professional managers in non-academic areas such as human resources, finance, estate management, sports facilities, etc. are more focused on delivering operational efficiencies (Black, 2015). However, there is a serious lack of literature on the role of professional managers in universities. Spendlove (2007) argues that the experience of university life plays a crucial role in success as a leader in a university. He also claims that university leadership is fundamentally

different due to inherent organizational complexity, and therefore requires additional competencies such as conflict management and collaboration. The most dominant factor that determines the role of HE leaders is the size of the institution. According to Tucker (1988), the larger the size of an institution, the less the interaction a middle-level leader will have with the head of the institution. However, smaller institutions' leaders interact with their institutional heads like vice-chancellors more often. Students represent another major constituent of an HEI. In addition to chairpersons and faculty, professional managers also receive complaints from students about discrimination based on sex or race as well as lack of facilities (Buller, 2007, p. 60). Both academic and professional leaders complement each other for a common goal of achieving the mission of their institution.

2.4.2 Competencies of HE Leaders

According to Wolverton and Wolverton (1999), universities lack clarity in setting expectations for academic deans who are hired on scholarly attributes and achievements but are expected to perform for administrative excellence. Teaching and research alone do not prepare a dean to perform an effective role. They need key skills such as communication, strategy, fund-raising, organizational skills, collaboration, collegial relationships (Kalargyrou and Woods, 2009). Trustworthiness is also an important leadership competency for deans. A study conducted to measure perceived trustworthiness among public sector university deans concluded that perceived trustworthiness is predicted by communication skills, planning & organizing and presentation skills (Tang et al, 2013).

The role ambiguity that causes stress and burnout and the inherent conflict presents an opportunity for coaching since many forms of coaching take a holistic approach to learning. Coaches coach the person, not the problem (Cox, 2013). It appears that the problem is rooted in the person (Dean) who assumes this role of a dean rather than the job. This research explores these

issues with college deans and how coaching could help them learn to navigate through the inherent ambiguity and complexity in their roles.

Change management is yet another key competency of a dean since they are often brought into a college to implement a change agenda. An Australian study, for example, of 195 deans argued that most deans were selected on their skills in change management (Sarros et al, 1998). A survey of 1,515 university administrators that was overwhelmingly participated by academic deans concluded that those who had taken courses in business administration, human resources or industrial psychology felt better prepared for the administrative roles as compared to others (Montez et al, 2015).

Academic deans are essential academic leaders in institutions of higher education. They are engaged in both leadership as well as institutional management roles unlike heads of academic departments who are performing only institutional management roles. Deans control resources and influence academic outcomes in colleges. An effective dean promotes integrity, trust, their vision and direction, sets challenging goals and supports their team to set and achieve goals (Lumby, 2012).

Some deans who are not fully prepared to assume the role, they could attend training programs to improve their management and leadership skills without compromising the values and characteristics of the higher education sector. Aasen and Bjorn (2007) recommend leadership training for deans followed by organizational development activities such as coaching because some forms of coaching support the effective transfer of learning to application. They argue that what limits deans' ability to implement these activities is stress, lack of time, and organizational culture.

It is imperative that leadership skills of these managers be developed to increase their capacity to play their respective leadership roles. Coaching has been found as a preferred organizational leadership development

intervention for managers in higher education. However, there is serious lack of literature on the topic of coaching of professional managers in universities. The development needs of these managers are somewhat different than those in other industries.

2.4.3 How HE Leaders Learn?

According to Buller (2007), most deans rely on their past administrative experiences of relationships with senior faculty members as important sources of learning and to be effective. Their experience as a faculty member is also a valuable means of learning (Favero, 2006). Blackmore and Blackwell (2006) argue that Academic leaders may educate themselves through formal and informal processes of learning that include reflective processes such as coaching, peer mentoring and action learning.

According to Favero (2006), deans' learning is greatly influenced by their disciplinary background. He argues that deans in pure fields rely more on trial-and-error than those with disciplinary backgrounds in applied fields. This argument is supported by Van Maanen (1984) who studied the influence of the socialization theory on learning experiences. The socialization theory suggests that trial-and-error may be a preferred learning approach by an academic dean since their chain of socialization can be traced back to their academic discipline. Consequently, the academic background of a dean may inform his/her learning approach.

The literature discussed in section 2 suggests that academic deans have a significant leadership challenge in their roles. They deal with unexpected emotional stress caused by ambiguity and some inherent conflict in their roles which is also increasingly becoming that of a manager rather than an academic. They have to continually learn how to deal with the above challenges. Coaching presents an opportunity for deans since it may accelerate learning and enable change through managed conversations (Hunt and Weintraub, 2017).

The above literature shall help to explore how learning theories inform the learning patterns among academic deans so that it may inform a coaching framework or a heuristic for academic Deans.

2.5   Frameworks for the Leadership Coaching

A coach facilitates learning and changes through a managed conversation (Gallwey, 2000). According to Lennard (2010), coaching helps coachees in their learning and personal development, coaching frameworks and models, however, help coaches. "Coaching models facilitate the learning, development, and performance of coaches" (Lennard, 2010, p. 3). Chapman (2010) emphasizes the need for having a framework for coaching. He argues that it is important to have a coaching philosophy or theory, but it is not a practical tool to deliver a practical solution for coachees. Stout-Rostron (2014) also supports the importance of coaching models. She claims that coaching models provide a structure for coaching conversations as well as the overall coaching journey. Stout-Rostron (2014) recommends simple coaching models that represent structures for both a conversation and the journey. However, she cautions against following models blindly. She says, "although models create a system within which coach and client work, it is imperative that models are not experienced as either prescriptive or rigid" (Stout-Rostron, 2014, p. 116).

2.5.1 Functions and Characteristics of Coaching Frameworks/Models

A good coaching framework/model can support the effectiveness of a coach. Lennard (2010) identifies the following four major functions of a coaching framework/model:

- A coaching model organizes a framework of ideas about coaching to promote understanding of the approach and coherence of the structure.

- A coaching framework highlights key elements of coaching process to facilitate questioning at each stage or within a stage of a process framework.

- A coaching framework guides coaching decisions and actions to assist a coach in navigating the process by clarifying complexities.

- A coaching framework enables continual learning to provide new insights and greater coaching effectiveness.

Carey et al (2011) found that there are five common elements within all coaching frameworks/models they studied through a systematic integrative research. These elements included relationship building, problem-defining and goal setting, problem-solving processes, action and transformation, and the mechanisms to achieve outcomes. Lennard (2010) observed that the most useful coaching models are comprehensible and use simple language to help articulate what a coach does and why. She also noticed that such models are frequently graphic and support the generation of powerful questions.

A good coaching structure provides a big-picture view of the entire coaching journey. It has a framework but at the same time, it is flexible enough to let the coach and coachee explore where needed. One such framework is proposed by Lane and Corrie (2006) as shown in Figure 2.3.
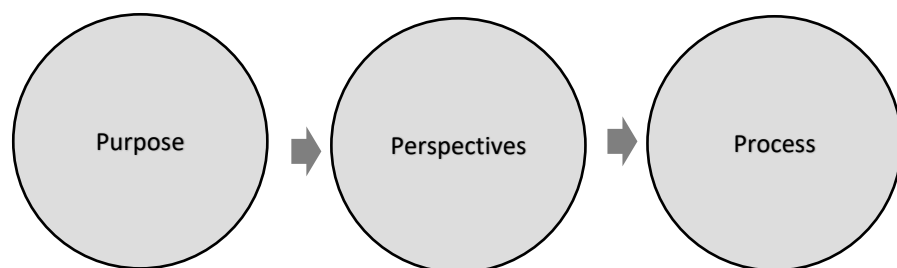
Figure 2.3: Purpose, Perspective, Process Framework (Lane and Corrie, 2006)

In the Purpose, Perspective, Process model, Lane and Corrie (2006) begin with establishing where are we going and why before moving to what will inform our journey. In this journey, both coach and coachee show up with their individual cultural and structural interpretations of the world. This is followed by an explanation of how both coach and coachee will work together to achieve the purpose. Stout-Rostron (2014) used the above model for her business client by starting with perspectives rather than the purpose which is also workable and demonstrates the flexibility of the model.

Barner and Higgins (2007) classified coaching models into four categories based on theoretical assumptions that guide each category. The four categories include clinical, behavioural, systems and social constructionist. These models offer unique perspectives on individual and organizational change based on their distinctive advantages.

2.5.2   Architecture of Coaching Process

Stout-Rostron (2014) distinguishes coaching question frameworks from models. She argues that a model is implied to have a process. She explains the staged-framework as "a structure that tends to be linear, progressive and visible. A question framework is a sequence of questions with steps or stages. Stages indicate the possibility of nonlinear "movement" between the parts; steps indicate a number of linear or progressive questions as part of its process" (Stout-Rostron, 2014, p.86). She describes the coaching architectures based on a number of stages as follows:

Two-stage frameworks	Two-stage is the simplest model that uses behavioural concepts to identify the old and new behaviours. Peltier's (2001) approach to behavioural change is relevant here. Action learning is another relevant approach in two-stage: identify and solve the problem.

Three-stage frameworks	Three-stage question framework is useful in both contracting as well as during coaching sessions. Examples of questions such as what needs to change? how will it change? And how learning can be sustained? It could also be used with questions such as what is working? What is not working; and what can you do differently to be more effective?
Four-stage frameworks	Whitmore's (2009) GROW (Goal, Reality, Options and Will) model is a very popular example of the four-stage coaching conversation. It helps build awareness and responsibility in the coachee through asking the right questions. Another example of a four-stage framework is O'Neill's (2000) *executive coaching with backbone and heart* model.
Six-stage frameworks	Kline's (2005) Thinking Environment is a good example of a six-stage coaching questions framework. It includes multiple questions in each of six stages: exploration, further goal, assumptions, incisive, recording and appreciation. The framework is very effective for team coaching since it helps to identify limiting assumptions and replace them with empowering one. That's why the process is embedded in transformative learning. Similar to Kline, Zeus and Skiffington (2005) also introduced a six-step process for team coaching.

2.5.3   Competency Frameworks in Coaching

The literature review related to the coaching competency frameworks is discussed in three domains: the origins of coaching competency frameworks, issues related to coaching competency and contexts of coaching and learning. This literature is part of the Report on Professional Practice that discusses the adequacy of the coaching frameworks for the academic Deans.

Arguably at least, the competencies movement in coaching originated from the well-known academic, Warren Bennis, who is quoted in Morris & Tarpley (2000) as saying in relation to coaching, *'I'm concerned about unlicensed people doing this.'* This article was probably the first to raise concerns about standards in coaching practice and used the term 'wild west of coaching' to describe the current state. The term 'Wild West' gathered momentum within the coaching world on both sides of the Atlantic and in 2004 Sherman and Freas published an article in the Harvard Business Review called 'The Wild West of Executive Coaching'. Given the importance often given to The Harvard Business Review, 'the Wild West' concept took hold and there followed calls for the professionalization of coaching and this led to standards, based on competencies being created by the burgeoning numbers of self-styled professional bodies (Garvey, 2011). Given the 'taming of the wild west discourse' which followed, these competencies were also driven by the need for economic competitiveness among the professional bodies as well as market differentiation needs. The standards and competencies were rapidly adopted in businesses by Human Resources (HR) functions (Horton, 2000). This may have been due to organizations subscribing to the managerial discourse (Western, 2017), which is embedded within competency frameworks, needing something to justify their purchasing decisions in executive coaching.

Garvey et al. (2018) argue that one problem with a competence framework is that it tends to simplify a complex task by reducing it to short descriptive statements. They argue that 'simplification of the complex' is a core behaviour within a managerialist discourse (Western, 2017). Bachkirova and Smith (2015) support this idea and suggest that a competency based coaching framework reduces the complexity of the coaching process to merely a task rather than involving critical thinking. Hawkins (2008) goes further suggesting that competencies are self-serving for professional bodies. Barnett, 1994) argues that competency frameworks focus on predictability – *"The notion of competencies is concerned with predictable behaviours in predictable situations"* (Barnett, 1994 p.73).

Garvey (2011) and Ferrar (2004) also identify this issue in coaching and suggest that a competency framework treats learning as a linear system and Ferrar (2004) adds that coaching competency frameworks are more relevant as ethical guidelines and promoting professional behaviors at principle levels in the coaching industry. Cavanagh and Lane (2012) challenge the assumption held within the competency framework ideology that coaching is a linear function (see also Garvey et al. 2018). They believe that it is the space between linear and chaotic that is called "edge of chaos" which creates possibilities for emergent creativity. Barnett (1994) argues that the drive to competency frameworks is a societal issue. He states:

"Society is more rational; but it is a rationality of a limited kind.' 'Limited rationality' is a rational pragmatism devoid of ethical or environmental justification." (p. 37).

He goes on to say that this is driving out *"genuinely interactive and collaborative forms of reasoning"* (p. 37). I argue that can coaching, potentially at least, facilitate a 'collaborative form of reasoning'.

Linley (2006) predicted that the demand for evidence-based coaching is expected to grow as more and more purchasers of coaching services are asking for it; but do competencies provide the evidence base?

Griffith and Campbell (2008) say that competency frameworks are not evidence based because these are not empirically tested. If this is the case, coaching can never become a recognized profession because professions are based, in part, on evidence-based activities and procedures.

So, what is evidence-based coaching? Grant (2016) offers that it is:

"intelligent and conscious use of relevant and best current knowledge integrated with professional practitioner expertise in making decisions about how to deliver coaching to coaching clients and in designing and delivering coach training programs".

It is notable that often coaching research recognizes the contribution and importance of practitioner expertise (Garvey et al. 2018). Stober et al (2006) also support Grant's (2016) argument that evidence-based practice integrates scientific knowledge, practitioner's expertise and they add the coachee's context. They describe this as a scientist-practitioner coaching model. Stober et al. (2006) emphasize the:

"need to take into account an array of variables that make up the individual context of each client" (Stober et al, 2006).

An understanding of context requires a broader understanding of not just the 'individual context', for example, age, gender orientations, socioeconomic status, religious beliefs, personality factors, but also an understanding of both the internal and external relational network that the coachee is part of, the organization and external operating environment and culture (Hofstede, 2003). This requires the Coach to apply a systemic approach (Whittington, 2020) that may not be reflected in a simplified competency framework.

This integrative, rather than simplified, the approach may not only provide a comprehensive and practical framework for coaching but also serve as a basis for an evaluation of any competency frameworks.

2.5.4   Application of Coaching Frameworks for HE Leaders

The leadership coaching frameworks must be evaluated against the context of higher education. According to Stokes et al. (2020), the context plays an agentic role in the learning process of coachees and mentees, allowing them to distinguish it as either coaching or mentoring or a mix of both of these 'help' orientations. The coach needs to be aware of the context as well as the above coachee-specific variables. Cox (2013) also highlights the importance of contextual knowledge in coaching and mentoring and calls for the recognition of context by coaching and mentoring educators to further improve professional practice and standards.

According to Griffith and Campbell (2008), the process of reflection generates learning and insights in coaching. In most HE organizations, learning environments are complex due to the inherent business processes and interaction among people. Garvey (2017) argues that competency-based coach/mentor training does not develop reflection and reflexivity, which are essential abilities within the complex dynamics of coaching. This is an important issue and it is associated with a key idea in learning, which is 'practical judgement' (Harrison & Smith, 2001) or 'reflective skills learning' (Jarvis, 1992; Schön, 1983). The concept of practical judgement is based on Aristotle's ideas on learning, which remain relevant today, particularly in relation to coaching. Aristotle suggested that learning was comprised of three elements:

- Episteme, which emphasises scientific theories and analysis - favoured in psychology;

- Techne, which is associated with skills and techniques – favoured in a managerialist discourse;

- Phronesis, which is practical wisdom and relates to behaving ethically within a context of practice and experience (Flyvbjerg, 2001) - largely absent from the institutional professional discourse.

Phronesis is about 'noticing' within a specific context. It involves the flexibility of thought, sensitivity to the context, reflective analysis based on a critical interpretation of the situation and the exercise of a personal judgement related to action. In this sense, it moves away from the idea of compliance to a competency framework and goes into the realms of what is appropriate for a given situation. Phronesis is concerned with values, emotions, and interests, as a precursor for action (Flyvbjerg, 2001 & Hemmestad, 2010)

Techne and episteme frameworks are associated with prescribed learning– competency frameworks.   Phronesis is about 'action' or thought in the moment, which is often what happens in a coaching situation. Further, whilst it is beyond the scope of this project to engage in a debate about the similarities and differences between coaching and mentoring, in recent times (Stelter, 2019) argues for an integrated model of coaching and mentoring by suggesting the coach as a 'facilitator of dialogue'. In practice, this means that a coach needs to flex their practice to suit the needs of the coachee within any specific context. This, in itself, adds a layer of complexity into coaching which may not be covered by a competency approach. According to Garvey and Alred (2001), "the environments in which we work are becoming more complex and mentoring is also complex". Both coaching and mentoring could help coachees/mentees deal with such complex work environments that apparently lack strict rules and predictable outcomes.

Lane and Corrie (2006) provide a useful framework for client case formulation by developing an appropriate approach to meet client needs. This focuses on developing clarity of '*Purpose'* based on client needs, the *'Perspectives'* that you and the client bring which include values, beliefs and

knowledge, the range of personal, interpersonal and systemic models and underpinning philosophies and limits of competence. Once the purpose and perspectives, that underpin it have been defined then it is possible to structure a *'Process'* for the work that you and your client intend to undertake.

In applying the 'Purpose, Perspective, Process' approach, due consideration is given to the Coach's ability to formulate and meet different client *purposes*, the *perspectives* that the Coach brings that are relevant to the client's needs and the Coach's skill in developing a *process* for the work that the Coach and Coachee intend to undertake.

Stokes (2015) in his PhD thesis (British Library EThOS: The skilled coachee: an alternative discourse on coach, (bl.uk)) argues that much of the literature on coaching focuses on the skills of the coach but the coachee is just as skilled. There is evidence in the literature to support versions of this idea. For example, Joseph (2006) argues that coaching approaches that harness the coachees' inner strengths and resources may produce better results and if this is the case, a greater focus on understanding the coachee and his/her inner resources rather than coaching models is required. Linley (2006) agrees with the above notion:

"*Practitioner's expertise, including models and techniques, are distant third place*" (Linley, 2006, p. 5).

Flaherty, (1999) points out that there is little work done on the coachee's perspective. Further, according to Stelter (2019), there is a need to increase our understanding of coachee experiences in a coaching process. Passmore (2010) asserted that only a few studies have considered the coachee's behaviours and preferences in learning and this is an omission. Carter et al. (2014) argue for a shared responsibility on the coachee for the success of the coaching process whereas Sztucinski (2001) proposed that coachee ownership of the coaching process is critical to a positive coaching process.

However, it is necessary to investigate whether a competency based approach can provide this.

The literature review suggests that leadership coaching frameworks for the professional managers and academic leaders in HEIs may be informed by adult learning theories. However, while architecting the leadership coaching frameworks, the context of HE and the roles of academic and professional leaders must be taken into account. The role of academic leaders is more complex than those of professional managers, and thus necessitates consideration of learning informed models rather than mere core competency models that are prescribed by professional coaching associations. This study also attempts to shift the focus from the coaches to the coachees in leadership coaching engagements. The next two chapters explore the leadership coaching issues for the administrative or professional leaders (chapter 3) and academic leaders who are Deans at a leading Middle Eastern university.

Chapter 3

SMALL SCALE RESEARCH PROJECT: COACHING ADMINISTRATIVE LEADERS IN THE ACADEMIC INSTITUTION

3.1 Introduction

This is a research report for the small scale service project. The research on this service project is based on a real-life project involving leadership coaching for eleven (11) professional managers at a leading university in the Middle East. The project coincides with an opportunity that arose just in time to coach eleven administrative managers in the university. The project kicked off after the approval of my proposal by the supervisors. The two coaches who coached the service managers acted as participants in this research. The coaches were contacted and interviewed immediately after the completion of the coaching project. The coaches had signed a consent to participate in the research.

A university needs leaders to achieve its mission. The university administration has decided to develop its leaders in the services sector so that they play a more effective role in their support to achieve the mission of the university. A leadership coaching project was created for this purpose. The main objective of the project is to identify competencies of each leader as a potential improvement area and then coach them to develop those competencies and/or behaviours so that they become more effective in their respective leadership role.

According to Ely et al., (2010) leadership coaching focuses on the unique skills of coachees which is different from other leadership development interventions such as training. These unique skills may include listening, presence and trust building. According to Stevens (2005), coaching is a multidimensional intervention process, and it requires a good understanding of business, organizations, management, leadership, among other relevant

issues. Gentry et al., (2013) seem to agree with Stevens (2005) and support that coaches need to be well prepared for an engagement to be result-driven. Spence (2007) argues that since coaching is a goal-focused process, goal achievement remains a key dependent variable for any coaching engagement. An effective coach calibrates the goal attainment moderators such as commitment (measured by importance and self-efficacy), feedback and task complexity to support the achievement of the planned outcomes (Moen and Skaalvik, 2009). Locke and Latham (2002) define a goal as a 'specific standard of achievement' within a given timeframe. According to Ryan (1970), goal setting theory has developed over a period of four decades on a premise that goals have a strong impact on performance, achievement and success at work. Goals are not the only psychological factor impacting human performance, self-efficacy has also contributed to success in various areas of human performance (Grant & Greene, 2004; Bandura, 1993).

Though there is a focus on goal achievement in the coaching literature, however, specific performance goals may avoid learning about the self (Askew and Carnell, 2011). According to Brockbank and McGill (2012), Performance coaching aims to preserve the status quo and social inequalities rather than challenging the power relations. In coaching engagements, it's equally important to understand who is setting the goals. Some coaches may see their success through the achievement of the goals while limiting the potential of higher performance by the coachees (Garvey et al, 2018).

This small scale research project helped me identify an opportunity to explore the professional practice for leadership coaching for administrative managers in the university. It offered a great opportunity to explore how goal setting helps in a coaching process, and what is the role of self-efficacy in goal attainment? For this research, I adopted a specific methodology as described and discussed in section 3.2. This section also presents details of the research methodology - Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA), ethical considerations and trustworthiness of the qualitative research. Section 3.3 comprises the coaching

engagement, coaching model, sample size, data collection and data analysis. It provides details related to the exploratory comments on the transcriptions, and how the emerging themes are identified and clustered from subordinate to super ordinate themes as per IPA design. A discussion on the themes is presented in the following section. The report concludes with some recommendations and opportunities for future research on the topic.

3.2   Methodology

This section presents the purpose and questions of the research. The research approach, which is guided by the overarching purpose of this project, is then discussed along with its rationale. The section also includes ethical considerations for the study before concluding on the trustworthiness of the qualitative research.

3.2.1 Purpose Statement

The objectives of this service project helped establish the purpose of the research. Hence, the purpose of this qualitative research is to understand the lived experiences of the coaches who have completed the leadership development coaching engagement for eleven professional managers (coachees) at a leading university in Saudi Arabia.

3.2.2 Research Questions

Based on the related literature and in keeping with the purpose of this small-scale service project, I framed the following three questions that guided the study:

- What are the lived experiences of the executive leadership coaches in the context of professional managers of the Saudi university?
- How does goal setting help in a coaching process?
- What is the role of self-efficacy in goal attainment?

3.2.3 Research Method

This study used a qualitative approach based on an Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) design. A choice of research method is largely determined by the purpose and/or questions of the research. I chose the qualitative method rather than quantitative due to the exploratory nature of the study involving understanding of lived experiences of coaches. In contrast to quantitative research that is based on precise measurements and analysis of well-defined variables, qualitative research begins with a broadly defined question or an issue (Stringer, 2007). Draper (2004) defines qualitative research as an inquiry concerned with the quality of human experiences and what those experiences mean to people. According to Oh (2015), while it is possible to use both qualitative and quantitative methods, it would be paradoxical to analyse the results from both perspectives due to inherent differences between the research objectives and methods.

There are several qualitative methodologies commonly used including phenomenology, case study, and ethnography (Petty et al., 2012). According to Yin (2013), a case study follows a more positivist epistemology and is often used to understand what is distinctive within a bounded system. Ethnography is more suitable to examine shared patterns of language, beliefs and behaviours within a cultural group (Goulding, 2005). Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) is a research approach for examining how people make sense of, and understand their lived experiences (Smith et al., 2009). According to Benner (1994), these lived experiences are daily routines, habits, activities, practices, and meanings of concern to people as they relate to and interact with their world. van Manen (1990) suggests that the true meaning of a lived experience usually is hidden from a person living it because he/she generally lives in an automatic mode of our everyday habits. Laverty (2003) finds value in these hidden experiences and thus recommends uncovering the forgotten meanings through an IPA study. Although IPA is a relatively new research method

(Smith et al., 2009), it is informed by phenomenology and hermeneutics which are long standing philosophies and brought together by Martin Heidegger (Dahlberg et al., 2008). Introduced by Edmund Husserl, phenomenology emphasizes the subjective world by a person rather than an objective world that is separate from us (Sokolowsky, 2000).

Hermeneutics refers to the art, theory and science of interpreting texts (Schwandt, 2007). Texts are words that are important to analyse because we are 'languaged beings' (Crotty, 1998). Allen (1995) also underscores the importance of language by calling it "means to transmit culture" (ideas, beliefs and practices) from one generation to another. Smith et al., (2009) claim that IPA involves double hermeneutics because while participants make sense of their world, the researcher tries to interpret that sense making. The third theoretical orientation of IPA that it depends on is idiography. The main idea here is to explore every single case before making any general statements. According to Pietkiewicz and smith (2012), "idiography refers to an in-depth analysis of single cases and examining individual perspectives of study participants, in their unique contexts" (p.363).

Many researchers, who have conducted coaching studies, have used IPA as a research approach. Passmore and Mortimer (2011) used IPA to explore the experiences of approved driving instructors in the UK in using coaching as a method for novice driving learning. They found IPA an effective tool to explore the potential value of coaching for the development of novice drivers. Lech et al., (2018) applied IPA design to understand and explore the experience of Ph.D. students who had received coaching. Dodds and Grajfoner (2018) used IPA design to explore the interaction between national culture and coaching methods that executive coaches use in the United Arab Emirates (UAE). Passmore and Mortimer (2011) caution that while applying IPA design the researchers must be aware of their own influence and bias and focus on the detailed examination of a particular

participant's account. However, Smith et al. (2009) defend it by saying that qualitative analysis itself is an interpretative work by a researcher. The purpose of this study is aligned with phenomenological approach since it is about learning from the lived experiences of the leadership coaches involved in the engagement. Specifically, Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) research design is suitable for this study because it supported my interest, as an insider, in understanding the phenomenon of leadership coaching as experienced by the coaches who coached the 11 professional managers in the university by following a given coaching framework.

3.2.4 Ethical Considerations

Ethics are an integral part of a research project. The proposal and this project report are in complete compliance with the requirements of Canterbury Christ Church University. I had submitted the Ethics Release Form for the Work-Based (Small Scale Research Service) Project along with my research proposal. A copy of the same has been attached herewith as Appendix 3-A. The Ethics Release Form had been approved by the learning advisors after a careful review. In this project, three aspects of ethical behaviour were given utmost importance. These are confidentiality, informed consent, and my prior relationship with the research participants. Each of three aspects are discussed here.

3.2.4.1 Confidentiality

It is important that the research participants who are executive leadership coaches feel comfortable and confident to share their personal meaning-making in their coaching experiences. To hear the authentic voice of the participants, they were assured of confidentiality throughout the process that included the interviews and communications. The names and identities of the participants were not shared with anyone at all. All electronic information was coded and secured in a password-protected file until the conversion of audio files into MS Word documents through transcription. The recordings of the

interviews were erased from the media after accurate and validated transcriptions.

3.2.4.2   Informed Consent

Both the research participants were briefed on the objectives of the project. *Consent to Participate in the Research Study* Form was given to them prior to interviews for their review and signature. A copy of the above form is attached as Appendix 3-B. In this form, the participants were assured their rights to refuse or withdraw from the study anytime without affecting the relationship. They had the right to ask questions or refuse to answer any questions (s) should they so feel. Since the participants had volunteered to take part in the research study, they were not compensated in any form, cash, or kind.

3.2.4.3   My Role and Relationship with the Participants

I work as Director of Organizational Excellence in the university in which the research was carried out. The coaching engagement was managed by Learning and Organizational Development (L&OD) Department that is part of the Human Resources function. I played no role in selection of the coaches or design of the coaching engagement. Therefore, there is no conflict of interest whatsoever. Upon the completion of the coaching engagement, I was given access to some de-identified records and the two executive coaches so that I could interview them for my research project. Qualitative research involves a close relationship between participants and the researcher. Brinkmann and Kvale (2005) warn that false relationships for the motive of obtaining data can be softer and seductive forms of power through manipulated dialogue, and misusing empathy and intimacy. I came to know the participants of this research project through conducting the interviews. Both groups of the participants had no hesitation to share their personal lived experiences for the research since there was a significant trust of my professional conduct with them. Interviews with the coaches were conducted after

completion of the coaching engagement and payment of the professional fee. The participants felt completely free and interested to provide their account of working with the coachees.

3.2.5 Trustworthiness

There must be a mechanism by which the quality of research work could be evaluated. In empirical research, researchers establish reliability, validity and objectivity of the process and data (Patton, 2002). However, the same cannot be established in qualitative research. In view of the above, Lincoln and Guba (1985) introduced the term trustworthiness to judge the integrity of the qualitative inquiry. However, Smith and Heshusius (1986) criticised the criteria used by Lincoln and Guba (1985) by saying that it is not too different from quantitative research and fails to address the basic philosophical differences. Yardley (2000) came up with four principles for assessing the value of qualitative research. These principles include sensitivity to context, commitment and rigour, transparency and coherence, and the impact and importance of research. According to Merriam (2009), the integrity of qualitative research is ensured through performing it in an ethical manner. In this research project, first of all, I had familiarized myself with the related literature to understand leadership coaching and its process for developing professional managers in a university. Since the beginning of the leadership engagement, I got involved deeply in all stages of the coaching process that is a prolonged engagement with the topic and allowed me to immerse in the data. The interview questions were refined and pilot-tested with another similar coach. I had checked the accuracy of the transcriptions against the audio recordings and then sent them back to participants for verifications. A diary was maintained for all activities and issues related to the research to ensure transparency. Finally, the study is very important and of practical value for the continuous improvement of the coaching programs. The

recommendations of the study are expected to make a significant impact on the design of future leadership coaching programs in the university.

The next section of the report discusses the project activity including the procedures for data collection and analysis, and coding of the transcriptions.

3.3 Project Activity

In this section, the coaching engagement and framework are discussed followed by the sample size. Next the data collection procedures and analysis are presented. It included the preparation of exploratory comments as well as identification and clustering of emergent themes according to the IPA method of research.

3.3.1 The Coaching Engagement

All the managers are Saudi nationals and occupy leadership positions in the service sector of the university. In a recent study, researchers have concluded that the leadership style of middle managers in universities in Saudi Arabia is a mix of transformational and transactional styles of leadership (Wirbaa & Shmailan, 2015). The effectiveness of the coaching engagement to achieve the intended outcome depend on various stakeholders in the university. Following are the major stakeholders and their respective roles of this leadership-coaching engagement:

Stakeholder	Role and/or Interest
Leader/Coachee	The leader is the ultimate beneficiary of the engagement. He works with the coach and his direct manager to discover his values, strengths and areas of development. He is exposed to a significant challenge at his workplace and supported to achieve the planned outcomes.

Stakeholder	Role and/or Interest
Coach	External coach who has been contracted by the University to become a partner in development of a leader and support him to achieve the planned goals and outcomes.
Director Manager	The direct manager of a leader (coachee) supports the leader in setting the professional/organizational agenda as well as achieving the results.
Engagement Manager	Department of Organization Development (OD) is responsible for setting this framework, planning, managing and reporting the success of the coaching engagement. It works with all stakeholders.
University Administration	The Rector and Dean of Faculty & Personnel Affairs represent the University administration. The administration is the sponsor and provider of the executive support for the engagement.

3.3.2 Leadership Coaching Model

The coaching engagement followed a leadership coaching model of Riddle et al., (2015) as shown in Figure 3.1. The model comprised assessment, challenge, support, relationship and results in the context of the university operating environment as described here.

3.3.2.1 Assessment

The coach conducted behavioural interviews of the leader, direct manager, direct reports and possibly a few peers to assess the strengths and development areas of behavioural improvements for each leader. While the strengths are handy for coaching and achievement orientation, one or two development needs were included in the list of outcomes. The data collected through behavioural interviews were used as a substitute for 360-degree

assessment questionnaire that was expected to be harder to implement and less effective in this university context as learned through recent similar experiences due to some cultural reasons.
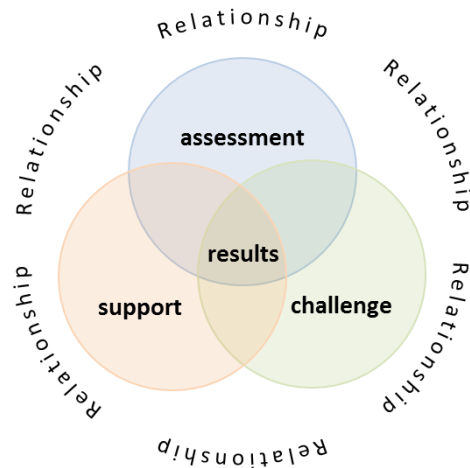
Figure 3.1: The Coaching Model

Source: The Centre for Creative Leadership Handbook of Coaching in Organizations (2015)

3.3.2.2 Challenge

The leaders occupying the leadership positions in the university deal with significant leadership challenges of vision, engaging people and achieving results. At the outset of the coaching process, the coach worked with each leader and documented the real on-the-job leadership challenge. Such a challenge was an important project, assignment, operations impacting the service delivery, among others.

3.3.2.3 Support

The coach supported the leader to effectively deal with that challenge in order to achieve results. Leaders were also supported by their direct managers throughout the coaching process so that the leaders could effectively manage the change.

3.3.2.4 Relationship

The quality of the relationship between the coach and the coachee is based on trust and mutual respect. The rapport between them created a greater impact on the outcomes of the coaching engagement. As a result of this relationship, the coach helped develop self-efficacy in the coachee so that he could achieve his goal(s).

3.3.2.5 Results

The basic intent of the coaching model is the achievement of results for the individual leader as well as the organization. The coach supported the leaders to set SMART goals to achieve business results in addition to enhancing their psychological performance and leadership competencies.

As a part of the coaching framework followed in this engagement, the effectiveness of coaching was measured at three levels: psychological performance, learning & development and organizational results as shown in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1: Measurement criteria and data collection of coaching effectiveness

Criteria	Measurement	Data Collection
Psychological performance	Self-Efficacy	Interviews of coaches and coachees
Learning & development	Leadership competencies	Assessment through 360-degree behavioural interviews
Organizational results	Business goals	Achievement levels of written scaled goals

The planned learning and developmental outcomes of this coaching engagement were achieved through a goal attainment process. The

process involved the construction of a scale based on the desired level of goal attainment, and the use of that scale to monitor progress and evaluate performance at time points of interest. The resultant goal chart thus becomes a key component of the coaching based individual leadership-development plan for each leader Schlosser (2004). The coaches conducted an assessment and then supported the leaders set and achieve 2-3 goals related to their respective challenges.

3.3.3 Sample Size and Participants

A purposive sampling technique was used for this study to select a predefined homogenous group of participants. The logic of purposive sampling provided me with information rich cases which is important in qualitative research (Patton, 2002). According to Obwuegbuzi and Leech (2007), the objective of purposive sampling is not to generalize but obtain insight into a phenomenon. Tongco (2007) also supports purposive sampling for the selection of participants, and claims purposive sampling is a practical tool that can be as effective and efficient as random sampling. Smith et al. (2009) recommend that participants must have lived the phenomenon under study though the sample size can be between three to six. The sample size of this study is two participants, which is smaller than the minimum of three. However, since this is a small scale research project, the information-rich sample of two is sufficient for obtaining the desired insight through in-depth analysis. It is also notable that the coaching engagement that formed the basis of this research had two coaches (participants) and therefore the sample included all coaches who could be possibly recruited for this study. The two leadership coaches were engaged under a paid contract through competitive bidding by the university. Both coaches (a male and a female) were based out of neighbouring Bahrain and drove down to Saudi Arabia to conduct coaching sessions under a predetermined schedule. The coaches were certified by International Coaching Federation (ICF) and had rich experience in executive leadership coaching. The participants were recruited to share their

experiences of coaching once they completed their engagement and their fee was fully paid to avoid any conflict of interest.

3.3.4 Data Collection

Data are the foundation of any research study (Yin, 2013). The purpose and questions of research guide data collection procedures (Maxwell, 2005). I conducted semi-structured interviews of the two coaches by asking open-ended questions. Interviews are a widely used data collection method employed in qualitative research (Hays and Singh, 2012). Qu and Dumay (2011) emphasize that research interviews require skills such as planning, organizing, intensive listening, and note taking. A questionnaire (attached as appendix 3-C) was developed for the interviews. The questions included in the questionnaire were carefully framed and included to illicit the required insight from the coaches. Table 3.2 shows the corresponding link between research questions and interview questions.

Table 3.2: The research questions and corresponding interview questions

Research Question	Interview Question
What are the lived experiences of the executive leadership coaches in the context of administrative managers of the Saudi university?	- What is your overall experience of coaching the administrative leaders in public sector universities in Saudi Arabia? - What is your experience in using the coaching framework in this engagement? - How would you assess coaching as a method of leadership development? - If you have coached managers in the private sector, how did you find it different in the government sector organization? - What should the University do to make coaching more effective in the future? - What did you learn as a coach in this particular coaching engagement?

How does goal setting help in a coaching process?	- What role goal-setting has in a coaching process? - What contribution a does coachee make towards his success? - How did you support your coachees to achieve results?
What is the role of self-efficacy in goal attainment?	- What is your understanding of self-efficacy? - What is the role of self-efficacy in goal attainment? - How self-efficacy could be improved through coaching?

"Questions suitable for an IPA study may concentrate on exploring sensory perceptions, mental phenomena (thoughts, memories, associations, fantasies), and specifically individual interpretations" Pietkiewicz and Smith (2012). According to Anfara et al. (2002), the questions used in an interview provide the scaffolding for the research and become the basis of the analysis. The questionnaire, process of interviewing and its recording were pilot-tested with another coach. The real interviews were then scheduled as per the convenience of the coaches through an online video conferencing system (Zoom) that also provides a recording facility on the local computer (https://Zoom.us, 2018). The semi-structured interviews were conducted in a conversational style with supplementary probing questions and prompts. The recorded interviews of approximately 40 minutes each were transcribed verbatim to produce MS Word documents for analysis.

3.3.5 Data Analysis

Data analysis using the IPA research method is a complex and time-consuming activity (Pietkiewicz and Smith, 2012). In all steps of the data analysis, I immersed myself into data by reading and re-reading the transcriptions to understand the participants meaning-making of the phenomena under investigation as well as of their world. In keeping with the IPA design, the

data collected through semi-structured interviews were analysed in three major steps as follows:

- Preparation of Exploratory Comments

- Identification of Themes

- Clustering of Themes

Each of the above data analysis steps are discussed in the following sub-sections.

3.3.5.1 Preparation of Exploratory Comments

I transcribed the audio recordings of the interviews and listened again to improve the accuracy of the transcripts as well as understand the emotional responses of the participants. Then, I read the transcriptions three times to fully comprehend the content, the language used including the metaphors, symbols, repetitions, etc. and the context. I also used a personal diary to record the timing, background environment, quality of the online connectivity, among others. The output of this step is my exploratory notes and comments on the original transcript of the interviews. A sample of the above comments is demonstrated in Frame 3.1.

Frame 3.1: An extract from interviews with researcher's comments.

Original transcript (partial)	Exploratory Comments
Researcher: *What role goal setting has in a coaching process?*	
So I think, for myself goal setting is absolutely critical and in a coaching relationship otherwise, it just becomes a conversation rather than fluffy end conversations. I wanted to see this linking into a bigger picture of what is the goal setting of the organization and so to make sure that the goals that are set in coaching are aligned to the greater good of the organization and one thing that we kind of discovered in this coaching relationship with the universities it doesn't seem to be a best practice of goal settings generally in the organization so setting of the IDPs for many of them was a new experience	*Goal setting is spirit of coaching* *Goal setting must be aligned with organizational goals* *Leaders had no prior experience of goal setting in their current or previous roles*

and so which was good I mean we have to start somewhere and how much. so when we have the 3-way meetings we were able to have our conversations, that are these goals really relevant to this person and the manager was able to say yes or no and treat them accordingly.	*Goal setting was key item on the agenda of the 3-way meeting with coach-coachee-direct manager of coachee*
Researcher: *If you have coached managers in private sector, how did you find it different in the government sector organizations?*	
How to put it… So if I'm an employee [government organization] for example, I got a job for life, it doesn't matter whether if I perform or don't perform and that's what it generally feels like. In the private sector, it's more driven around results so if I'm an underperformer, I kind of know that my existence is not gonna be too long in the organization and in government private typically you know I have a job regardless of my performance and if I'm underperforming I'm typically not gonna be fired, I might be moved but I'm not gonna be fired. So I think that's a big factor and this is why that self-efficacy piece comes in. it's even more important to have self-efficacy in your organization because the external factor of you know being given a verbal warning, written warnings and I'm out is not really common practice so the fire is gonna be from within if you know what I mean. If I'm an employee of an organization, I gotta have that fire within to be driving myself further to be aspirational to be what I want to achieve.	*Government workers have job security and lack performance culture* *Government workers are not held accountable for poor performance* *In the private sector, low performers are not tolerated for long* *Self-efficacy is more important and relevant in the government sector* *Employees with high self-efficacy are intrinsically motivated to perform and grow*

3.3.5.2   Identification of Themes

Once the comments and notes, like the sample shown in Frame 1, I worked to transform those comments and notes into emerging themes. Although I tried to phrase these comments into a higher level of abstraction, it was still grounded in participants' accounts of their lived experiences. Here, I may be influenced by the annotated script as a whole which is an example of the hermeneutic circle. According to Pietkiewicz and Smith (2012), "the part is interpreted in relation to the whole, and the whole is interpreted in relation to the part". Frame 3.2 demonstrates examples of emergent themes.

Frame 3.2: Examples of developing Emergent Themes

Original transcript (partial)	Emerging Themes
Researcher: *What role goal setting has in a coaching process?*	
So I think, for myself goal setting is absolutely critical and in a coaching relationship otherwise it just becomes a conversation rather than fluffy end conversations. I wanted to see this linking into a bigger picture of what is the goal setting of the organization and so to make sure that the goals that are set in coaching are aligned to the greater good of the organization and one thing that …. it doesn't seem to be a best practice of goal settings generally in the organization so setting of the IDPs for many of them was a new experience and so which was good I mean we have to start somewhere and how much.. so when we have the 3-way meetings we were able to have our conversations …	*The value of goal setting in coaching*
Researcher: *If you have coached managers in private sector, how did you find it different in the government sector organizations?*	
How to put it… So if I'm an employee [government organization] for example, I got a job for life, it doesn't matter whether if I perform or don't perform …. this is why that self-efficacy piece comes in. It's even more important to have self-efficacy in a government organization… If I'm an employee of an organization, I gotta have that fire within to be driving myself further to be aspirational to be what I want to achieve.	*Lack of accountability in government organizations*
	Self-efficacy intrinsically motivates to perform and grow

3.3.5.3   Clustering of Emergent Themes

At this stage of data analysis, commonalities and connections between emerging themes are used to group them based on their similarities. It involves clustering of emerging (subordinate) themes into super-ordinate themes as shown in Table 3.2. Some of the themes were found weak and dropped during the clustering exercise. The discussion and interpretation of the superordinate themes are presented in the next section of this report.

Table 3.3: Clustering of themes

Superordinate themes	Subordinate themes
Commitment to evolve and grow	- Coachability of coachees - Interested in learning if practical and relevant - Self-responsibility - Selection of coachees - Meet coachees where they are - Readiness of coachees
Role of goal-setting in coaching	- Goal setting is the soul of coaching - Individual Development Plan (IDP) - Alignment of personal and organizational goals - Goals form agenda for 3-way meetings - Doing goals vs being goals - Goals give sense of achievement
3-way meetings for accountability and support	- Support by direct managers - Organizational commitment - Role of supervisors in improving self-efficacy - Source of new perspectives - Higher accountability
Impact of self-efficacy on goal attainment	- Self-efficacy as self-belief - Coaching for self-belief - Limiting beliefs - Self-efficacy is low in government employees - Role of determination for success - Energy of leaders
Coaching for development of organizational leadership	- Role of values - Evidence through 360-degree assessments - Importance of relationships - Trust grows slowly over a period - Collaboration with complementary strengths - Measuring effectiveness of coaching

3.4   Findings and Discussion

As discussed at the beginning of this chapter, based on the gap in the literature about coaching in universities for leadership development, and keeping with the purpose of this research for this small-scale service project, I framed the following three questions that guided the study:

- What are the lived experiences of the executive leadership coaches in the context of administrative managers of the Saudi university?

- How does goal-setting help in a coaching process?

- What is the role of self-efficacy in goal attainment?

3.4.1 Emergent Superordinate Themes

The above research questions led to semi-structured interviews of the two participants of this project. The data analysis, as discussed in the previous section, resulted in the following superordinate themes:

- Commitment to evolve and grow

- Role of goal-setting in coaching

- Impact of self-efficacy on goal attainment

- 3-way meetings for accountability and support

- Coaching for development of organizational leadership

3.4.1.1 Theme: Commitment to evolve and grow

The two participants emphasized the commitment of coachees over the entire period of a coaching engagement. Commitment determines the level of coachability of a coachee which is important to get results in organizational leadership coaching. Unless the leader him/herself is motivated to learn and grow, no coach could help them become a better leader.

"who is really dedicated to their own self-growth and development as a leader. Where it doesn't work is you know you've heard of the metaphor, you can take the horse to water but you can't make him drink right. So the horse willing to drink is the ideal person where coaching really serve". [Participant 1]

Participant 1 believed that leaders value practical and relevant skills and pay more attention since they could use them in their real life. This is where an experienced coach can make a difference in coaching. Coachees appreciate real-life examples and case studies and in turn, it elevates their commitment.

"so I think the things that we have been sharing with them have been really practical, I think that's been one thing that they really enjoyed this group really practical things like they can take back into their environment and actually use and not be seduced by near complex theorist abuse but actually things they can actually say so you know to give them words to use and may be very receptive to that based upon the real life examples each one of them uniquely is going through in their circumstances". [Participant 1]

Participant 2 underscored the importance of the selection process of coachees in organizational coaching engagement. She argues that coaching is not for everyone. It is for the chosen few who are eager to evolve and serious to grow in leadership roles. Another key factor is the readiness of the coachees. Organizations choose high potential leaders for coaching. However, these high potential leaders may not be ready for coaching intervention due to their internal or external preferences at that point in time. Therefore, Participant 1 believed that a coach should meet the coachee where he is and refrain from undue expectations.

3.4.1.2 Theme: Role of goal-setting in coaching

The participants gave a detailed account of goal-setting in coaching. They referred to the goals set in the Individual Development Plans (IDPs) and the associated goal attainment scale. Participant 1 thought that goal setting is a critical piece in coaching otherwise it is just a purposeless conversation. He asserts that managers not only set clear

and achievable goals but also align them with organizational goals. In his experience, leaders in universities lack the practice of goal setting in their routine work. This coaching engagement introduced goal setting through the IDPs that are expected to help them to achieve results.

"I wanted to see this linking into a bigger picture of what is the goal setting of the organization and so to make sure that the goals that are set in coaching are aligned to the greater good of the organization and one thing that we kind of discovered in this coaching relationship with the universities it doesn't seem to be a best practice of goal settings generally in the organization so setting of the IDPs for many of them was a new experience and so which was good I mean we have to start somewhere and how much". [Participant 1]

Participant 2 highlighted the importance of goals since it provided a concrete item of agenda during the 3-way meetings held among coach, coachee and director managers of the coachees. The direct managers appreciated the SMART goals and the timelines associated with each goal. Organizations appreciate the value of goals in leadership planning processes since it becomes easy for them to measure the results. To coachees, goals give a great sense of accomplishment and meaning in their jobs.

"Okay. Well, the goal is the heart of any coaching. So, the goals help in their leadership development planning, and the organization to achieve something, while coachees achieve their goals. Without a goal, it will be more like purposeless coaching for the organization". [Participant 2]

In coaching, there are doing goals and being goals. Doing goals are referred to tangible achievements. Participant 2 pointed out while achieving the doing goals, who the coachee is becoming is through the

being goals. In a coaching conversation, being is more empowering for the coachees than doing goals.

"So, the being goals, in doing that goal, who does the coachee need to be, what qualities that they need to be expanding in to experimenting with to actually get back on plan. So they are expanding their leadership range as well". [Participant 2]

3.4.1.3 Theme: Impact of self-efficacy on goal attainment

Coaching is a goal-focused process and goal achievement is influenced by self-efficacy, among other moderators. According to Participant 1, self-efficacy is belief in one's own abilities combined with self-determination. It determines the chances of success of coachees in the attainment of their goals.

"Self-efficacy for me is that internal belief that an individual has on their own abilities as a human being and to not be full of over inflated self-opinion of one self which is, you know, on the extreme contributed by ego and all that kind of stuff. And on the hand, not to be totally defeated and have no self-belief in self". [Participant 1]

A coach may focus on improving the self-efficacy of the coachees. The same could be done by direct managers by letting leaders experiment with new ideas and taking measured risks in their pursuit of objectives. Similarly, if goals are relevant and attainable, it influences the self-belief of a coachee in their achievement.

"Fundamentally there's no point in setting a goal which is unattainable because one feels defeated from the outset. Yet, on the other hand, the goal shouldn't be such a walk in the park that is not worth stretching. So I think that fine balance to be the goal with stretches the person yet is not too daunting that they feel defeated before they even had to start". [Participant 2]

Participant1 emphasized on knowing the limiting beliefs of the coachees. These limiting beliefs could be based on past experiences or assumptions that they are good enough. These beliefs could be in the form of hyper achievement or worries to be judged by senior management. Such limiting beliefs paralyze goal attainment.

"So we really have to be putting them into the perspective of what is that today for this individual and really busts those limiting beliefs and look up what is the 2% truth of that limiting belief not what's 100% and that was a real insight for many of them that they are being kind of controlled by those limiting belief rather than being informed by this one". [Participant1]

Both the participants spoke about the self-efficacy of government employees. They believe that self-efficacy in those employees is lower than those in the private sector which may be attributed to low incentives and lack of desired accountability. However, the participants underscored the need for higher self-efficacy in leaders working in government organizations.

3.4.1.4 Theme: 3-way meetings for accountability and support

As per the coaching framework, leaders were required to have 3-way meetings in presence of their designated coach and their respective direct manager. The meetings were held in the beginning, middle and end of the coaching engagement of 10 sessions. The purpose of these meetings was to involve direct managers in the coaching process as a show of support and accountability. Since support is an important element of the coaching process, 3-way meetings were effective in creating solid support for the coachee.

"And having those 3-way meetings got an equal opportunity to flush out some stuffs which perhaps more most aligned and bring them closer

together. That also linked nicely in to the support element of the model and so they have the support of the coach and, and the organizational support is absolutely key in letting stick in what we are discussing in actually sessions otherwise they become in a powerful conversation in the coaching session but they really remain a stand-alone and kind of, not really integrated into their daily life in the work". [Participant 1]

Participant 2 argued that 3-way meetings are a symbol of organizational commitment and support for the coachees. This kind of support is crucial for achieving results. Since coachees were subject to a challenge and achievement of pre-defined goals, they needed organizational support through their direct managers.

"The 3-way meeting with the leaderships helped in setting valuable goals. These meetings also helped in raising the level of accountability quite a bit since coachees felt responsible in presence of their bosses". *[Participant 2]*

Participant 1 found the 3-way meeting as a source of new perspective(s) about the role of the coachees and the organizational priorities. He was amazed by the new perspective shifts and change in the attitude of the coachees after these meetings. The participant attached value to such a finding in those meetings since he believed that leadership coaching is also for the organizational and business results rather than merely personal growth.

3.4.1.5 Theme: Coaching for development of organizational leadership

The research participants spoke about coaching as an intervention for leadership development. They particularly shared their experiences of coaching the Saudi professional managers in the university. Participant 1 argued that coaching for a manager who is really serious and dedicated to self-growth. He suggested starting the coaching with a

360-degree assessment of competencies and behaviours. The assessment helps in the establishment of development agenda in the form of an individual development plan. The development agenda should also be linked to succession planning for the leaders. Assessment of values and their alignment with those of the organization is also an important content of a coaching programme.

"I think how did they sharpen the competencies? How did they, you know, it can be great to link it with organizational values? How did this person sharpen the values? Because you know, values, in my world, in other DNA of an individual but a DNA of the organization that is you have the right person in your organization. And maybe also so you got a 360 feedback from various parties". [Participant 1]

Participant shared her experience of the growing relationship as a coach over several sessions. She believes that the trust between a coach and coachee grows slowly over a longer period. However, it is very important for the overall effectiveness of the coaching programme. Participant 2 highlighted the importance of measuring the return on investment for a coaching programme. She recalls that although the government organizations are less critical about the return on coaching investment, it is part of the planning for private sector companies.

"If you look into the private sector, it's more like a return on their investments (ROI). So when they invest in leadership development, they want to have their money back in return. And the private sector is more committed to growing people. But if we look into the government, it is more a little bit relaxed. And it's, it's more like, like a reward for them. In government, jobs are for life". [Participant 2]

3.4.2 Discussion

The purpose of this study was to explore the lived experiences of the executive leadership coaches (participants) who coached administrative leaders of the university. The study also aimed to explore how goal-setting helped in a coaching engagement, and then what is the role of self-efficacy in attaining those goals. The study reflected the views of the coaches, and due to the nature of the IPA research, these views cannot be generalized. However, researchers such as Passmore and Mortimer (2011) and Lech et al., (2018) have found IPA an effective tool to explore the potential value of coaching for their subjects.

The study resulted in five major themes related to the lived experiences of the coaches who worked with the professional leaders for the leadership development in the university. The first theme is about the commitment of coachees. Coaching is not for every manager but for a selected few who are eager to evolve and motivated to grow in their roles. Barner and Higgins (2007) agree with this and therefore caution that coaching is provided to carefully selected managers who are worth the investment. In view of the above, organizations should be careful in identifying coachees in an engagement who maintain sustainable commitment. Not all coachees are ready for coaching and benefit from it though an experienced coach is able to reduce this distance by meeting his/her coachees where they are.

The role of goal setting in coach emerged as the second theme of the study. The participants emphasized on the importance of goal setting in coaching. Spence (2007) supports this argument that coaching is a goal-focused process and goal achievement remains a key dependent variable. The coaching framework created specifically for this engagement required coachees to identify two to three business goals in their area of professional responsibilities. The Individual Development Plan (IDP) thus became a key instrument to define and measure the progress of the coachees. Ryan (1970) agrees that goal setting has a strong impact on performance,

achievement and success at work. It may be said that goal setting is the heart of coaching. It helped the coaches create alignment of coaching with organizational goals and use as an agenda item during the 3-way meetings. However, performance goals may have limited the autonomy of the coachees to control their own agenda (Garvey et al, 2018) and unleash their true potential. It may also have avoided learning about the self (Askew and Carnell, 2011) and setting some learning goals.

The third theme is about the impact of self-efficacy on goal attainment. Moen and Skaalvik (2009) argued that an effective coach calibrates the goal attainment through self-efficacy level of coachees. Grant and Greene (2004) and Bandura (1993) also confirm that self-efficacy contributes to success in various areas of human performance. This qualitative study, as per the perception of the coaches, also found that self-efficacy fuels goal attainment. However, the two coaches agreed that self-efficacy is less evident in government employees though more important in their roles. One coach saw self-efficacy through limiting beliefs that are better known in the coaching world. He argued that limiting beliefs lower the level of self-efficacy among coachees, and self-efficacy problems could be coached just like we coach limiting beliefs.

Another theme that emerged rather unexpectedly was 3-way meetings for accountability and support. As per the coaching framework, coaches met the coachees in presence of their direct managers in the first, sixth, and tenth (last) sessions. However, some of the above 3-way sessions were not held due to the unavailability of the direct managers who are senior executives in the university. Nonetheless, these meetings became a great source of support as well as accountability. These meetings helped in reviewing IDPs and the progress made by coachees thereafter. Both Drew (2010) and Spendlove (2007) underscore the need for the development of customized individual development plans since each leader has a unique challenge.

The fifth and last theme is about coaching for the development of organizational leaders. Leadership development is about expanding the overall capacity of organizational leaders to play their roles effectively (McCauley et al., 1998). According to Black (2015), leaders in higher education need a combination of leadership and management competencies in order to deal with their strategic and operational challenges. Gigliotti and Ruben (2017) recommend a portfolio of collaborative leadership programs that cut across conceptual, operational and strategic dimensions of leadership. Both the coaches believe that coaching is the right developmental intervention for professional managers of the university. However, they suggest paying attention to values assessment and 360-degree assessment at the beginning of the coaching engagement in a formal way for record. The same is agreed by Barner and Higgins (2007) who found that since professional managers in a university have specific development needs, coaching supports individual leadership development plans. One coach suggested that a clear return on investment plan be prepared as an integral part of the coaching framework. Such plans are more practiced in private sector corporations rather than government organizations where business results in financial terms are rarely considered.

3.5   Conclusions and Recommendations

The role of administrative leaders in universities is becoming increasingly important in the achievement of the mission. These leaders support the delivery of teaching and research programs. Professional managers in non-academic areas such as human resources, finance, estate management, sports facilities, etc. are more focused on delivering operational efficiencies (Black, 2015). Leadership skills of these managers must be developed to increase their capacity to play their respective leadership roles. Coaching has been found as a preferred organizational leadership development intervention for managers in higher education. However, there is a serious lack of literature on the topic of

coaching of professional managers in universities. The development needs of these managers are somewhat different than those in other industries. Spendlove (2007) argues that the experience of university life plays a crucial role in success as a leader in a university. He also claims that university leadership is fundamentally different due to inherent organizational complexity, and therefore requires additional competencies. This study, based on the perceptions of two coaches, has tried to fill a gap in the research on the use of coaching for leadership development of professional managers/leaders in universities. It was noticed that one of the coaches made some generalized statements about coaching in government organizations. Such statements can inform the assumptions, thinking, style and approach of the coach and may cause the coach to ignore or not pay sufficient attention to what may be different and important to the coachee and the context. The context and complexity are explored in more detail in chapter 4 (ARP) and chapter 5 (RPP).

The research was conducted based on IPA design. It resulted in five superordinate themes: commitment to evolve and grow, role of goal-setting in coaching, the impact of self-efficacy on goal attainment, 3-way meetings for accountability and support, and caching for development of organizational leadership. The themes highlight significant factors that may lead to the success of a coaching programme aimed to develop leadership capacity, professional managers, in a university. It is recognized that the research was conducted in one Saudi Arabian university and therefore cannot be generalized. However, the findings of this study are sufficient to advance future research conversations about the use of coaching for leadership development of university administrative leaders and goal-setting in coaching.

The study has contributed to academic knowledge through addressing the research questions on how the lived experiences of coaches inform coaching of professional managers of a university. Coaches have shared their learning that is valuable for planners and managers of the coaching engagements in human resources and/or organization development departments. The study provides

insight to university administrators and other coaches for using the frameworks for coaching programmes. Specifically, it has highlighted that goal-setting by those external to the coaching sessions such as managers of the coachees and human resources departments are less effective than learning goals set by coachees themselves. It also highlights that setting specific goals may stress out the coachees and therefore prove less effective if not counterproductive. These limitations of goals setting and goal attainment will be explored in the fourth chapter. Chapter 4 comprises the Applied Research Project (ARP) that explores the learning experiences of the academic Deans and its implication on the knowledge and practice of coaching.

Chapter 4

APPLIED RESEARCH PROJECT: A LEARNING INFORMED COACHING FRAMEWORK FOR ACADEMIC DEANS

4.1 Introduction

This study attempts to develop an alternate, flexible framework to assist coaches in adapting to complex coaching situations. In the previous chapter, the Small Scale Research Project (SSRP), informed that specific performance goals are less effective for professional managers in the HE institution. The learning theories and the leadership coaching reviewed in the literature (chapter 2) also support that coaches facilitate learning of coachees. Therefore, a learning-informed coaching framework is worth exploring for a more complex role that is played by Academic Deans. Whilst, Chapman (2010) and Stout-Rostron (2014) support the importance of coaching models to provide a structure for coaching conversations as well as the overall coaching journey, Bluckert (2010) argues that with a Gestalt approach to coaching, the coach needs to make use of themselves in order to work in the moment. This suggests that a rigid model is not always appropriate and the great flexibility is required by the coach. Garvey et al. (2018) suggest that a 'repertoire approach' is more appropriate and this clearly has implications for coach education and development. More recently, Stelter (2019) argues that, as coaching practice becomes more of a dyadic dialogue, basic competency frameworks for coach development become inadequate. He argues for a kind of hybrid approach between mentoring and coaching.

Academic Deans are at the centre of academic decision-making and represent the middle leadership of an institution of higher education (Buller, 2007). For an Academic Dean to develop into the role and to become effective, he or she needs to learn continually at both personal and professional levels and coaching can offer such an opportunity through a managed conversation (Gallwey, 2000; Bertrand, 2018). While coaching can help coachees in their learning and

personal development, coaching process models, however, often help coaches far more (Lennard, 2010). Additionally, Kilburg (2004) reminds us that the proliferation of coaching models leads to Dodoville where all are successful and all must have prizes! That means that all coaching models cannot be successful for all coachees.

According to Sarros, et al. (1998), the Academic Dean is the least researched and most misunderstood role in the higher education enterprise. The role and responsibilities of an Academic Dean vary widely from institution to institution. However, according to Buller (2007), all Deans play a middle leadership role. They relate upwardly to the senior leadership, sideways with their equivalents in other functions, supervise heads of department and chairs of departments as well as other academic colleagues, students, administrative staff, develop strategy, and in some cases have budgetary control. Performing these multifaceted roles can create a significant personal and professional challenge for a dean. It has also been argued (Zhang et al., 2008; Rouleau & Balogun, 2011) that middle leaders play a similar and crucial role in any organization and Wolverton & Wolverton (1999) argue that middle leaders may experience problems of role ambiguity, stress and burnout that may result in higher turnover, low productivity and ultimately lower job satisfaction. According to Tucker (1988), in the context of higher education, in a large institution, a dean will interact less and gain less support from the senior team while in a smaller institution, this interaction may be greater. Additionally, Wolverton & Wolverton (1999) suggest that universities can lack clarity in setting expectations for Academic Deans who are hired on scholarly attributes and achievements but are expected to perform with leadership and administrative excellence.

Commonly, Deans are appointed for their teaching and research abilities and these alone do not prepare a Dean for the role. They need key skills such as communication, strategy, fund-raising, organizational and time management skills, collaboration, and the ability to establish collegial relationships

(Kalargyrou & Woods, 2009). One way potential Deans prepare for the role is through training programmes and, indeed, Aasen and Bjorn (2007) recommend leadership training for Deans but also suggest that this is followed by further organizational and personal development activities such as coaching to enable the transfer of learning to the Deans context. This has the potential to support individualized learning and development of Deans and through coaching they may learn how to deal with stress, manage their time and develop their communication abilities.

In addition, it is also possible that Deans may educate themselves through both formal and informal processes of learning and these may include reflective processes such as coaching, peer mentoring and action learning (Blackmore & Blackwell, 2006). However, one issue that may influence the way in which Deans' learn identified by Favero (2006), is the influence of their academic background. He argues that Deans in pure fields, such as science and engineering rely more on trial-and-error than those with disciplinary backgrounds of applied fields, such as business.

This research explores these issues in relation to coaching by asking:

- What are the lived learning experiences of Academic Deans that contribute to their role?

- How may the learning experiences of Academic Deans inform the design of a leadership coaching framework for middle leaders?

This study:

- Explores the literature on adult learning theories in relation to coaching

- Considers the findings from an intensive semi-structured interview process that was subject to an Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) process

- Develop a conceptual framework leading to a 'learning leadership through coaching'

4.2   Learning Theories and Leadership Coaching

This literature review in chapter 2 offers a summary of the key adult learning theories that may contribute to the leadership coaching process. There is little doubt that research influences practice and 'there is nothing as practical as a good theory (Lewin, 1951: 169). While there is no theory that is unique to coaching (Brunner,1998; Passmore et al. 2013; Peltier, 2001), it is possible to examine a range of learning theories and find resonances with the ideas presented in the leadership coaching literature.

In this summary of the literature, a set of 'proxy theories' are adopted to inform the ARP. These indicate that leadership coaching has the potential at least to be a very powerful learning process. Both coach and coachees are learners (Garvey et al. 2018). As Stelter (2019) points out, the coach needs to learn from their coachees in order to develop the art of dialogue. According to Cox (2013), coaching is a facilitated, dialogic learning process and its demand has risen due to the need to overcome increasingly complex problems in the world. Arguably at least, adult learning theories comprise the largest set of theories that have relevance for the coaching processes. An understanding of adult learning principles and theories could therefore support the learning processes of both coaches and coachees.

According to Anthony (2017), coaching is becoming an increasingly popular intervention for organizational leadership development to bring about the desired behavioural outcomes by coachees. Coaching could also support the personal growth of deans since they would learn how to deal with stress, time management and intercultural communications. Jones et al. (2016) also agree that unlike other developmental interventions, coaching has a larger and more consistent positive effect on outcome criteria. However, Barner and Higgins (2007) caution that coaching must be provided to carefully selected managers who are worth the investment. Since academic leaders in a university have

specific development needs, coaching supports individual leadership development plans (Barner and Higgins (2007).

According to Ely et al., (2010) leadership coaching differs from traditional leadership development. Leadership coaching focuses on the unique needs of a coachee and his/her organization, and requires coaches to have specific skills such as listening and trust building. "Leadership coaching demands process flexibility to achieve desired results" (Ely et al., 2010, p. 586). Stevens (2005) also emphasizes on competence of leadership coaches. He argues that coaching is a multidimensional intervention process, and it requires a good understanding of business, organizations, management, leadership, among other relevant issues. Gentry et al., (2013) joins Stevens by saying that coaches need to be well prepared for an engagement to be result-driven. According to Huggins et al., (2021), coaching offers more benefits than other professional development methods due to its personalized nature of relationship with a coachee. However, in Saudi HEI, some internal coaching and mentoring engagements are challenged by the hierarchical relationships and academic ranks that make them less effective (Alkhatnai, 2021).

Several theorists including Knowles et al. (1998), Schon (1983), Kolb (1984), Maslow et al. (1987) and Rogers (1989) make major contributions to the understanding of adult learning and by implication, the learning that is facilitated by coaching conversations.

Knowles et al. (1998), for example, presented six assumptions about adult learners as follows:

1. Adults are self-directed in their learning

2. Adults are goal-oriented in learning

3. Adults have a reservoir of life experiences to learn from

4. Adults are interested to learn to solve real-life problems

5. Adult have practical orientation – they learn to apply knowledge

6. Adults respond more to intrinsic motivators than extrinsic ones.

Schon (1983) developed the concept of the 'reflective practitioner' and argued that being:

> "mismatched to the changing character of the situations of practice – the complexity, uncertainty, instability, uniqueness, and value conflicts which are increasingly perceived as central to the world of professional practice" (Schon, 1983, p. 14).

Kolb (1984) provided insights into the idea that adults learn from their experience and in accordance with certain 'styles' of learning. Later Kolb & Kolb (2013) argued that certain subject disciplines favoured certain learning styles.

Maslow et al. (1987), through the notion of a 'hierarchy of needs' suggested that this hierarchy provided the underpinning motivations to learn beyond mere survival and Rogers (1989) offered insights into the 'core conditions' for adult learning which, for some, provides the underpinning 'humanistic' value set (Peltier, 2001 and Zeus & Skiffington, 2005) for coaching relationships. Among these core conditions, Rogers (1989) suggests the ability to reflect is central. Another contribution to learning is the idea of mindfulness. Becoming aware through mindfulness can enable transformation (Kets de Vries, 2014; Langer, 1989).

These theories offer an opportunity to understand the learning experiences of adults and, in the case of this study, those in the role of Academic Dean. As discussed above, Academic Deans are exposed to many challenges and their ability to learn and act is critical to their ability to perform the role.

It is not argued that Academic Deans learn in different ways to other people in a similar middle leadership role. On the contrary, it is very likely that Academic Deans are exposed to similar challenges found in any middle leader's learning environment. For example, goal setting, intrinsic and extrinsic motivations, political knowledge, professional judgement, tension-filled situations,

accumulated experiences, problem-solving, and need for self-actualization and congruence with their values. In relation to this, Winters & Latham (1996) argue that when a task is straight-forward, specific goal setting often leads to improved performance. However, when the task is complex, for example in the complexities of being a middle-leader or Dean (as is this study), Seijts et al. (2004) argue that 'learning goals' are more relevant and it is through these that there is a shift away from specific task outcomes and towards the 'discovery of task-relevant strategies or procedures' (p.229).

Consistently, the learning theories, as outlined by the theorists above and in chapter 2, remind us about the importance of contexts and conditions for learning, reflection on assumptions, beliefs, and choices of action and outcomes. However, it has been argued (Gray, et al. 2016) that an over emphasis on outcomes can drive out the relational aspects of the coaching dyad and others (de Haan, 2008; Stelter, 2019) argue that it is the relational aspects that are crucial to the success of coaching.

In chapter 2, I raise Sammut's (2014) argument that the closest learning theory to coaching is Mezirow's (1991) transformative learning theory. This theory describes the conditions and processes essential for adult learners to make a transformative shift, which may be necessary for them to be able to deal with the contextual challenges they face. These include the use of experience, critical reflection and rational discourse as key parts of the process of learning. According to Taylor (1998), Mezirow later considered the notion of holistic orientation, the awareness of context and the authenticity of practice. In a transformative learning process, adults reframe their perspectives and become more engaged in life with a sense of self-direction and purpose. Within the concept of transformative learning, the learner constructs meaning from their experiences and this may involve deep shifts in beliefs, values, principles and feelings (Mezirow, 1991). According to Du Toit (2007), in coaching, this may happen as a result of the coach providing a supportive challenge to the coachee's thinking.

Also with reference to chapter2, Freire's (2000) theory of education for social change is relevant. This introduced the concept of praxis; a process of dancing between action and reflection. Here, this process aims to enhance the learners' awareness of the socio-cultural dynamics that may play a major role in their lives.

In this applied study, context and values play a role and it is important to be mindful of, for example, Harrison & Stokes (1992) (later popularized by Charles Handy) version of culture in an organizational context where they identify four, sometimes overlapping versions of culture – Power, Person, Task and Role.

Handy (1993) argues that universities have traditionally tended towards a 'person' culture where there is little loyalty to the organization and more loyalty to the specialist subject and research. This in itself has the potential to create staff recruitment and retention issues. However, in the context of this study, there is a strong 'power' orientation where 'power' is held very strongly by a few people and control is exercised through strong bureaucratic processes and social ties. There is also a strong, almost nepotistic, tradition within this university where sons follow fathers into the university as undergraduates and re-join as academic faculty members after a postgraduate education in either the USA, Canada or the UK. One consequence of this is that Deans may not apply for the role and follow standard HR recruitment procedures, rather they are appointed to the role by the most senior officials in the university, rather than choosing it for themselves.

The learning theories outlined above may help to inform how Academic Deans learn about themselves and the roles they play in their institutions. These learning experiences of Deans may then inform the architecture of the learning process in the shape of a facilitated conversation and a learning journey. The unique value of this part of this Ph.D. research is in the understanding of how Academic Deans learn to be more effective and by applying this knowledge to a flexible structure that may facilitate their learning so that they could become what they would like to become within the role.

The conceptual framework for the applied research project is depicted in Figure 4.1. It integrates the Academic Deans and their learning experiences as informed by learning theories to develop a heuristic of leadership coaching.
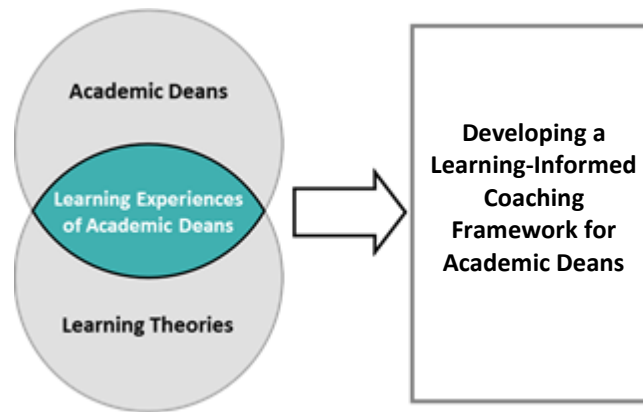
Figure 4.1: Conceptual Framework of the Applied Research Project

In view of the above, this research addresses a gap in the literature on the learning of Academic Deans who are at the centre of academic decision-making in the institutions of higher education. There may also be implications for coaching for middle leaders in general.

4.3   Research Questions

The main purpose of this qualitative research is to understand the lived learning experiences of Academic Deans and then use that understanding to develop a coaching process framework. This study is guided by the following two questions based on the literature review in chapter 2, which is summarised above in this chapter, and in keeping with the purpose of the research:

- What are the lived learning experiences of Academic Deans that contribute to their role?

- How may the learning experiences of Academic Deans inform the design of a leadership coaching framework for middle leaders?

4.4 Research Method

This section presents the research method and its rationale for its selection for the applied research project. The section also discusses other important associated factors of conducting the research that includes ethical considerations, confidentiality, informed consent, research participants, and trustworthiness.

4.4.1 Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA)

As in chapter 3, due to the exploratory nature of this study, a qualitative method rather than a quantitative is appropriate. This study is set in the natural setting of a Middle Eastern University and there is no attempt to test any hypothesis, to prove something or develop any universal truths – a deductive approach. Rather, this ARP study takes an inductive approach where theory is generated through the analysis of the data (Gray, 2017; Bryman and Bell, 2015). The choice of research method is largely determined by the purpose of the research and in this case, it is about exploring the Academic Deans' learning experiences.

Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA), first developed in health psychology settings (Callary et al., 2015; Roberts, 2013, Larkin, et al., 2011; Smith, et al., 2009) and as stated in chapter 3, it is a research approach for examining how people make sense of and understand their lived experiences (Smith et al., 2009) and therefore, it is an approach that is appropriate for this ARP study. Recently, Rajasinghe (2019) confirms this argument that IPA is an appropriate research method for coaching studies due to their inherent subjectivity and social nature.

According to Benner (1994), these lived experiences are daily routines, habits, activities, practices, and meanings of concern to people as they relate to and interact with their world. Van Manen (1990) suggests that the meaning of a lived experience is usually hidden from the person living it!

This is because individuals generally live in an automatic mode of everyday habits. The IPA approach is designed to explore the hidden meanings.

IPA has three theoretical underpinnings and although it is a relatively new research method (Smith et al., 2009), it is informed by long standing research philosophies of phenomenology and hermeneutics (Dahlberg et al., 2008) and idiography (Pietkiewicz and Smith, 2012).

Phenomenology is the study of human experience from the point of view of the person being studied. Its central tenant is related to intentions, meanings and enabling or contextual conditions. Phenomenology attempts to explore the sense people make of these interacting elements.

Hermeneutics is about the art, or indeed, the science of interpretation. According to Ricoeur (1970), hermeneutics is based on two schools of thought. The first being the hermeneutics of empathy and the second being the hermeneutics of suspicion.

The hermeneutics of empathy is related to creating a safe environment where the research participants can explore openly their responses to the questions and are helped to make sense of their own interpretations. Arguably, this is similar to the concept behind coaching.

The hermeneutics of suspicion is about offering an external critique or challenge to the interpretation or the meaning an individual may attribute to a phenomenon. It could be understood as an attempt to establish a universal truth through critique.

In this ARP study, it is the experiences of the participants that are privileged through hermeneutic empathy rather than through hermeneutic suspicion. Empathetic hermeneutics is about honouring and respecting the interpretations of the participants and in this way, it is a mirror of coaching philosophy and is therefore appropriate for this study.

Smith et al., (2009) claim that IPA involves double hermeneutics because while participants make sense of their world, the researcher tries to interpret that sense making.

The third theoretical orientation of IPA is that it depends on is idiography. The main idea here is to explore every single case before making any general statements. According to Pietkiewicz and Smith (2012), "idiography refers to an in-depth analysis of single cases and examining individual perspectives of study participants, in their unique contexts" (p.363).

Some researchers, who have conducted coaching studies, have used IPA as a research approach. For example, Passmore & Mortimer (2011) used IPA to explore the experiences of driving instructors in the UK who were using coaching as a method for novice drivers. They found IPA an effective tool to explore the potential value of coaching for the development of novice drivers. Lech et al. (2017) applied IPA design to understand and explore the experience of Ph.D. students who had received coaching. Dodds & Grajfoner (2018) used an IPA design to explore the interaction between national culture and coaching methods that executive coaches use in the United Arab Emirates (UAE). However, Passmore & Mortimer (2011) caution that while applying IPA design, the researcher must be aware of their own influence and bias and focus on the detailed examination of the participant's account. Therefore, they advocate neutral objectivity on behalf of the researcher. However, Smith et al. (2009) suggest that qualitative analysis in itself is *interpretative* almost by definition, therefore, this ARP study tends towards Smith et al.'s (2009) position and acknowledges that objectivity is 'a figment of our minds; it does not exist in nature' (Skolimowski, 1992:42) and argues that 'The more central a concept, principle, or skill to any discipline or interdisciplinary, the more likely it is to be irregular, ambiguous, elusive, puzzling, and resistant to simple propositional exposition or explanation' (Schulman, 1993). This is the domain that coaches find themselves in during coaching encounters.

4.4.2 Ethical Considerations

Ethics are an integral part of a research project. The proposal and this project report are in complete compliance with the requirements of the Ethics Board of Professional Development Foundation (PDF) and those of Canterbury Christ Church University. I had submitted the proposal to the Ethical Panel after the approval of my Ph.D. supervisory panel. A copy of the same has been attached herewith as Appendix A. In this project, three aspects of ethical behaviour were given utmost importance. These are confidentiality, informed consent, and my prior relationship with the research participants. Each of the three aspects is discussed in detail below.

4.4.2.1 Confidentiality

It is important that the research participants who are academic Deans in a local university (where I also work) feel comfortable and confident to share their personal meaning-making in their lived learning experiences. To hear the authentic voice of the participants, they were assured of confidentiality throughout the process that included the interviews and communications. The names, identity and transcripts of the participants were not shared with anyone at all. All electronic information was coded and secured in a password-protected file even after the conversion of audio files into MS Word documents through transcription. The recordings of the interviews shall remain secured for two years after the completion of the Ph.D. programme.

4.4.2.2 Informed Consent

I briefed all the research participants on the objectives of the project. I gave them *Consent to Participate in the Research Study* Form prior to interviews for their review and signature. A copy of the above form is attached as Appendix B. The participants have the right, as stated in this form, to refuse or withdraw from the study at any time without affecting the relationship. They also had the right to ask questions or refuse to answer any query (s) should they so feel. All the participants had

volunteered to take part in the research study on their own volition. They were not compensated in any form, monetary or in kind.

4.4.2.3 Research Participants

Qualitative research involves a close relationship between participants and the researcher. Brinkmann and Kvale (2005) warns that false relationships for the motive of obtaining data can be softer and seductive forms of power through manipulated dialogue, and misusing empathy and intimacy. I knew the participants of this research project prior to conducting the interviews. However, all the participants had no hesitation to share their personal lived experiences for the research since there was a significant trust of my professional association with them. Interviews were conducted at places of their choice. Most of them sat in a meeting room adjacent to their offices where no interruption was assured. The participants felt completely free and interested to provide their lived experiences and stories of learning as an academic Dean and beyond.

4.4.2.4 My Organizational Role

I work as Director of Organizational Excellence in the university in which the research was carried out. Due to my position and long history in the organization, I personally knew all the Deans who are participants of this research project. They were aware that I have formal organizational permission to conduct this research. In addition, I briefed them about my research objectives and the timeline to complete the Applied Research Project. The participants had no hesitation to share their personal lived experiences for the research since there was a significant trust of my professional conduct with them. The professional ethics and the Informed Consent helped me in establishing and maintaining the desired confidentiality throughout the interviewing and follow-up processes. My department has no role in this project because it was my personal Ph.D. related research activity.

4.4.3 Trustworthiness

There must be a mechanism by which the quality of research work could be evaluated. In empirical research, researchers establish reliability, validity, and objectivity of the process and data (Patton, 2002). However, the same cannot be established in qualitative research. In view of the above, Lincoln and Guba (1985) introduced the term trustworthiness to judge the integrity of the qualitative inquiry. However, Smith and Heshusius (1986) criticised the criteria used by Lincoln and Guba (1985) by saying that it is not too different from quantitative research and fails to address the basic philosophical differences. As stated in chapter 3, Yardley (2000) puts forward four principles for assessing the value of qualitative research. These principles include sensitivity to context, commitment and rigour, transparency and coherence, and the impact and importance of research. According to Merriam (2009), the integrity of qualitative research is ensured by conducting it ethically.

In this applied research project, first, I had familiarized myself with the related literature to understand what the major learning theories are and how academic Deans learn in their roles. The learning theories guided me to frame the set of open-ended questions for the semi-structured interview. Prior to conducting actual interviews, I pilot-tested and refined the interview questions with another retired Dean who had played a similar role in the recent past. I had checked the accuracy of the transcriptions against the audio recordings and then sent them back to participants for verifications. I maintained a diary for all activities and issues related to the research to ensure transparency. Finally, the study is very important and of practical value for the development of academic Deans. The recommendations of the study aim to make a significant impact on the design of future leadership coaching programs for academic Deans as well as administrative leaders in a university.

The next section of the report presents the project activity and results including the procedures for data collection, coding of the transcriptions and emergence of themes.

4.5   Data Collection and Analysis

This section discusses the participants, sample size, data collection, and data analysis. I researched at the same leading university in the Middle East as in the SSRP. The university administration was fully supportive of the research and readily approved all requests to interact with its leaders for interviews and subsequent data collection using a questionnaire.

4.5.1   Sample Size and Participants

I used a purposive sampling technique for this study to select a predefined homogenous group of participants. The logic of purposive sampling provided me with information rich cases which is important in qualitative research (Patton, 2002). According to Obwuegbuzie and Leech (2007), the objective of purposive sampling is not to generalize but obtain insight into a phenomenon. Tongco (2007) also supports purposive sampling for the selection of participants and claims purposive sampling is a practical tool that can be as effective and efficient as random sampling. Smith et al. (2009) recommend that participants must have lived through the phenomenon under study though a sample size can be between three to six. The participants of this study are academic/college Deans. The sample size of this study is five participants, which is a full size available at the university. The university has six Dean and at the time of interviews, one Dean was newly appointed. Therefore, I dropped his name because he has not lived the experience I was interested in. Nonetheless, the information rich sample size of five is sufficient for an IPA method study for obtaining the desired insight through in-depth analysis (Smith et al, 2009). I recruited the participants to share their lived experiences as academic Deans. The sample is highly homogenous since all Deans are male local

nationals. They studied in the same university for bachelor's degrees and then proceeded to complete their Ph.D. degrees in the United States and came back to serve at the university. They have lived in the same higher education institution all of their adult lives. The Deans represent different colleges (arts, business, pure sciences, geoscience, and engineering) and thus become a source of some learning experiences. There is a possibility of disciplinary influences on their learning styles and tendencies.

4.5.2 Data Collection

Data are the foundation of any research study (Yin, 2013). The purpose and questions of research guide data collection procedures (Maxwell, 2005). Though not planned, I collected the data for this applied research project through two rounds. In round one, I conducted semi-structured interviews of the academic Deans by asking open-ended questions. The second round used a questionnaire based on Kolb's Learning Style Inventory. Interviews are a widely used data collection method employed in qualitative research (Hays and Singh, 2012). Qu and Dumay (2011) emphasize that research interviews require skills such as planning, organizing, intensive listening, and note taking.

Therefore, I developed a set of questions (attached as appendix C) for the interviews. The main purpose of the interviews was to obtain insight for the first research question: *What are the learning experiences of academic Deans that contribute to their role?* I framed the questions for the interviews in respect of the learning theories included in the literature review (Chapter 2). Table 4.1 shows the corresponding link between interview questions and the corresponding learning theories. In other words, the learning theories guided the identification of the open-ended questions asked through the interviews. I did not share these questions with the participants in advance. I subtly used the questions to lead a conversation rather than a formal interview. My coaching skills helped me to create a trusted environment in which the participants felt comfortable

to share their deeper experiences of learning as a Dean and link to their values and believes in life.

Table 4.1: The interview questions and corresponding learning theories

Question	Corresponding Learning Theory
What is the role of a college dean in your views?	These questions are related to the role of a College Dean.
What are the key challenges of a college dean?	
How do you make key decisions?	
What makes you stressed at work?	
What part of your job is most satisfying?	
How do you balance between your personal values and the demands of your role as a college dean?	
What are your profound learning experiences?	
How much influence does your disciplinary background have on your learning style?	
What motivates you to learn new things?	Knowles et al (1998)
How much of your learning is influenced by problem solving opportunities?	Knowles (1980)
What is the role of your intuition in making professional judgements?	Schon (1983)
How do you overcome your current learning to be open to new learning?	Kolb (2015)
What are your experiences that didn't lead to any new learning?	Jarvis (1987)
What conditions makes your learning more lively?	Rogers (1989)
What shifts your perspectives or principles?	Mezirow (1991)
How often you reflect during or post an action?	Freire (2000)
How comfortable are you in making decisions in unstructured and/or ambiguous situations?	Hofstede (1997)

Question	Corresponding Learning Theory
What do you learn from inter-cultural communications in your role?	Ting-Toomy (1999)
What difference it makes when you are relaxed or not so relaxed?	Langer (1989)
How much do you learn by observing others?	Lave & Wenger (1991)
What makes you unstuck?	Lave & Wenger (1991)
How a structured conversation may keep you getting a new idea or possible solution to a problem?	Coaching Question

According to Anfara et al. (2002), the questions used in an interview provide the scaffolding for the research and become the basis of the analysis. "Questions suitable for an IPA study may concentrate on exploring sensory perceptions, mental phenomena (thoughts, memories, associations, fantasies), and specifically individual interpretations" Pietkiewicz and Smith (2012). The questions, process of interviewing and its recording were pilot-tested with another past academic Dean and then refined as per his feedback. I then scheduled the real interviews as per the convenience of the participants. I conducted all the semi-structured interviews in-person face-to-face in a conversational style with supplementary probing questions and prompts. I transcribed the recorded interviews of approximately 60-75 minutes each verbatim to produce MS Word documents for analysis.

4.5.3 Data Analysis

Data analysis using the IPA research method is a complex and time-consuming activity (Pietkiewicz and Smith, 2012). In all steps of the data analysis, I immersed myself into data by reading and re-reading the transcriptions to understand the participant's meaning-making of the phenomena under investigation as well as of their world. In keeping with the anonymity of the participants, the names of all five Deans are coded

as D1 through D5. In keeping with the IPA design, I analysed the data collected through semi-structured interviews in three major steps as follows:

- Preparation of Exploratory Comments

- Identification of Themes

- Clustering of Themes

I have discussed each of the above data analysis steps in the following sub-sections.

4.5.3.1   Preparation of Exploratory Comments

I transcribed the audio recordings of the interviews and listened again to improve the accuracy of the transcripts as well as to try to understand the emotional responses of the participants. Then, I read the transcriptions three times to fully comprehend the content, language used (including the metaphors, symbols, and repetitions) and the context. I also used a personal diary to record the timing, background environment, quality of the online connectivity and agreed changes with supervisors. The output of this step is my exploratory notes and comments on the original transcript of the interviews. Frame 1 demonstrates a sample of the above comments.

Original transcript (partial)	Exploratory Comments
Researcher: *How much of your disciplinary background influence your learning style?* *'The way you think about issues is totally different perspective and so I can see the difference. I don't exactly how much of my way of thinking is an outcome of what I learned in school but I can see the difference.'* (D2)	- I look at issues differently due to my disciplinary background - I'm certainly influenced by my discipline but can't quantify it.
'I think yes. I think in my discipline, or in computing, or the way I work in computing is that if I cannot do it, if I cannot	- I understand and learn through my discipline [computing]

understand something, then I don't ask anybody else to do it. I have to understand it first. Maybe because it comes from the background of coding and making programs' (D4)	- I prefer to learn it my disciplinary way
Researcher: How often do you reflect during or post an action*?*	
'And I think this is really a very important learning source. Otherwise if you feel that you always doing the right decisions. Nobody can claim that he's always doing the right decision or the optimum decision.' (D1)	- Reflection is an important source of learning - Reflection helps in arriving at the right decisions
'I do reflections daily. Sometimes I'm harsh on myself also. Reflection is important especially when the change is fast. You need to always observe things and maybe create feedback. So, I do this quite often.' (D5)	- Reflection is my daily routine - Reflection is important when change is fast - It is feedback for me

Frame 4.1: An extract from interviews with the researcher's comments

4.5.3.2 Identification of Themes

Once the comments and notes, as the sample shown in Frame 1, I worked to transform those comments and notes into emerging themes. Although I tried to phrase these comments into a higher level of abstraction, they were still grounded in the participants' accounts of their lived experiences. The annotated script as a whole may have influenced me but that is an example of the hermeneutic circle. According to Pietkiewicz and Smith (2012), "the part is interpreted in relation to the whole and the whole is interpreted in relation to the part". Frame 4.2 demonstrates examples of emergent themes.

Original transcript (partial)	Emerging Themes
Researcher: How much of your disciplinary background influence your learning style? 'The way you think about issues is totally different perspective and so I can see the difference. I don't exactly how much of my way of thinking is an outcome of what I learned in school but I can see the difference.' (D2) 'I think yes. I think in my discipline, or in computing, or the way I work in computing is that if I cannot do it, if I cannot understand something, then I don't ask anybody else to do it. I have to understand it first. Maybe because it comes from the background of coding and making programs' (D4)	Disciplinary background influences learning of Deans
Researcher: How often do you reflect during or post an action? 'And I think this is really a very important learning source. Otherwise if you feel that you always doing the right decisions. Nobody can claim that he's always doing the right decision or the optimum decision.' (D1) 'I do reflections daily. Sometimes I'm harsh on myself also. Reflection is important especially when the change is fast. You need to always observe things and maybe create feedback. So, I do this quite often.' (D5)	Deans are reflective learners

Frame 4.2: Examples of developing Emergent Themes.

4.5.3.3 Clustering of Emergent Themes

At this stage of data analysis, I used commonalities and connections between emerging themes to group them based on their similarities. It involves clustering of emerging (subordinate) themes into super-ordinate themes as shown in Table 4.2. I found some of the themes weak and dropped during the clustering exercise. The next section of this report presents a discussion and interpretation of the superordinate themes.

Table 4.2: Clustering of themes

Superordinate themes	Subordinate themes
Role of the Deans is to attract and retain faculty	- Emphasis on the role of faculty - Engage faculty and students - Creating a conducive environment for faculty - Dean is a talent manager - Ensuring support for faculty - Enabling growth for faculty members
Disciplinary background influences learning of Deans	- Perspective is largely dependent on disciplinary background - Discipline influences though can't quantify it. - Understanding of problems through my discipline - Discipline helps define problems - Discipline helps in the analysis of problems
Deans learn by observing behaviours and interactions	- Learn by observing others' behaviours - Observe their reactions - Learning by interaction - 70-80% of my learning is from observing others - I started learning by observing my mother cooking food - My visual instinct is strong - By observing and interacting, I can predict behaviours
Deans are reflective learners	- Reflection is an important source of learning - Reflection helps in arriving at the right decisions

Superordinate themes	Subordinate themes
	- Reflection is my daily routine - Reflection is important when change is fast - It is feedback for me
Deans think clearly when relaxed	- When relaxed, less influence of factors inhibiting my innovative thinking - Make better decisions when relaxed - Achievement is higher - Better quality when no deadline pressure - Perform important work at night because that's my relaxed time - I'm creative only when relaxed - I enjoy my work when relaxed and therefore experience productive learning

Next chapter, analyses and discusses these superordinate themes in detail in view of the relevant literature in domains of learning and coaching theories.

4.6 Discussion of Themes

Following this method, five super-ordinate and, to some extent, overlapping themes were created as follows:

- Theme 1: Attract and retain faculty

- Theme 2: Disciplinary background

- Theme 3: Learning by observation

- Theme 4: Reflection

- Theme 5: Think clearly when relaxed

In this section of the chapter, I will take those themes and discuss them one by one. The chapter concludes with a tentative coaching heuristic framework based on this analysis and discussion.

4.6.1 Theme 1: Attract and retain faculty

Academic Deans play several roles to achieve the mission of their colleges. However, from the interviews, the most critical role identified was to attract and retain faculty members for their colleges. They reported that they find it very challenging to hire colleagues. For example:

> *'So faculty recruitment to me is the most challenging aspect, not only how to recruit but how to take care of the faculty while they are here'* (D1)

Deans in this sample also talked about the challenges they face to recruit and keep the talented professors and researchers who are the backbone of a college. This issue was particularly important for research-oriented colleges where faculty members work in teams and other collaborative environments. The participants suggested that these challenges were related, but not only limited to, compensation and benefits, research grants, cultural fit, and career opportunities. In Higher Education (HE), there is a growing competition among colleges to attract and retain academic staff:

> *'It is definitely the recruitment of the right talent, not only attracting but also retaining the right talent within the college so that constitutes a lot of efforts not only from me but from the team that is working with me*.' (D5)

This issue is seemingly adding a layer of complexity into the role as well as being a relatively new purpose for the role of a Dean. In line with Wolverton & Wolverton's (1999) comments raised in chapter 2, this adds to the complexity of the role, for which the Deans may not be equipped. Although most Deans in this study said that they preferred to work with chairs and

senior faculty members to make consensus-based decisions (in line with cultural norms in academia), without adequate understanding or support in recruitment, selection, and reward processes. It appears that this aspect of the role may be a source of stress and therefore have an impact on the Deans' ability to perform in other areas of their role. Some Deans did not feel equipped to deal with recruitment and retention and had little HR understanding. Another issue is, the cultural norm in HE is to recruit for subject matter expertise and research profile without consideration of the interpersonal fit and commitment to the institution. The dedication that academics have for their subject and research can outweigh considerations of commitment to the university, which may compound the problem of retention (Handy, 1993). This, added to the strong 'power' culture and 'role' focus (Harrison & Stokes, 1992) in this specific context, where people are often appointed rather than apply for roles means that, Deans may feel a responsibility for the retention and recruitment of staff but lack any authority to act independently.

A cultural shift among Deans where the almost nepotistic tradition, a product of a collectivist culture (Hofstede, 1997) is changing, and newer, younger members of the faculty are not necessarily following their fathers into the university and are seeking opportunities elsewhere. This also has the potential to place stresses on the system and on the Deans in particular who are charged with the responsibility of retention and recruitment. Responsibility without authority is a potential source of stress (Garvey, 1994) for leaders.

Clearly, some people handle this type of stress better than others and some feel a greater sense of 'control' than others. While listening to the Deans, it was obvious that some of them wished to discuss health and wellbeing issues which were related to the pressures of the retention and recruitment issues.

Coaching could play a vital role in enabling Deans to 'come to terms' with their situation, reframe or 'transform' their thinking (Mezirow, 1991) so that they come to learn to 'tolerate complexity' (Garvey & Alred, 2001).

4.6.2   Theme 2: Disciplinary background

The interviews data shows that the disciplinary background of the Deans makes a profound impact on their approaches to learning. Most of them actively engaged with this question and stated that it enabled them to consider this issue for the first time. All the Deans stated that their disciplinary backgrounds determined how they viewed issues and analysed problems. For example, one, from a multidimensional discipline, believed that he considered issues from several different angles before concluding. Another, who compared himself with Deans of different disciplinary backgrounds, said:

'The way you think about issues is from totally different
perspective and so I can see the difference. I don't exactly know
how much of my way of thinking is an outcome of what I learned
in school but I can see the difference.' (D2)

Deans with backgrounds in social sciences stated that they tend to think about issues holistically and in 'big picture' terms. One who studied computer science said that his discipline had influenced his ways of learning new things and even teaching. According to him:

'I think yes. I think in my discipline, or in computing, or the way I
work in computing is that if I cannot do it, if I cannot understand
something, then I don't ask anybody else to do it. I have to
understand it first. Maybe because it comes from the background
of coding and making programs' (D4)

Given that the main discipline in this university is science and engineering, most Deans said that they were systematic, logical thinkers who always

tried to first establish principles and valued quantitative over qualitative analyses to make insightful decisions. Kolb & Kolb (2013) called it a predominately 'converging' approach to learning. Convergent thinkers tend to prefer "technical tasks and problems rather than with social issues and interpersonal issues." (Kolb & Kolb, 2013:13). This is borne out by the coach's experience in working with these people. Some of the challenges presented in the coaching conversations related to the difficulties the coachees had with social and interpersonal issues.

For some, this was an additional source of tension and stress in that they found it difficult to appreciate 'people issues' from a social perspective and tended to think about them in technical ways making it difficult for them to appreciate the political nature of some of their colleagues' behaviours.

This issue has significance for any coaching framework developed for people in this role is that any coach working in HE needs to be cognizant of this. It is necessary for the coach to be able to make use of the coachee's approach to learning in order to build rapport and trust, however, the challenge is also a part of coaching and the coach also needs to be able to challenge so that the coachee may reframe their thinking and approach (Schon, 1983; Mezirow, 1991; Du Toit, 2007). The data shows that some preferred working with tools, such as 360 questionnaires, numerical data and drawing diagrams helped to appeal to the rational thinking of the coachees and enabled them to engage in thinking rather than through conversation. Some favoured a technical approach to discussing issues, wanting to move to practical solutions rather than wishing to 'explore' an issue. According to Gray et al. (2016), in coaching, the overemphasis on the technical can drive out the relational aspects, while these people have a preference for the technical in the coaching conversations, the coach needs to discover ways in which the coachees to build their interpersonal and social abilities as leaders. Clearly, a more extensive study is needed to explore these issues, however, these findings also contribute, albeit in a small way, to Kolb &

Kolb's (2013) claim that certain subject disciplines favour certain career choices and occupations.

4.6.3 Theme 3: Learning by observation

Deans interact with many people including faculty, students, staff, peers and other stakeholders inside and outside their colleges. From the interview data, the Deans also seem to learn by observing peoples' behaviours and then they apply this learning in future interactions in an attempt to improve their own performance. One Dean said:

'So I learn from interacting with people by observing people I think I have to see the reaction to my decisions and what I say. This is I learn, because I will modify what I say, what I do in the future' (D1)

Some of the participants suggested that this relates to their own student times when they would observe teachers in the classrooms and demonstrations in the laboratories and then quickly understand how to do it. As one Dean stated:

'I started learning by observing other people. I remember even at very young age, if I see somebody doing something, after seeing him once, I do get a pretty good idea of how it can be done and then I try it myself at my hand and something like that. I see teachers and how they solve questions on the board once and then I'm capable of solving it again.' (D4)

Some Deans observe and learn from others' behaviours more deeply. According to one Dean:

'Definitely I learn by the way they talk, by the way they handle things. It gives me what are the things that will interest them, I think that part is important for me also to work with them and understand how they think.' (D5)

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According to Kolb & Kolb (2013) predominantly visual learners do not tend to learn through verbalization. This presents a challenge to coaches in any context due to the fact that coaching, according to Cox (2013), "is a facilitated, dialogic learning process." The emphasis on verbalization therefore, may present problems for coachees who are predominantly visual learners. From the point of view of a coaching framework, when working with visual learners, it would seem that asking the coachees to reflect on concrete examples that illustrate the issue they wish to discuss and to enable them to visualize and explore situations could prove to be a successful approach.

4.6.4 Theme 4: Reflection

Related to and following on from the previous theme, the interview data suggests that most Deans regularly engage in reflection. They report that they find a lot of value in reflection and consider it as one of the important sources of learning. One Dean who evaluates his decisions afterward, said:

> *'And I think this is really very important learning source. Otherwise if you feel that you always doing the right decisions. Nobody can claim that he's always doing the right decision or the optimum decision.'* (D1)

Another Dean said, he reflects during or immediately after an action. He believes it is important to learn from what has happened and get a deep understanding of it as soon as possible. This may be akin to Freire's (2000) concept of praxis where there is a movement between action and reflection to help enhance the learners' awareness of the socio-cultural dynamics that may play a major role in their lives. This is an important aspect of developing a leader.

Another Dean uses reflective learning as a feedback system for his actions. He claims:

'I do reflections daily. Sometimes I'm harsh on myself also. Reflection is important especially when the change is fast. You need to always observe things and maybe create a feedback. So, I do this quite often.' (D5)

Some Deans use weekends and/or travel times for reflection time. They want to detach from their routine and sit back and then reflect on the past to learn from it.

From my own observations based on the interviews, the majority of Deans demonstrated strong reflective tendencies. This was displayed in, for example, the time to think before responding to a question and this was sometimes accompanied by an intake of breath or a 'holding statement' such as 'good question that!' Schon, (1983) emphasizes that the understanding of a context for action is key to effective professional practice. He suggests that together, the reflection in action and experimentation through the application of the learner's intuitive practice, based on their experiences helps learners to construct a new theory to work from. As 'theory in practice' tends to be the preferred option for the participants in this study, it is important that the coach is both aware and able to facilitate and accommodate reflection by maintaining patience and silence as appropriate. The coach needs to be able to work in the moment (Bluckert, 2010) with the coachee and adjust their approach. Thus, rendering the use of a rigid process model of coaching inappropriate and highlighting the need for a more flexible or 'repertoire' (Garvey et al. 2018) framework for coaches to work from.

Additionally, reflection in complex situations is not necessarily a 'goal oriented' activity rather, it is more about strategies, self-insight and processes. Whilst some participants in this study are influenced by the concept of goals as a result of their preferred approaches to learning, a coach may need to work with the notion of strategies, self-insight and processes 'learning goals' (Seitjs et al., 2004) as discussed previously, rather

than specific task goals. Developing a strategic or process orientation may be of more benefit to the middle-leader than a reductionist approach of specific goals in order to break down the task. Mezirow's (1991) notion of holistic orientation is also relevant here. Again, there are implications for coach development here as well as for the development of any flexible coaching framework.

4.6.5 Theme 5: Thinking clearly when relaxed

Related to the previous point on reflection, most participants suggest that they learn at a deeper level when they are relaxed. One Dean said:

> *'When nervous or tense in a meeting, I can't think clearly or make a right decision. Therefore, I postpone the decision making.'*

Another emphasized the need to learn how to relax for clear thinking. Other participants said that they take a pause to relax and come back to discussion to clear their cluttered minds. Deans in this study agreed that they enjoy their work and are more creative when relaxed.

As one Dean said:

> *'I learn more when I'm relaxed. Because when I'm under pressure and tension, I don't get that freedom of exploring the different aspects*.' (D4)

I observed that some of the Deans were late for the interview meetings. They arrived in a state of slight panic and were very apologetic and agitated. When discussing this observation, it was noticed that some cultural issues related to power were evident. On most occasions, they had been summoned to see a more senior person. One Dean, who was part of the interview programme said:

> *'When the boss calls, you go, whatever you are doing.'*

Coaching may help the Deans to develop coping strategies for this issue through diary management techniques to protect their time and enable a better state of relaxed alertness to develop. In some cases, it looks like Du Toit's (2007) notion of 'supportive challenge' may be an appropriate way to facilitate transformative change.

Deans in this study reported that they achieve more in less time when they work mindfully (Kets de Vries, 2014; Langer,1989). They are more productive and focused and see complex issues more clearly.

Decision making is a major part of a Dean's responsibility and this group of Deans stated that they value the relaxed mindset. According to a Dean:

> '*But when you are relaxed, it means you minimized the influence of other factors. I think when I'm relaxed my thinking becomes clearer and that definitely helps learning and decision making*.'
> (D5)

Given the way in which some of the Deans in this study deal with the stresses of the role and their concerns about their own personal health and wellbeing, this is an important issue. As discussed in the previous theme, reflection is an important process and reflection tends to be associated with the notion of 'calm space' or mindfulness. It is also here that again, Mezirow's (1991) notion of holistic orientation and the awareness of authenticity within a given context become important. For learning to become truly transformative, the learner needs to reframe their perspectives and become more engaged in life with a sense of self-direction and purpose (Knowles et al., 1998). This becomes possible within a relaxed and reflective environment. Taken with reflection, these two elements contribute to satisfying at least two elements of Roger's (1989) 'core conditions for learning'.

As seen above, the contextual and cultural issues of power distance, masculinity, collectivism and role orientation (Harrison & Stokes, 1992; Handy, 1993) there are potential problems for the Deans. The cultural environment, as previously discussed, could create a sense of powerlessness or a lack of personal control as well as a feeling of intense loyalty to the leaders. This was an observation reported by the coach. For some, particularly those recently educated at doctorate level in the USA, Canada or the UK, where there are different cultural norms, the current cultural practices within the university are a source of stress and may create health and well-being issues. Others, seem able to cope with the complexity and accept the cultural norms without creating stress. Overall, a flexible coaching framework needs to be cognizant of these possibilities.

4.7   Heuristic Framework for Coaching

As Knowles (1980) argues, the above discussed are the conditions in which adults learn at their best. In taking some of these theories and combining them with an understanding of their role, their context and their experiences, I attempt a description of the main elements that may constitute a heuristic framework for coaching predominantly convergent learners in HE but this may also have applications for middle leaders in general. Keeping in the introduction to this chapter, this framework, as presented in Figure 4.2, offers an alternative to the basic competency framework and acts more as a decision-making process to enable the coach to develop more of a dyadic dialogue (Stelter, 2019). This is more like a hybrid between mentoring and coaching or a 'repertoire' Garvey et al. 2018) approach.
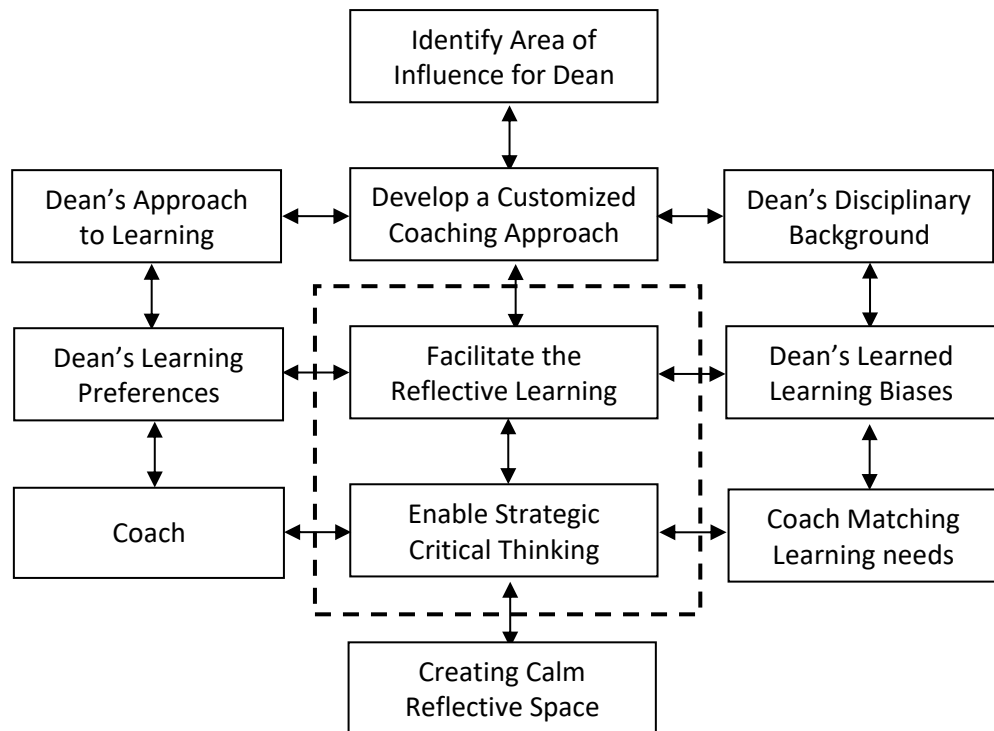
Figure 4.2: A learning informed heuristic

The main elements of the heuristic framework include:

1. Working from an understanding of what a Dean may feel they can influence and what they think they can directly control in their context.

2. Being aware of and adjusting the coaching approach to suit the learning style of the Dean.

3. Being aware that certain disciplines prefer the technical over the social and interpersonal.

4. Being prepared to 'work in the moment' and adjust

5. Being aware that coaching is primarily a dialectic process and that Deans may prefer the opportunity to visualize through diagrams, visualization techniques or practical examples.

6. Being aware that the technical mindset may prefer the coach to use tools such as questionnaires, 360, numerical data and diagrams in order to provide 'objective data'.

7. Being aware of the use of and the difference between specific goals and learning goals and enabling the Dean to develop strategic critical thinking.

8. Helping to create a calm reflective space to enable the Dean to relax and reflect.

Whilst the above list is not exhaustive, it represents research and learning informed framework relevant to this specific group of people. It may also have transferrable elements into other middle leader contexts. In Figure 4.2, the arrows indicate that, for the coach constant and regular monitoring and critical reflection on the coaching encounters is essential. The dotted box represents the central person of leadership coaching. This study is exploratory and more extensive work is needed to develop a more complete framework.

4.8   Conclusions

The purpose of this chapter is to develop a flexible coaching framework to fill in the gaps in the conceptual framework that I introduced at the start. It is clear from this study that the role of a Dean is complex and that they are not necessarily equipped to deal with the complexity. On one hand, as Aasen & Bjorn (2007) argue, training for Deans may be helpful, particularly around the issue of recruitment, selection, and retention. On the other hand, coaching offers an individualized leadership development that is contextual, potentially applicable, and relevant.

4.9   Implications for Practice

This study together with the findings of the Small Scale Research project (SSRP) raises important issues for coach development. Currently, the dominant model of coach development, as advocated by the professional associations including the International Coach Federation (ICF) and European Mentoring and Coaching Council (EMCC), is a training-based competence approach. This has two problems. The first is that a training philosophy is one that pre-specifies

outcomes and delivers content to meet those pre-specified outcomes. Garvey (2016) argues that this approach has its attractions in 'accelerating the journey' and satisfying quality issues but that it fails to adequately take into account the complexities of human interactions, learning styles, and contexts; it is a linear approach to learning. This was particularly pertinent to the SSRP where the coaches were trained on the ICF competency model.

The second issue is similar. A competence based approach is reductionist by definition and to argue that human interactions as complex as coaching, for example, maybe reduced to simple codes is limiting. Barnett (1994: 73) argues that: 'the notion of competence is concerned with predictable behaviours in predicable situations'. Given the complexities of the coachee's situation and of coaching itself, this is a worrying observation. This study and resultant framework provide some evidence that coaching is far from predictable and is complex. The individual within their own context needs focused consideration. This framework also highlights the area of goal-setting identified in the first study.

The above issues of pre-specifying the outcomes and taking a reductionist approach to coaching has implications for coaches, coach educators, and other stakeholders of coaching engagements. A conclusion that coaches need to broaden their knowledge and skills beyond the competency models so that they could understand the deeper issues of learning styles and biases and the much needed critical thinking is therefore appropriate. The coach educators may consider inclusion of learning theories in their training content. Other stakeholders such as human resources managers and sponsors of coaching engagements may benefit from the proposed coaching framework that addresses the inherent complexity of coaching academic and non-academic leaders in HEIs.

4.10   Implications for Research

Clearly, more research into the dynamics of coaching relationships and the coaching process is needed. It is important to move away from the evaluative studies that dominate (Gray, et al 2016; Garvey et al 2018) and start to develop insights into the complexities of coaching with different purposes and within different contexts to enable a more sophisticated, learning informed coaching process which may enable coaches to become better facilitators of dyadic dialogue (Stelter, 2019). As the academic and administrative leaders in HEIs are facing more complex situations with many challenges such as student enrolments, financial sustainability, faculty development and hybrid delivery of their programmes, the coaching approaches need to respond to these challenges and come up with more sophisticated and yet flexible frameworks.

The heuristic framework developed in this chapter offers an alternate to the coaching models that are too simple and outcome oriented. There is a need to conduct research on various aspects of learning informed coaching processes. The new research may exploit the complexity theory and its applications for complex learning interventions such as executive coaching. The ARP recognizes the complexity of the coaching process while working with the academic Deans as coachees. This recognition thus raises the question of the adequacy of the coaching frameworks of leading professional bodies including the International Coaching Federation (ICF) and European Mentoring and Coaching Council (EMCC). The next chapter conducts a critical review of these competency frameworks and evaluates their suitability for coaching academic Deans.

Chapter 5

REPORT ON PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE: ADEQUACY OF THE COMPETENCY FRAMEWORKS FOR COACHING ACADEMIC DEANS

5.1   Introduction

This is a report on professional practice which is another essential part of the portfolio of my research. It integrates the knowledge and professional practice in a real life organization by a practitioner. As a member of the organization (a leading university in the Middle East), I have witnessed the application of the knowledge and learning (from both the Small Scale Research Project (SSRP) and Applied Research Report (ARP) as well as additional literature review) by an experienced executive leadership coach who is the practitioner in this case.

The report is directly linked to the work of my SSRP and ARP research presented in the previous two chapters. The large-scale study, conducted to explore lived learning experiences of academic Deans, has revealed their learning preferences and biases. The Deans appreciate learning goals rather than pre-determined outcomes (as practiced by some coaches) and pre-defined behavioral expectations (competency-based behavioral assessments). According to Nadeem and Garvey (2020), coaching of academic Deans is a complex process and their learning is positively influenced by coachee-specific contextual variables such as disciplinary background, learning preferences, calm and safe reflective space and enablement of critical thinking. In addition, the role of the context is also relevant here. According to Stokes et al (2020), context plays an agentic role in the learning process of coachees. The coach needs to be aware of the above coachee-specific variables and the context for all HE leaders. This raises a question about the adequacy of the coach education/training programmes accredited by leading professional bodies such as the International Coach Federation (ICF) and the European Council of Mentoring and Coaching (EMCC). It has been observed that both ICF and EMCC keep updating their set of competency markers or competence indicators,

these fundamentally remain professionally determined competencies rather than the curriculum of an institution of higher education.

As has been argued above, both the SSRP and ARP support the rational for this study. As discussed in the SSRP (chapter 3), the professional managers' coaching programme revealed the limitations of goal setting in leadership development in the HEIs. Similarly, the ARP (chapter 4), concluded that coaching programmes for academic Deans may encounter complexity and context problems that may not be adequately addressed by current competency frameworks. These issues set a strong rational for conducting critical review of the ICF and EMCC competence models for their suitability of leadership coaching in HEIs.

5.1.1 Purpose of the Study

This RPP study aims to conduct a critical review of the competency frameworks prescribed by the two leading coaching professional bodies: ICF and EMCC. The idea of this review came from the findings and conclusions of the large-scale research resulting in a learning-informed framework that is coachee-centered and context-driven. As shown in Figure 5.1, the focus of this study will be to implement and reflect on the application of the framework (heuristic) and subsequently assess the adequacy of the competencies established by ICF and EMCC.
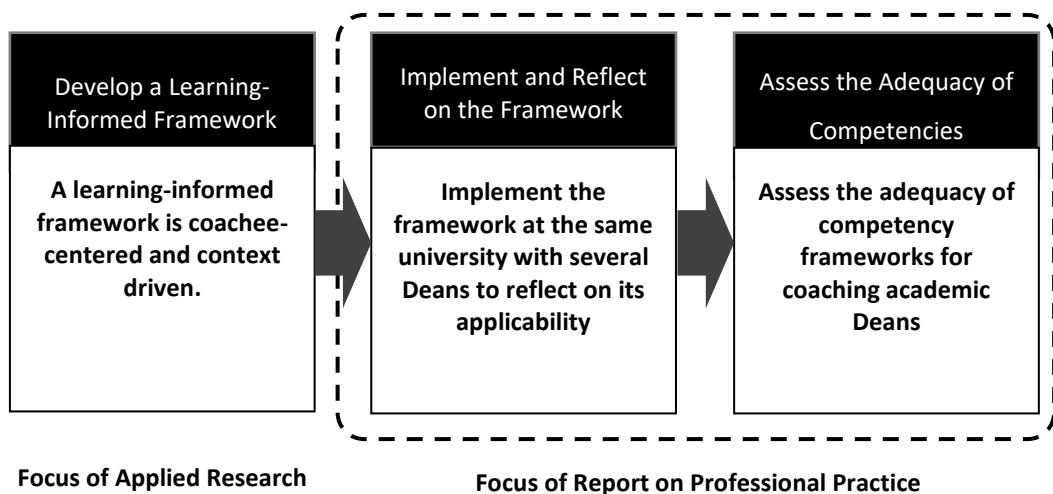
Figure 5.1: The development process of the research question

As established in the large-scale research, the coaching of academic Deans is complex and context-driven which may or may not be addressed adequately by the competency frameworks. Therefore, the main research question for this study is as follows:

Do existing coaching competency frameworks adequately address the complex task of coaching academic deans?

The above main question has the following four sub-questions:

- Are the current competency frameworks evidence-based?

- Do these frameworks address the significance of context and conditions?

- Do these competency frameworks address complexity in the coaching process?

- Are current competency frameworks coachee or coach-centred?

5.1.2 Context of the Research

As stated previously in chapter 3, the organization where the academic Deans are performing the complex role of middle management is keen to improve the effectiveness of their leadership. This RPP part of this thesis is carried out in the context of the organizational aspirations of improving leadership coaching practice for the academic Deans. The university has a mature leadership development program based on a competency model. These competencies were developed through a series of training workshops, action learning programs and coaching engagements. I am currently working with this university as a director of organizational excellence. In this role, I am responsible to design and direct the leadership coaching engagements that last for several months. The university administration is supportive of any endeavour that helps explore the customization of its academic leadership coaching program. This research is expected to provide critical input to understand the complexities of the

coaching process and engage coaches who can look beyond the predefined competency frameworks and models for the academic leaders.

5.1.3 Significance of the Research for the Practice

This research aims to integrate the theoretical knowledge and professional practice of organizational coaching in order to improve leadership coaching for academic leaders. It is directly related to the important issue of leadership development of academic Deans in universities. These Deans are at the centre of the academic decision-making process and, potentially at least, add value to the vision and outcomes of learning and research. This project is therefore expected to contribute to the development of leaders as well as the institution. Specifically, it will offer a well-researched, customized, and sophisticated coaching framework that is grounded in the learning experiences of the academic Deans.

In addition to the above, this RPP study is offering a critical review of the coaching competency frameworks prescribed by two leading professional bodies, ICF and EMCC, to find out about their adequacy for coaching of academic Deans. The review is expected to provide some insights for novice coaches about the involved complexities in the process of coaching of Deans. Overall, this small scale research may add some sophistication to the coaching process and evoke awareness among coaches on the perceived limitations of the coaching frameworks and models.

5.1.4 Organization of the Chapter

The chapter has all the basic attributes of a research project of academic importance and significance. It begins with an introductory section comprising the purpose and context of the research. It establishes the link between the Applied Research project and the Report on Professional Practice. The chapter also includes the significance of the research for the practice.

The second section presents parts of the review of literature related to the leadership role of academic Deans, some key relevant learning theories and competency based coaching frameworks. The next section focuses on the research framework and qualitative research method: case study. Another important aspect of this research project is the ethical considerations and compliance with policies and standards of Canterbury Christ Church University. These ethical considerations and other related issues including confidentiality, informed consent, and my relationship with research participants are explained here.

The fourth section is dedicated to data collection, analysis and results. The fifth section provides a comprehensive discussion on the themes in reference to the pertinent literature. Conclusions, recommendations and implications of this research are presented in the last section of this chapter.

5.2   Literature Review

Guided by the purpose of this study, I searched and reviewed the literature to discover the state of knowledge around the following topics/questions:

- What makes coaching of academic Deans a complex process?

- What are the current leading competency frameworks?

- Are these competency frameworks evidence-based?

- Do these frameworks address the significance of context?

- Do the frameworks address complexity in the coaching process?

- Are these frameworks coachee or coach-centred?

In search of the answers to the above questions, I reviewed relevant literature in four domains: leadership development and coaching academic deans, the origins of coaching competency frameworks, issues related to coaching competency and contexts of coaching and learning. I carried out the library advanced search at CCCU online databases and SmartSearch at another major

library in all major databases including ProQuest ABI/Inform, EBSCO, ERIC, Elsevier Scopus, Springer Link and Google Scholar. The key outcomes of this literature review are presented in Literature Review Chapter 2 of the thesis, with some elements in chapter 1. A summary of the parts of the literature relevant to this RPP are presented below.

Leadership development is about expanding the overall capacity of organizational leaders to play their roles effectively (McCauley et al., 1998). As raised in chapters 1 and 2, according to Black (2015), leaders in higher education need a combination of leadership and management competencies in order to deal with their strategic and operational challenges. Gigliotti and Ruben (2017) recommend a portfolio of collaborative leadership programs that cut across conceptual, operational and strategic dimensions of leadership education. Spendlove (2007) argues that academic credibility and experience of university life play crucial roles in the success of a leader in a university. He also claims that university leadership is fundamentally different due to the inherent organizational complexity, caused by conflicting interests of various stakeholders, and therefore requires additional competencies. Drew (2010) supports the argument of Spendlove (2007) and suggests the development of customized individual leader-centered development plans since the challenge of each leader is different from the other. Since each academic Dean in a university may have specific development needs, coaching can support individual leadership development plans (Barner and Higgins (2007) because leadership coaching is a one-on-one partnership that enhances the self-efficacy and performance of a coachee and consequently improves the effectiveness of their organization (Baron and Morin, 2009; Harper, 2012). According to Nadeem and Garvey (2020), coaching of academic Deans is a complex process and their learning is positively influenced by coachee-specific variables such as disciplinary background, learning preferences, a calm and safe reflective space and enablement of critical thinking. In their exploration of the lived learning experiences of academic Deans, Nadeem and Garvey (2020) noted a clear significance of Deans' learning preferences and biases.

5.3   Research Method

The purpose of this study is to conduct a critical review of the coaching competency frameworks prescribed by two leading professional bodies, ICF and EMCC, to find out about their adequacy for coaching of academic Deans. The context of this research comprises a higher education organization where the academic Deans are performing the complex role of middle management, and they would like to improve the effectiveness of their leadership. The university administration is supportive of any endeavour that helps explore the customization of its academic leadership coaching program. This research is expected to provide critical input to understand the complexities of the coaching process and engage coaches who can look beyond the predefined competency frameworks and models for the academic leaders. The purpose and context of this study are also linked to the large-scale research (Applied Research Report) conducted as a key component of my portfolio, as presented in the previous chapter of this thesis. The research question has been developed based on a proposition raised in chapter 4 that coaching of academic Deans is a complex and context-driven process which may or may not be addressed adequately by the competency frameworks. The research question for this study is: *Do existing coaching competency frameworks adequately address the complex task of coaching academic deans?*

This qualitative research is conducted based on the case study method. The Framework for Research, as presented in Figure 5.2, shows the relationship between the design and activities of the research work. According to Yin (2009), the case study research design must have a research question, its propositions, its unit of analysis, a determination of how data are linked to the propositions and criteria to interpret the findings. The unit of analysis of this interpretative and evaluative case study is coaching practices based on the core competencies as defined by the two leading professional bodies: ICF and EMCC.

I approached the research from an interpretive and evaluative perspective that requires a research method which is flexible and capable of capturing multiple

realities as well as being descriptive and context-sensitive (Yilmaz, 2013). It also makes me responsible to
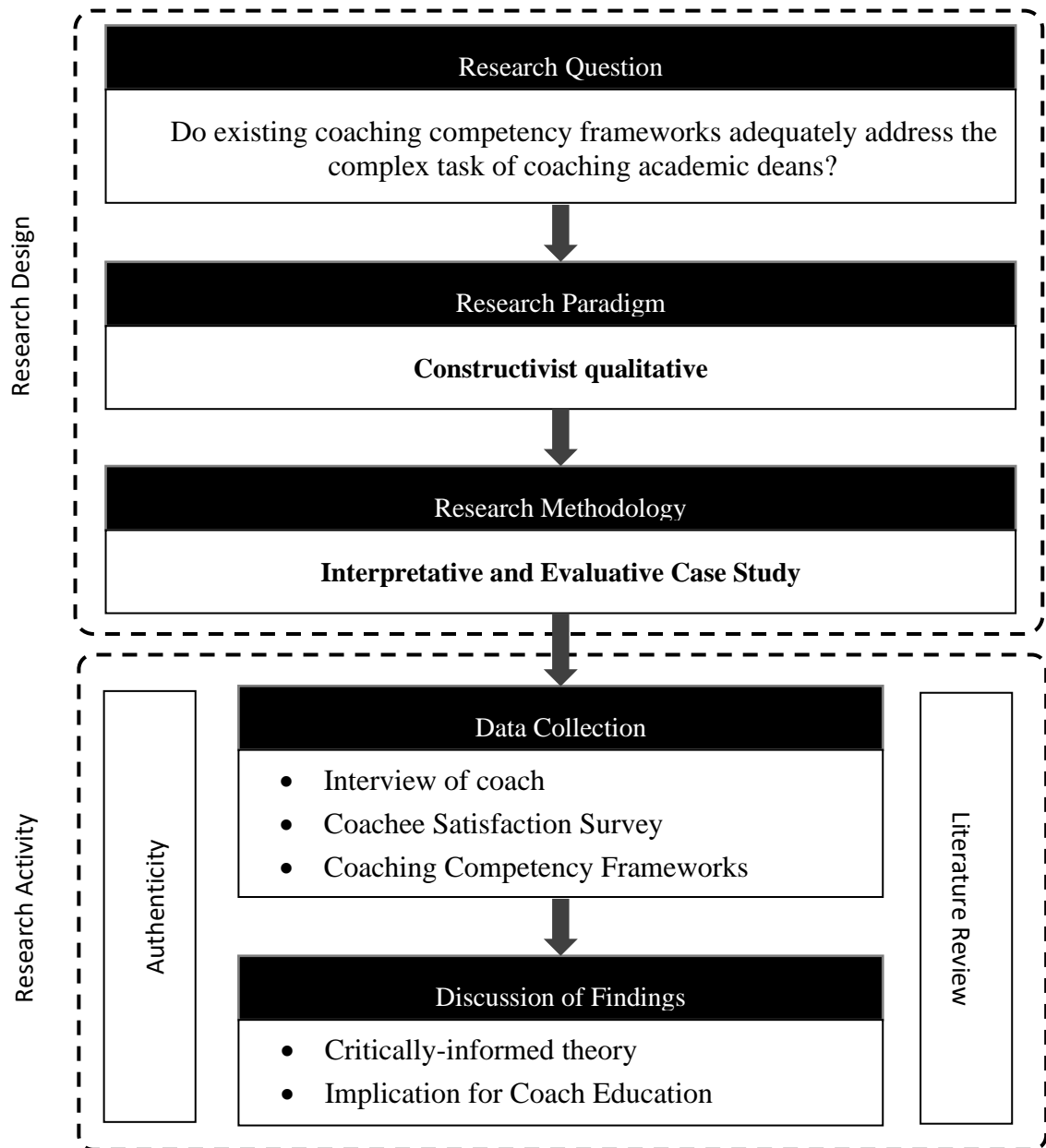
Figure 5.2: The Framework for Research

understand and interpret the phenomena under review rather than generalize or identify a cause and effect relationship (Carson et al., 2001). Case study is a flexible methodology, which can accommodate a variety of research designs, data analysis methods and epistemologies (Simons, 2009). It also allows for the analysis of single phenomena in the background of its context such that the

context can help shed light on the phenomena (Kyburz-Graber, 2004). To help justify my choice of the method here, many researchers have studied coaching and mentoring by using the case study research method. Wortruba (2016) has used the case study method to explore the importance of trust in building relationships in team coaching. Cull (2006) selected a case study as a research method to identify the success factors in mentoring of young entrepreneurs. Similarly, Hanna (2004) used the case study method to examine the individual and business impact of workplace coaching on the competence levels of the on-train customer service employees. All of the above three researchers selected case studies to explore a phenomenon, factors or impact by using multiple sources/realities of knowledge and data in a rather flexible manner.

In the case study research method, "An essential tactic is to use multiple sources of evidence, with data needing to converge in a triangulating fashion" (Yin, 2009). Therefore, this research uses five sources of evidence that converge to address the research question. Data sources for the research will include a heuristic model from the large scale study, an interview of the coach who implemented this heuristic model using some assessments and a planned coachees' satisfaction survey. According to Zucker (2009), a case study uses scientific credentials as its evidence base for professional application. This research will investigate the adequacy of the coaching frameworks for academic Deans in depth in light of the scientific base of evidence of various learning theories and their applications in a real-life coaching case. I wanted to know the nature and level of complexity in the coaching of academic Deans through the coach who worked with the Deans and then consider the effectiveness of his coaching through the satisfaction survey. The feedback by coach and the findings that resulted in the learning informed coaching heuristic will be used as lenses to conduct the critical review of the two competency frameworks.

5.3.1 Ethical Considerations

Ethics are an integral part of a research project. The proposal and this project report are in complete compliance with the requirements of the Ethics Board of Professional Development Foundation (PDF) and those of Canterbury Christ Church University. I had submitted the proposal to the Ethical Panel for its approval. In this project, three aspects of ethical behaviour were given utmost importance. These are confidentiality, informed consent, and my prior relationship with the research participants. Each of the three aspects are discussed in detail below.

5.3.1.1 Confidentiality

It is important that the research participants who are the coach and the academic Deans in a local university (where I also work) feel comfortable and confident to share their personal meaning-making in their lived learning experiences. To hear the authentic voice of the coach, he was assured of confidentiality throughout the process that included the interviews and communications. The names, identity and transcripts of the coach were not shared with anyone at all. All electronic information was coded and secured in a password-protected file even after the conversion of audio files into MS Word documents through transcription. The recordings of the interviews shall remain secured for two years after the completion of the Ph.D. programme. Similarly, the academic Deans were sent the anonymous survey to measure their satisfaction with the coaching engagement. Their identity has not been shared with anyone. Their responses remain anonymous and confidential thereof.

5.3.1.2 Informed Consent

The informed consent in this study is relevant to the coach. After briefing him about the objectives of this research, I gave him the 'Consent to Participate in the Research Study Form' prior to the interview for review and signature. A copy of the above form is attached

as Appendix A. He has, as stated in this form, his right to refuse or withdraw from the study anytime without affecting the relationship. He also had the right to ask questions or refuse to answer any questions (s) should he so feels. The coach had volunteered to take part in the research study after completing and fully paid for his work. He was not compensated in any form, cash or kind for participating in this research.

5.3.1.3 Research Participants

Qualitative research involves a close relationship between participants and the researcher. Brinkmann and Kvale (2005) warn that false relationships for the motive of obtaining data can be softer and seductive forms of power through manipulated dialogue, and misusing empathy and intimacy. I knew the participants of this research project prior to conducting the interview or sending them the questionnaire. However, all the participants including Deans and the coach had no hesitation to share their views since there was a significant trust in my professional association with them.

5.3.2 Trustworthiness

There must be a mechanism by which the quality of research work could be evaluated. In empirical research, researchers establish reliability, validity and objectivity of the process and data (Patton, 2002). However, the same cannot be established in qualitative research. In view of the above, Lincoln and Guba (1985) introduced the term trustworthiness to judge the integrity of the qualitative inquiry. However, Smith and Heshusius (1986) criticised the criteria used by Lincoln and Guba (1985) by saying that it is not too different from quantitative research and fails to address the basic philosophical differences. Yardley (2000) came up with four principles for assessing the value of qualitative research. These principles include sensitivity to context, commitment and rigour, transparency and coherence, and the impact and importance of research. According to

Merriam (2009), the integrity of qualitative research is ensured through performing it in an ethical manner.

In this research project, first, I had familiarized myself with the related literature and coaching competency frameworks and other sources of evidence such as heuristic for coaching of academic Deans. The above guided me to frame the set of open-ended questions for the semi-structured interview with the coach. I had checked the accuracy of the transcriptions against the audio recording and then sent them back to participant for his verification. I maintained a diary for all activities and issues related to the research to ensure transparency. Finally, the study is very important and of practical value for the development of academic Deans and coach education. The recommendations of the study aim to make an impact on the design of the future leadership coaching programs for academic Deans in the university and transferable to other academic leaders in higher education.

The next section of the report presents the project activity and results including the procedures for data collection and outcomes of the interview and coachees' satisfaction survey.

5.4   Data Collection and Analysis

Data are the foundation of any research study (Yin, 2013). The purpose and the question of research guide data collection procedures (Maxwell, 2005). This section describes the case and then discusses the research participants, data collection and data analysis. I conducted the research at the same leading university in the Middle East as the previous projects. As mentioned in the previous section, this chapter of the overall project uses five different sources of evidence that converge to address the research question. These sources of evidence include the transcript of a semi-structured interview with the coach who worked with the academic Deans (coachees), a coachees' satisfaction survey and most importantly the insights from the large scale study. Another

key data is the competency frameworks themselves by ICF and EMCC, as described here.

5.4.1 The Case: The Coaching Competency Frameworks

This research investigates the leading coaching competency frameworks prescribed by ICF and EMCC for their adequacy of coaching academic Deans. I wanted to know the nature and level of complexity in the coaching of academic Deans through the coach who worked with the Deans and then consider the effectiveness of his coaching through the satisfaction survey. The feedback by the coach and the findings that resulted in the learning informed coaching heuristic will be used as lenses to conduct the critical review of the two competency frameworks.

There are several competency frameworks in the coaching world. Some are country-specific like the one by Coaches and Mentors of South Africa (COMENSA) or those by professional bodies focusing on corporate organizations such as the Association for Professional Executive Coaching & Supervision (APECS). In order to maintain focus and depth in the analysis in this small scale research, the two major and leading coach competency frameworks by ICF and EMCC are included in this study. The two professional bodies describe their competencies as follows:

5.4.2 The ICF Core Competency Model

According to an ICF (2020), after a rigorous job analysis process involving more than 1,300 coaches over 24 months, the federation has developed and validated a new core competency model that will replace the current one from 2021. *"While the empirical data we collected through the job analysis process validated that much of the original ICF Core Competency model remains relevant and reflected in current coaching practice, this new competency model offers a simpler, more streamlined structure and integrates consistent, clear language"* (ICF, 2020). According to the ICF, the 1300 coaches are all qualified and

represent styles and experience levels. It includes members and non-members from various disciplines and training backgrounds. Despite this, it still remains a practitioner informed framework and lacks research rigour as discussed earlier in chapter 2 that according to Griffith and Campbell (2008), a competency framework is not evidence-based if it is not empirically tested.

The core competency model issued by ICF in October 2019 has four domains and eight competencies (ICF, 2020). The four domains include foundation, co-creating the relations, communicate effectively, and cultivating learning and growth. The various competencies within these four domains are listed below. An expanded version of the ICF Core Competency model with all markers is attached as Appendix C.

A. **Foundation**
- Demonstrates ethical practice

- Embodies a coaching mindset

B. **Co-Creating the Relationship**
- Establishes and maintains agreements

- Cultivates trust and safety

- Maintains presence

C. **Communication Effectively**
- Listens actively

- Evokes awareness

D. **Cultivation Learning and Growth**
- Facilitates client growth

5.4.3 EMCC Competence Framework

The EMCC combines coaching and mentoring and has a separate competency framework for coach supervision (Fillery-Travis and Lane, 2006). The purpose of the EMCC coaching and mentoring competence framework is to evaluate the behaviours and categorise the levels of skill of a mentor or coach (EMCC, 2020). Unlike the ICF, which does attempt to justify the 'research-based' of their competency framework, the EMCC do not appear to explain or justify the evidence for their competency framework on their website. The EMCC 'competence framework' has eight mentoring/coaching competence categories as follows:

I.   **Understanding Self**
     Demonstrates awareness of own values, beliefs and behaviours; recognises how these affect their practice and uses this self-awareness to manage their effectiveness in meeting the clients, and where relevant, the sponsor's objectives

II. **Commitment to Self-Development**
     Explore and improve the standard of their practice and maintain the reputation of the profession

III. **Managing the Contract**
     Establishes and maintains the expectations and boundaries of the mentoring/coaching contract with the client and, where appropriate, with sponsors

IV. **Building the Relationship**
     Skillfully builds and maintains an effective relationship with the client, and where appropriate, with the sponsor

V.   **Enabling Insight and Learning**
     Works with the client and sponsor to bring about insight and learning

VI. Outcome and Action Orientation

Demonstrates approach and uses the skills in supporting the client to make desired changes

VII. Use of Models and Techniques

Applies models and tools, techniques and ideas beyond the core communication skills in order to bring about insight and learning

VIII. Evaluation

Gathers information on the effectiveness of own practice and contributes to establishing a culture of evaluation of outcomes

5.4.4 The Research Participants

I used a purposive sampling technique for this study to select the participants of this research. The logic of purposive sampling provided me relevant and rich information which is important in qualitative research (Patton, 2002). According to Obwuegbuzie and Leech (2007), the objective of purposive sampling is not to generalize but obtain insight into a phenomenon. Tongco (2007) also supports purposive sampling for the selection of participants and claims purposive sampling is a practical tool that can be as effective and efficient as random sampling. The participants of this study are the coach and the coachees who are academic/college Deans in the same university. Notably, the same Deans participated in the Applied Research Project where I conducted their semi-structured interviews to understand their lived learning experiences. The research participants, therefore, provide a strong link between the two studies and confirmation of some results from the large-scale study. The coach coached/mentored the same academic Deans thus providing relevant information from the same sample to confirm their lived learning experiences and preferences.

5.4.5 The Learning Informed Heuristic

Nadeem and Garvey (2020) offer a framework, as presented in Figure 5.3, as an alternative to the basic competency framework and acts more as a decision-making process to enable the coach to develop more of a dyadic dialogue (Stelter, 2019). This is more like a hybrid between mentoring and coaching or a 'repertoire' approach (Garvey et al. 2018).

According to Nadeem and Garvey (2020), the main elements of the heuristic framework include:

- Working from an understanding of what a Dean may feel they can influence and what they think they can directly control in their context.

- Being aware of and adjusting the coaching approach to suit the learning style of the Dean.

- Being aware that certain disciplines prefer the technical over the social and interpersonal.

- Being prepared to 'work in the moment' and adjust

- Being aware that coaching is primarily a dialectic process and that Deans may prefer the opportunity to visualize through diagrams, visualization techniques or practical examples.

- Being aware that the technical mindset may prefer the coach to use tools such as questionnaires, 360, numerical data and diagrams in order to provide 'objective data'.

- Being aware of the use of and the difference between specific goals and learning goals and enabling the Dean to develop strategic critical thinking.

- Helping to create a calm reflective space to enable the Dean to relax and reflect.
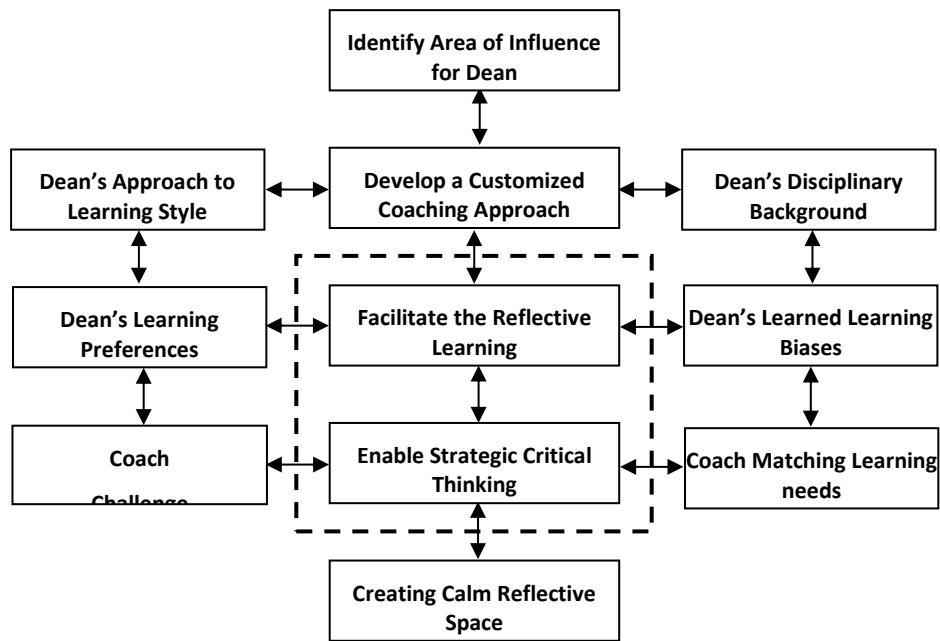
Figure 5.3: A learning informed heuristic

5.4.6 Interview of the Coach

Interviews are a widely used data collection method employed in qualitative research (Hays and Singh, 2012). Qu and Dumay (2011) emphasize that research interviews require skills such as planning, organizing, intensive listening and note taking. Therefore, I developed a set of questions (attached as appendix D) for the interviews. The main purpose of the interviews was to obtain insight into the learning experiences of academic Deans and the efficacy of the competency frameworks. According to Anfara et al. (2002), questions used in an interview provide the scaffolding for the research and become the basis of the analysis I did not share these questions with the coach in advance. As a matter of fact, I subtly used the questions to lead a conversation. My coaching skills helped me to create a trusted environment in which the coach felt comfortable to share his deeper experiences of coaching the Deans. It was a semi-structured in-person face-to-face interview with supplementary probing questions and prompts. I transcribed the recorded interview of 65 minutes verbatim to produce MS Word documents for analysis.

I transcribed the audio recordings of the interview and listened again to improve the accuracy of the transcript as well as to try to understand the responses of the participant. Then, I read the transcriptions three times to fully comprehend the content, language used (including the metaphors, symbols and repetitions) and the context. The output of this step is my exploratory notes and comments on the original transcript of the interviews. Table 5.1 demonstrates a sample of the above comments.

Table 5.1: An extract from interviews with researcher's comments.

Original transcript (partial)	Exploratory Comments
Researcher: What is the role of a college dean, in your views? *Coach: "In my view, I think it's a pretty complex role. Because in many ways there are expectations on a dean in terms of leadership and decision making and I think there is a challenge with being an academic dean in terms of the sheer numbers of people that you need to communicate with and relate to."*	- Dean's role is complex due to inherent conflicting demands and leadership.
Researcher: How much of their disciplinary backgrounds influences their learning? *Coach: "So a lot of them think in cause and effect terms. I think because the majority of them kind of scientific engineering disciplines."*	- Deans' learning is influenced by their respective disciplinary background.
Researcher: What are limitations of competency frameworks to coach Deans? *Coach: "And so I think that the educational development route does not ignore skills which are important, but it also brings in knowledge and theory and reading and rigor and the all-important critical reflection."*	- Coach education [not training] integrates theory and practice, supports reflective learning.

After preparing the exploratory notes, as the sample shown in Table 1, I worked to transform those comments and notes into emerging themes through abstraction. Major themes from the coach's interview are as follows:

- Dean's role is complex due to inherent conflicting demands and leadership

- Deans' personal and professional challenges include time management, lack of autonomy, high expectations and multi stakeholders' satisfaction

- Deans' enjoy teaching and research activities and supporting others' growth

- Deans' learning is influenced by their respective disciplinary background

- Deans' prefer to set learning goals rather than specific goals

- Deans' prefer critical thinking and reflective learning

- Deans' appreciate evidence based learning and decision-making

- Deans' deal with cultural issues such as 'power distance'

- Coaching frameworks limit a coach's ability to become coachee-centric

- Coach education [not training] integrates theory and practice, supports reflective learning

- Understanding of coachee's context is critical for the effectiveness of coaching

- Trust is built through competence and empathy. Understanding of coachee's learning preferences and biases improves coachee's perception of the competence of the coach.

- Coaches who are trained on a specific framework/model find it hard to hold broader and reflective conversations centered on the learning needs of the coachee.

5.4.7 Coachees' Satisfaction Survey

At the conclusion of the coaching engagement, a survey was conducted to measure the satisfaction level of the coachees. The sample size of the survey was 5 coachees who are Deans at the university. The survey was completely anonymous and the questionnaire (attached as Appendix E) was sent through Google Docs to all participants with no identification of the respondents. The survey had ten questions and multiple free text boxes to choose from. However, an additional question was added to solicit comments. As shown in Figure 5.4, 80% (4 out of 5) of the participants said that coaching sessions were important for them whereas 20% (1 out of 5) said that coaching was very important for them.
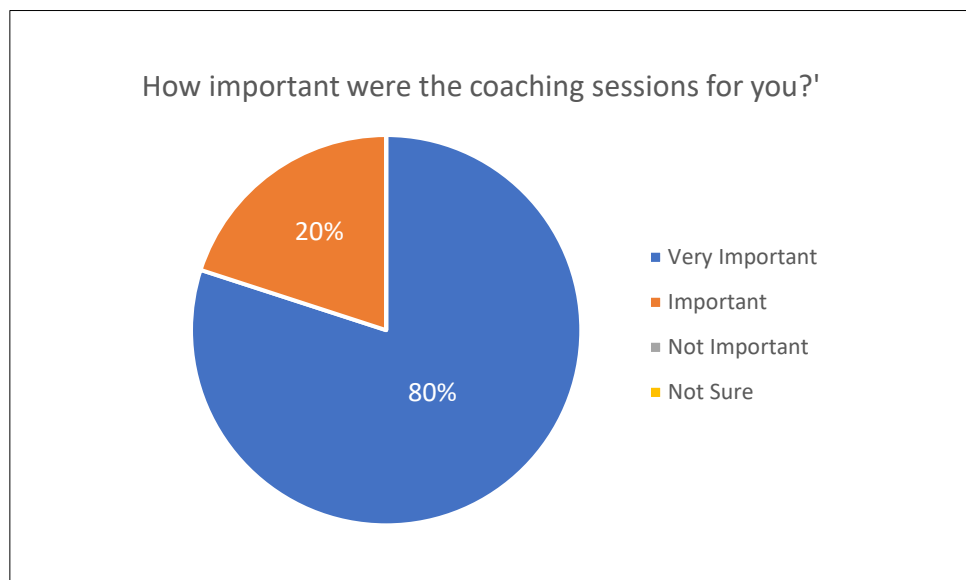
Figure 5.4: The Importance of coaching sessions

However, when asked that how useful was the coaching for you, only 20% (1 out of 5) said very useful and 60% (3 out of 5) found it useful for them. Another 20% (1 out of 5) were sure about the usefulness of the coaching as shown in Figure 5.5.
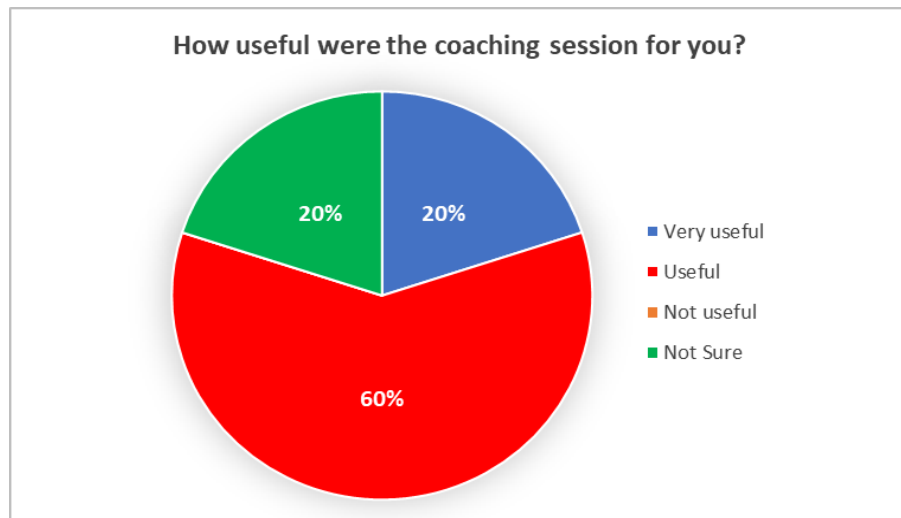
Figure 5.5: The usefulness of coaching sessions

Coaching relationship sets core condition for coaching. As shown in Figure 5.6, all coachees found it very easy or easy with time to establish a relationship of trust with the coach.
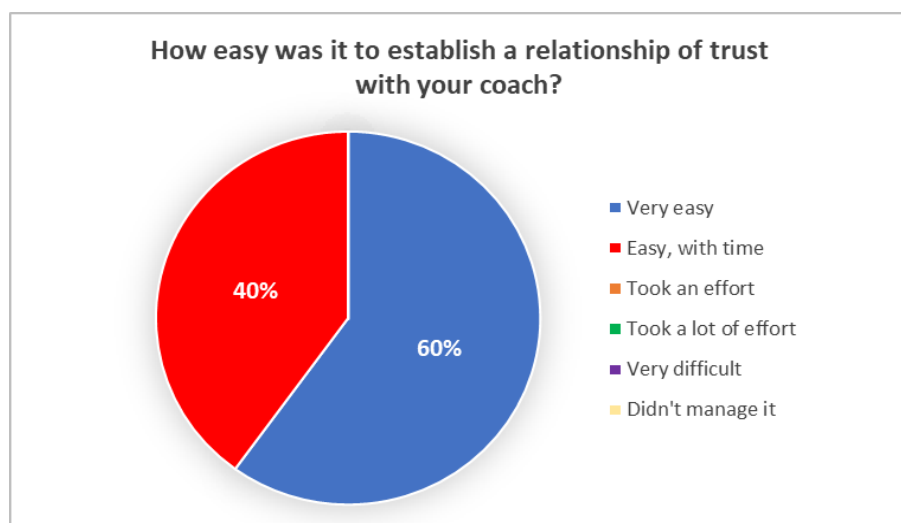
Figure 5.6: The coaching relationship

Figure 5.7 lists various possible problems that a coachee may encounter in coaching engagement. However, other than time pressure and achieving focus for the relationship, the coachees did not encounter any problems.
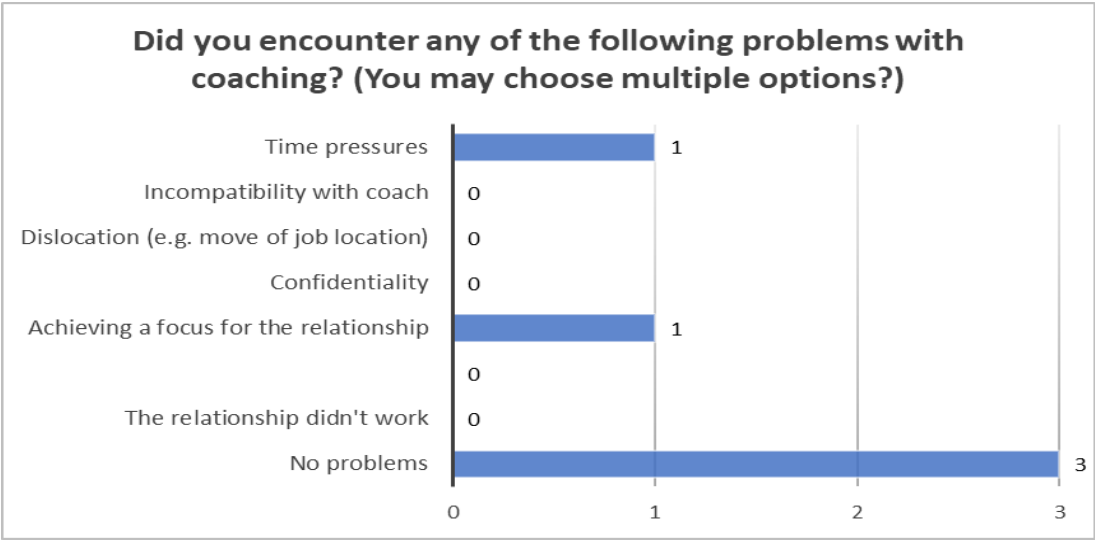
Figure 5.7: The problems in coaching

When it comes to the main benefits of coaching process, the coachees chose new learning, strategic thinking and improved decision making over other listed benefits. As shown in Figure 5.8, all coaches said the coaching helped them in improving their ability of decision making in their roles.
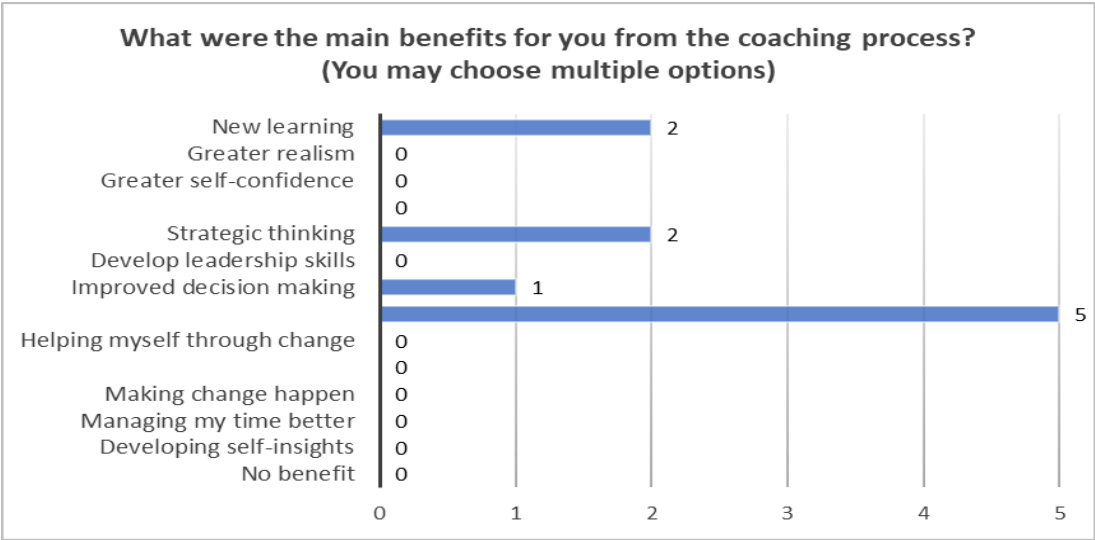
Figure 5.8: The benefits of coaching

Figure 5.9 lists several measures of coaching success the participants were asked to choose from. Most participants selected improved performance, and new ideas as measures of success for coaching for them. It shows that academic leaders value coaching as a source of new insights and better performance at the workplace.
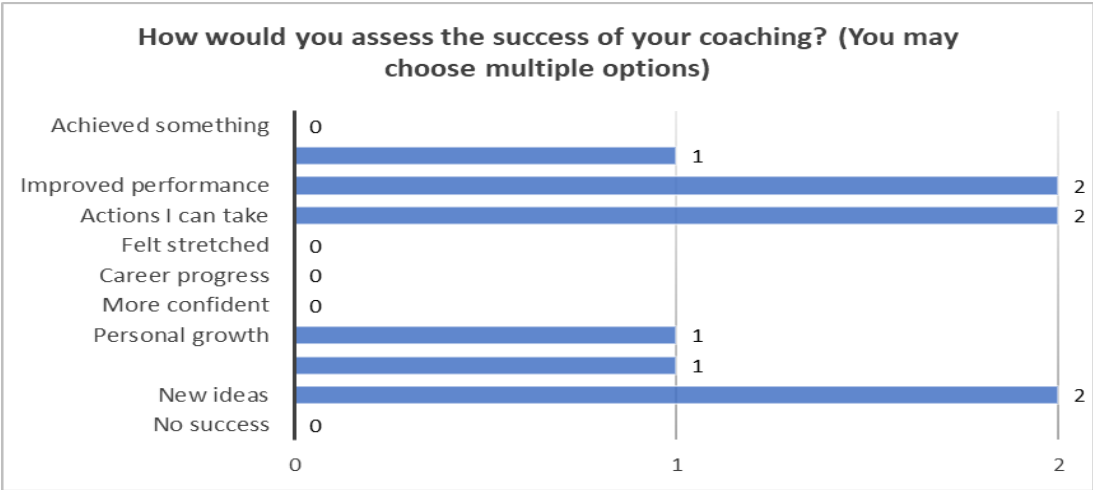
Figure 5.9: The measures of success in coaching

As shown in Figure 5.10, 60% (3 out of 5) of the participants agreed that coaching helps in generating new learning insights which confirms that coaching is a learning experience for the coachees.
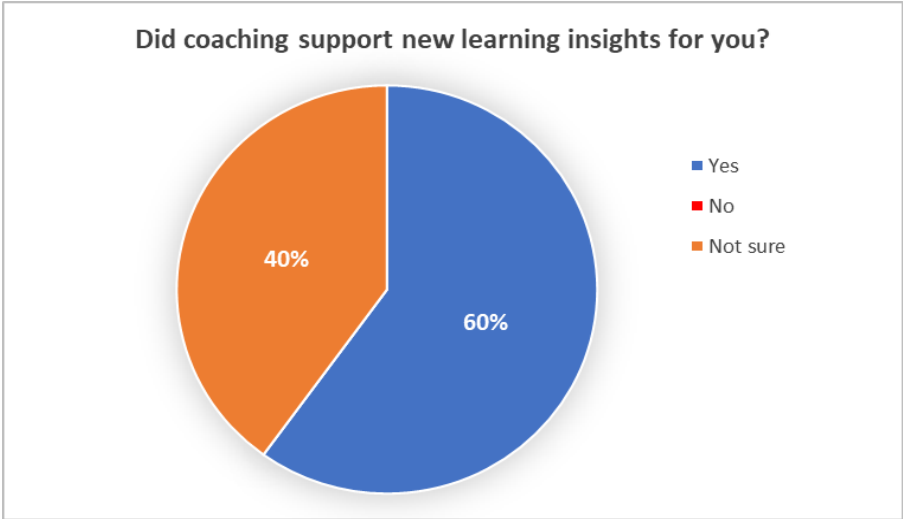
Figure 5.10: Coaching as a sources of new learning

An overwhelming 80% (4 out of 5)of the coachees rated between 8 and 10 when asked to rate their coaching experience on a scale 1-10, where 10 is excellent coaching experience, as shown in Figure 5.11.
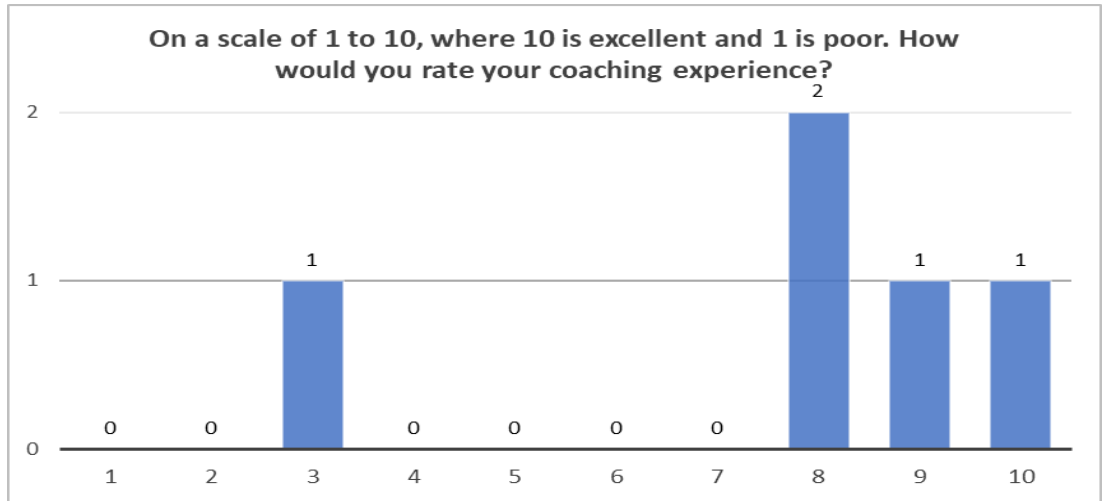
Figure 5.11: The evaluation of coaching experience

Most of the participants (3 out of 5) preferred face-to-face as a method coaching whereas others prefer a hybrid approach. This was expected in the Saudi culture where most leaders like to meet in person. However, it is likely to change as the virtual meetings become more pervasive in organizations.
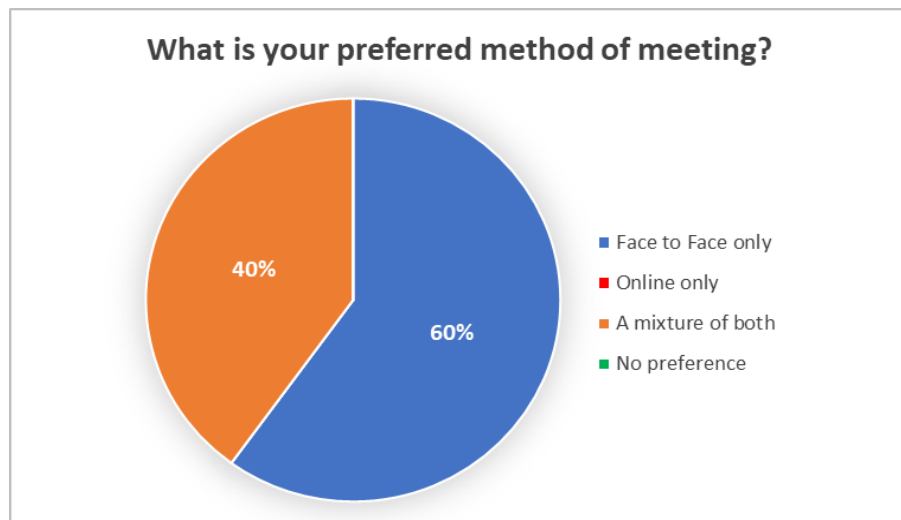
Figure 5.12: The preferred modes of coaching

As shown in Figure 5.13, 80% (4 out of 5) said that they would like to participate in a coaching program again which is a strong indication that they value coaching as a leadership development method.
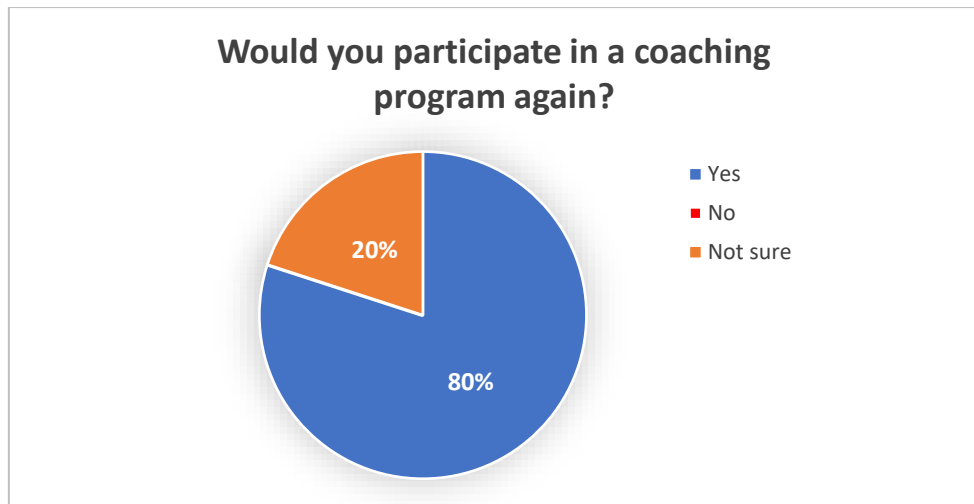
Figure 5.13: The willingness of returning to coaching

The results of the survey indicate that most of the coachees who are academic leaders did benefit from the coaching program and would like to return to coaching if given an opportunity. They prefer to meet in person though some are open to mixed method of meetings such as face-to-face and online virtual meetings. The coachees found the coaching effective in generating new ideas and improving their performance as leaders who are playing complex roles in a university.

5.4.8 Identification of Themes

At this stage of data analysis, I used commonalities and connections between emerging themes to group them based on their similarities. It involves clustering of emerging (subordinate) themes into super-ordinate themes as shown in Table 5.2. I found some of the themes random and irrelevant and dropped during the clustering process.

Table 5.2: Clustering of themes

Superordinate themes	Subordinate themes
Evidence-based coaching frameworks are more effective for Deans.	- Deans prefer evidence based decision-making - Knowledge leads to reflective learning - Combination of knowledge and skills is more effective. - The frameworks lack a strong basis of theoretical foundation - Academic Deans appreciate scientific knowledge based coaching
Context and conditions play a pivotal role in the coaching of Deans.	- Context play agentic role - Organizational systems impact their emotions and health - Cultural nuances influence the learning and coaching outcomes - Deans learn more and quickly when relaxed - The frameworks are not flexible to specific contexts and conditions
Coaching process for Deans is complex.	- Deans' role is complex - Deals with conflicts due to demands and values - High expectations for quality and performance - Unstructured and ambiguous situations - The frameworks are too simple to address the complexities of a coaching process
Deans appreciate coachee-centered approach.	- Learning is influenced by the individual disciplinary backgrounds of coachees - Coachees have learning biases - Coachees may prefer a directive approach for solving problems - The frameworks may limit a coach to accommodate the individual needs of coachees

The next section of this report presents a discussion and interpretation of the superordinate themes. During this discussion, the coaching competency frameworks will be contested in view of the literature and data collection mainly the interview of the coach who worked the academic Deans. It also offers a critical review of the competency based coach training for the Deans.

5.5 Findings and Discussion

Organizations, including universities, engage coaches for leadership development and supporting executives to resolve their personal and professional issues. The professional services offered by coaches go through strict scrutiny and matching of coaches who are assigned to the leaders. In most organizations, the criteria used to assess the coach's suitability for the job include his/her credentials and coaching experience. While the coach's experience may be measured through the numbers of coaching hours, the credentialing is left to professional bodies such as ICF and EMCC. These professional bodies have prescribed competency levels for junior, middle and senior levels of coaches depending upon their proficiency to demonstrate the skills and required hours of paid as well as pro bono coaching. Such credentialing standards do not require any minimum education of a coach. As long as you can demonstrate the prescribed level of pre-defined competencies through a series of questions, you are a qualified coach. There is an abundance of coach training programmes available and these tend to focus on skills development using competency frameworks. Such a competency-based approach of training and assessing professional coaches is an oversimplification (Garvey et al. 2018; Bachkirova and Smith, 2015) of the complex process of coaching and therefore deserves a discussion on those themes one by one with inputs from various sources of evidence including the literature, the initial research, the interview with the coach, the competency frameworks and the coachees' satisfaction survey.

5.5.1 Are competency frameworks evidence-based?

According to Bachkirova and Smith (2015), the issue of accrediting and assessing professional coaches is widening the divide between academia and professional bodies. Academia argues for theory to inform practice whereas professional bodies are solely relying on the opinion of coaches to define coaching and its competencies. According to Griffiths and Campbell (2008), most existing coaching competency frameworks are not evidence-

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based because they are not empirically tested and they argue that competencies do not reflect the coaching process. Coaches' understanding and ability to make the links between the tools and techniques they use and the underpinning theoretical basis would help to bridge this gap but this ability is not listed in the ICF and EMCC competency frameworks

ICF claims that its new core competency model issued in October 2019 is evidence-based and a 'Gold Standard' because its development involved a large number of qualified coaches.

By the ICF's own figures taken from their 2016 Global Survey 2016 (coachfederation.org) there are an estimated 53,300 coaches worldwide and the 1,300 sample represents 2.4% of this population. The business social media site, LinkedIn has 586,292 people listed as coaches on their site and 1300 represents 0.22% of this population. Further, I don't know the precise demographic make-up of the 1,300 and although it is hinted at but I don't know anything about the contexts and purposes of their coaching. Further, I have no information on how the job analysis was defined to take into account these different variables.

Using a 'job analysis', which seeks to understand the functional skills of a coach does not explore the different contexts and purposes of where coaching takes place. A 'behavioural analysis', which explores coach behaviour in various settings would take into account the context. Therefore, and defining 'best' or a 'Gold Standard' does not take into account that what is 'best in one situation may not be 'best' in another. Therefore, it implies a 'universal' model. The ICF also claims that the competency framework is 'validated' but not on what basis.

The last update of EMCC Competence Framework V2 was released in September 2015. Like the ICF, the EMCC relies on coaches and mentors to define their respective set of competence categories. There is a lack of clarity in the definition of competencies as the overall framework is a mix of

skills, tasks, behaviours, and commitments. Again there are questions about the sample, for example, are these coaches and mentors EMCC members? If they are, there may be a vested interest in supporting competencies because their membership depends upon it!

I am left with three other questions:

1) What is meant by Competencies, which include a mix of skills, commitments behaviours, and tasks?

2) Does a 'simpler' structure result in a 'one size fits all' approach that does not adequately reflect the different purposes, types and contexts of coaching?

3) How are the various professional backgrounds of coaches taken into account in such an approach?

I cannot find complete answers to these questions currently.

Defining the competencies in this way places less emphasis on coaching as a process and more on coaching as a set of skills and techniques (Aristotle's techne and episteme). Griffiths and Campbell (2008) conclude that *"…coaching process, rather than coach competency, more adequately defines coaching"*. Therefore, reducing coaching to a few competencies may not help achieve the desired results.

Stober et al (2006) and Grant (2016), while recognizing the expertise of a practitioner, argue that evidence-based practice integrates scientific knowledge, practitioner's expertise and coachee's context. Competencies alone are like focusing on Aristotle's techne while 'nodding at' episteme and ignoring phronesis altogether. It is the practical wisdom accessed through reflective analysis of the coachee's values and personal interests that leads to impactful coaching (Flyvberg, 2001). Therefore, a scientist-practitioner coaching model may provide the much-desired practical wisdom for

coaches. The ICF claims that their frameworks are evidence-based and yet this claim lacks the necessary detail that such a claim requires.

5.5.2 Do competency frameworks consider context and conditions?

The context of coaching is multifaceted and it is made up of an array of variables (Hofstede, 2003) and requires a systemic approach to coaching (Whittington, 2020). In addition to the context, some conditions, created in the coaching room itself, such as calmness, stress level and being relaxed also matter.

Both the ICF and EMCC appear to be silent on the array of variables within any context. However, the ICF competency 4.1 (Cultivate Trust and Safety) sets a marker for coaches to demonstrate as follows:

"seeks to understand the client within their context which may include their identity, environment, experiences, values and beliefs" (ICF, 2020). The context is clearly important and this includes the coach's ability to work systemically (Whittington, 2020) in helping the coachee make the links between the issues they are facing and the links with what is occurring in the wider network of relationships of which they are part. Moreover, the ICF competencies 7.1 and 7.7 also require coaches to consider the client's experience and adjust the coaching approach in response to the client's needs. The ICF also doesn't say how this should be done and what knowledge or education a coach requires to be able to understand the client's context!

On the other hand, the EMCC requires coaches to understand their own values and beliefs and how these impact their own practice (EMCC, 2020).

Contrary to Stober et al (2006) and Stokes et al (2020), who argue that context is an essential element in evidence-based practice, neither the ICF nor EMCC give context its due place in their frameworks. A deeper

understanding of the various contexts of practice requires scientific knowledge which can't be acquired merely by learning the competency models and frameworks.

Context is influenced by the culture and subcultures (Cox, 2013). The organizational culture sets the context in which the HE leaders operate. For instance, in the case of the Deans, the coachee satisfaction survey indicates that Deans who received coaching preferred face-to-face in-person coaching sessions, as indicated in Figure 5.12. The coach noticed various national or organizational cultural influences on the coachees. For example, power distance (Hofstede, 2003) was highly visible, as the coach noted:

"But there are cultural nuances which influence them and one of them I think deals with what could be referred to as power distance. There seems to be quite a power distance between people of positional power here and I think that in itself creates a deference to power and I think that's cultural."

Stokes et al. (2020) suggest that context determines which coaching or mentoring orientation should be used in a session. In some contexts, for example, a performance-oriented setting, coaching is more suitable if a coachee is also performance-driven and goal-oriented. However, coaching may not be effective if the coachee is using the opportunity for long-term learning and growth. Here, a different type of conversation may be necessary and the relationship between the helper and the helped changes to embrace Stelter's (2019) concept of a 'facilitator of dialogue'. This is where Seijts et al's. (2004) concept of 'learning goals' rather than specific performance goals (see also, Nadeem and Garvey, 2020) come into play.

Further, the coach highlighted the conditions in which the Deans seem more creative and engaged. The coach consistently observed that Deans think clearly when they are relaxed and calm or not in a hurry.

"I think when they are relaxed they are more open and receptive, they talk more freely, and they engaged in the process better. And sometimes, as I said, some of them take a while to get relaxed and they need to just get all this stuff out of their heads and some of it is just a kind of pouring of stuff and they leap from one thing to the another."

Nadeem and Garvey (2020) support the above observation by the coach. There is no evidence that both the ICF or the EMCC competencies consider such conditions to stimulate critical thinking and learning for the Deans.

As an alternative, the coach acknowledges the importance of coaching skills but in explaining the difference between coaching education and coach training stated:

"And so I think that the educational development route does not ignore skills which are important, but it also brings in knowledge and theory, and reading and rigor, and the all-important critical reflection"

The coach here is suggesting that training programmes using competency frameworks are not enough and an educational perspective is needed to help coaches develop their repertoire (Garvey et al. 2018).

5.5.3 Can competency frameworks address complexity?

There are several sources of complexity for Deans which stem from the organizational culture and conflicting demands and expectations. The Coach expressed this as follows:

"In my view, I think it's a pretty complex role because in many ways there are expectations on a Dean in terms of leadership and decision making and I think there is a challenge with being an academic Dean in terms of the sheer numbers of people that you need to communicate with and relate to. So, there's an issue about reporting

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to people who are higher up in the hierarchy and trying to work with their expectations and their demands they put on you [the Dean] to do with the overall strategy in the university."

Deans interact with various internal and external stakeholders such as faculty, students, senior management, donors, and industry partners. From the coach's interview:

"It's also about understanding the organizational politics in the university and I think each university I ever worked with has its own set of politics. And that's complex. Who knows who and who's powerful whether or not they have the position. Who people take notice of, who's allowed to make jokes and who isn't…."

This type of complexity necessitates a deeper understanding of the context and ability for a coach to quickly adapt to coachees' needs. However, as competency frameworks are based on predictable outcomes (Barnett, 1994) and thus reduce complexity to merely a task (Bachkirova and Smith, 2015), a coach working in such an environment may need to take on the role of a mentor at times.

Interestingly, the EMCC does not distinguish between coaching and mentoring. However, neither the ICF nor the EMCC frameworks address the complexity that may form learning biases or varied disciplinary backgrounds of Deans or indeed, any coachees.

The ICF competencies related to 'Listens Actively' do require coaches to consider the clients' environment to enhance communication. Similarly, the ICF competencies related to 'Evokes Awareness' demands coaches to demonstrate an ability to explore beyond current thinking and adjust the coaching approach (ICF, 2020). As per the latest Competence Framework of the EMCC, competence category 5 and category 7 focus on 'enabling insight and learning' and 'use of models and techniques. For example, at the master

practitioner level, a coach/mentor should be able to support clients effectively with their increasingly complex needs (EMCC, 2020). However, such statements simplify a complex activity and fail to offer further insights into how it may be evolved.

Nadeem and Garvey (2020) argue that Deans have a complex 'in-between' role that can create significant leadership and personal challenges. While coaching offers an opportunity to support Deans to navigate through this complexity, a competent coach cannot be enough. A more flexible and adaptive coach is needed with a repertoire (Garvey, et al. 2018) of skills, processes, and phronesis.

The coach agrees with the above and asserts that a specific model of coaching is likely to limit a coach and may not be sufficient for Deans. As the coach said:

> *"The whole spectrum of things that you might encounter with the coachee may not be addressed if you only have one methodology."*

The coachees' satisfaction survey supports this view and most coachees agreed that the coaching helped them deal with the complexities of significant personal and professional change, as indicated by Figures 5.8 and 5.10.

5.5.4   Are competency frameworks coachee-centred?

Most of the coaching research focuses on the coaches (Stokes, 2015; Griffith and Campbell, 2008). There is very little work done to understand the coachee's structure of interpretations (Flaherty, 1999).

In the coach interview, the coach said that each of his coachees' had quite different learning needs in that they were not only biased by their own learnings from the past but also driven by their disciplinary backgrounds. Nadeem and Garvey (2020) agree with the observations of the coach and

thus recommended a coachee-centred approach that is flexible to accommodate the individual learning needs of a Dean.

The ICF coach competencies rely on trust and safety, and listening actively to understand a client better which is quite limiting. The coach felt that he had to depend on his deeper knowledge of learning theories and knowledge of coaching repertoires to understand his coachees.

> *" I mean, you have to develop that wide knowledge of repertoire first before you can strip it back."*

The above observations by the coach and the literature are consistent with the outcomes of the coachees' satisfaction survey. The survey clearly shows that, though all Deans are satisfied with the results of the coaching engagement, they defined their respective successes quite differently. It is interesting to note that the above successes were not defined in advance as required in competency frameworks but rather emerged during the process over time.

The coach's interview highlighted that the Deans in this study preferred evidence-based decision-making. Given this preference, a learning challenge or goal for them might be to learn to deal with situations where there is no clear evidence base, an emerging evidence base or dealing with relational issues or situations of high uncertainty or unpredictability.

The coach said:

> *"they will often want evidence; they will often want theory behind it in order to see the reasonable thing to do. I have also found that this might relate to decision making as much as anything, some of them like to have tools providing them with some kind of questionnaire that generates a sort of data"*

As found by Nadeem and Garvey (2020), Deans in this study, appreciate scientific knowledge due to their learning biases and disciplinary

backgrounds. The coach supports the notion that knowledge leads to reflective learning.

The coachee's satisfaction survey (Figure 5.8) showed that Deans appreciated the strategic and critical thinking developed in their coaching as a process of new learning for them. The new learning is also related to trust-building because the more they learn, the more they trusted the coach.

The EMCC has a competence category 'enabling insight and learning' that requires coaches/mentors (who are at master practitioner level) to adapt their approach in the moment while keeping the focus on outcomes. However, these competencies do not require that a coach needs to have scientific knowledge including that of learning theories that underpin the learning processes of coachees.

While the ICF competencies underscore the value of partnering with clients to create a safe and supportive environment that cultivates trust and safety and another ICF competency emphasizes 'evoking awareness' and learning by using tools and techniques (which Linley, 2006 reminds us are a poor third place), the level of coachee-centeredness required to achieve the understanding and flexibility to adapt by the coach is beyond tools and techniques. It is an example of phronesis in action. Learning is a non-linear process (Garvey, 2011 and Ferrar, 2004) and a coach needs to honour the coachee's learning journey. The ICF and EMCC have little to say on this issue.

Griffiths and Campbell, (2008) assert that coaching is a process rather than a set of competencies. A coach should therefore follow a process that is valuable to his/her coachees rather than the demonstration of competencies. Such a process involves critical reflection and a coachee-centred approach. Coachees gradually develop their own learning muscles and intrinsic ability to hold themselves accountable for their outcomes and values. It is in this spirit that Hawkins (2008) terms the accreditation standards as formulaic and self-serving to members of their professional

body instead of coachees. It is also of importance to note that the purpose of coaching is understood. Linley (2006) underscores the critical role of the coach-coachee relationship as a predictor of outcomes which is emphasized by both the ICF and EMCC competency frameworks. However, because coaching is an idiosyncratic intervention (Grant, 2016), each coachee may have his/her own evolutionary process of building the relationship that is conducive to a successful engagement and a competency framework may not allow for this individualism.

In essence, it is argued here that every coachee is unique and a coach should therefore be able to understand their uniqueness by developing a coachee-centred approach that is flexible and adaptable.

5.6   Conclusions

This chapter provides evidence that the ICF's and the EMCC's competence frameworks are not evidence-based in the empirical sense. They are legitimized by practitioners. It also presents evidence and arguments to suggest that these frameworks do not take sufficient account of the contexts in which the coaching is happening and that the coaches' educational background or experience is not considered.

There is also some evidence and arguments that coaching 'in between' middle leaders is indeed a complex task and that competence framework, in essence, attempts to reduce the complexity (Bachkirova and Lawton Smith (2015). This study also finds that competencies tend to create a coach-centric framework for working rather than a coachee-centric approach which focuses on the coachee's learning needs and styles. According to the competency-based approaches, a coach is the one who can demonstrate the prescribed set of competencies in a coaching session regardless of who the coachee is. This approach is challenged by academics (Garvey et al. 2018; Bachkirova and Lawton Smith, 2015) who term it an oversimplification of a complex process of learning and human change in an idiosyncratic relationship. This case study on

professional practice is congruent with the findings of many researchers that indicates that evidence-based practice that integrates scientific knowledge with the expertise of practitioners is a way forward for coaching (Stober et al. 2006; Grant, 2016), especially at the executive level with people such as Deans. Whilst this study focused on academic Deans, its findings may be relevant in other complex settings where the coaching needs to move away from a performative approach to a coachee-centred learning and development approach.

In view of the above, the chapter concludes that a competent or skilled coach may not be enough to generate inspired insights for the complex task of coaching Deans. A deeper understanding of the purpose, relevant learning theories and context are other sufficient conditions for effective coaching engagements.

In essence, I argue that every coachee is unique and a coach should either be able to understand their uniqueness by developing a coachee-centered repertoire that is flexible and adaptable or, not attempts to work with people in complex situations with a simplistic competence-based model.

The study, presented in this chapter, has some limitations. It has been conducted in a single university with a single coach and five Deans. The coachees' satisfaction survey is limited to the five Deans only due to fact that there are only five Deans who qualified for the survey. This sample is based on and consistent with the sample size of ARP. The Deans who were interviewed for their learning experiences received the coaching and thus became participants of the coachees' satisfaction survey. Therefore, the findings may not be generalized to other leaders and industries, they may, however, be employed as a basis for further study and therefore they become transferable to other contexts.

This study does go some way to address the question:

Do existing coaching competency frameworks adequately address the complex task of coaching? I argue that, overall, they do not, however, it must also be acknowledged that some progress has been made with the competency frameworks of, particularly the ICF in recent times.

5.7   Implications for Practice

This research has identified limitations of the competency-based frameworks for the development of professional coaches as well as coaching managers with significant complexity in their jobs such as academic Deans. There is a need for revisiting the competencies-based models and considering knowledge based coaching models. Knowledge based models are expected to have a balanced approach by giving due weight to both the science and art of the coaching practice.

5.8   Implications for Research

More research is needed to promote coaching as a process rather than a set of competencies so that it could address the inherent complexities found within the various purposes and contexts of coaching. Learning and complexity theories may provide a solid foundation to further explore the balance between knowledge, skills and practice for the development of coaches who are well prepared through an education rather than training process to address the complexities of the coaching process.

My journey towards Ph.D. so far has been very rich in learning the new knowledge and its implications on the coaching practice. The next chapter presents a comprehensive reflective account of my own lived experience of conducting the entire portfolio including the literature review and the three major projects.

Chapter 6

REFLECTIVE ACCOUNT

6.1   Introduction

This chapter presents the reflective account of my research work and the journey towards completion of my Ph.D. The Ph.D. is a portfolio based programme that aims to study how the academic leaders specifically the deans in the university learn and what are the possible implications for their leadership coaching. The research portfolio comprises five elements as listed the Table 6.1.

Before embarking on this reflective account, I considered several reflective processes including Gibbs Reflective Cycle (Gibbs, 1988) and Johns Model of Structured Reflection (Johns, 1995). However, I adopted Kolb's experiential learning cycle (Kolb, 1984) due to its relevance and my previous learning during the literature review. As shown in Figure 6.1, Kolb's cycle has four stages: concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualization and active experimentation. By following the Kolb's cycle, I have described what I have actually done in all elements of the portfolio in the concrete stage and then offered my reflective observations in the next stage.
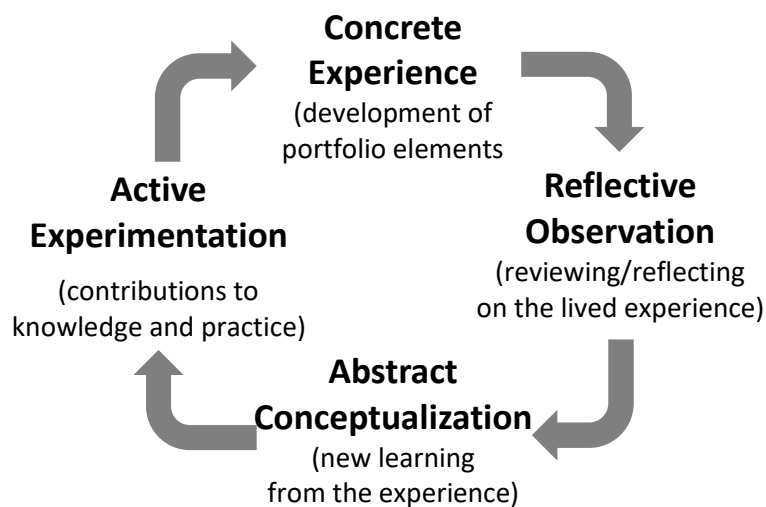
Figure 6.1: Adaptation of the Kolb's Learning Cycle for Reflective Account

In the reflective observation stage, I have presented my lived experiences of conducting this research. As a researcher, I have shaped the process and the process has shaped me. The next two stages describe the new learning from the research and contributions to the current body of related knowledge (literature) and its possible implications for the practice of coaching the academic Deans. It also chronicles my own experience that of people who inspired my work, such as my research supervisors, fellow Ph.D. students, and support staff.

Table 6.1: Elements of Portfolio Research

#	Element of Portfolio	Purpose of the Research/Element
1	Literature Review	To search and conduct a critical review of the literature related to the role of academic deans, learning theories and coaching processes. It helped me understand the topics and identify a justified scope for the research.
2	Small Scale Research Project	To understand the lived experiences of the coaches who have completed the leadership development coaching engagement for 11 professional managers (coachees) at a leading university in Saudi Arabia.
3	Applied Research Project	To explore the learning experiences of Academic Deans and how these learning experiences may inform a coaching framework in the form of a heuristic.
4	Report on Professional Practice	To explore the adequacy of the existing coaching EMCC and ICF competency frameworks to address the complex task of coaching Academic Deans.
5	Reflective Account	To reflect on the experience of conducting the research and document the key learnings at both professional and personal levels.

Each of the above elements of the portfolio is unique as well as complementary to other(s) because it contributed in terms of learning and/or posing a new

research question. For example, the literature review contributed to learning about coaching and Deans as well as it helped to identify the scope of research. Similarly, Applied Research Project led to a new question of research for the Report on Professional Practice. Small Scale Research Project turned out to be a huge source of learning on how to conduct academic research, especially the research method as well as it gave me insights into coaching for the development of middle leaders in the university. The Next four sections present the reflective account of each stage in more detail.

6.2 Development of Portfolio Elements - Concrete Experience

I worked on the first four elements of my Ph.D. portfolio in a sequence through the literature review was updated regularly. The Reflective Account is the fifth element in itself. My concrete experience of the development of the first four elements is described here.

6.2.1 Critical Review of Literature

Following the formal approval of my application for Ph.D. at the university, I held several meetings with my supervisors to define the research topic that I wanted to focus on. Although I had some ideas from my initial proposal for admission, however it wasn't very clear to me what I really wanted to research. It was clear that I wanted to research leadership coaching and preferably for academic leaders. So my first challenge was to understand academic leaders. I started research in all libraries that I had access to including Google search or other information sources and some social media sites. The two libraries I benefitted from the most are the Canterbury Christ Church (CCCU) library and the library of a local university in Saudi Arabia. I attended several lectures on how to conduct research and various research methods. On one hand, I was learning some advanced methods of library database searches and on the other how to conduct the research itself. Meanwhile, I also started outlining my research questions. During this process, at some early stage, I strongly felt that I am not compatible with

my first supervisor who was assigned to me. So I raised this issue at the appropriate forum who then connected me with another supervisor with whom I worked for the rest of my time.

After some extensive research and discussions with my supervisors and a few external academic researchers, I concluded that deans of colleges or faculties are leaders who are living with their academic leadership challenges. Therefore, I started my focus on researching more about deans. At this stage, it was clear that my literature review would focus on the following two main questions:

- What are the learning experiences of academic deans that contribute to their role?
- How may the learning experiences of academic deans inform the design of a leadership coaching framework?

In order to know how the Deans learn, I had to study learning theories. I searched and studied a large number of learning theories and started preparing my notes as presented in Appendix A. In this literature review, these learning theories are grouped into four domains: adult learning, transformative learning, intercultural learning and social learning. I was getting clear that these theories may help me understand some of the learning patterns in academic deans. It also became obvious that there is a lack of research on the role of academic or college deans. And, there is almost no research conducted to understand how academic deans learn and then how to use the outcomes of such research in developing a framework or learning-informed heuristic for coaching academic deans. In view of the above, this research is going to address the big gap in the literature on the learning of academic deans who are at the center of academic decision-making in the institutions of higher education.

6.2.2 Small Scale Research Project

The second element of my Ph.D. research portfolio is Small Scale Research Project (SSRP). Although it is small in size, SSRP has all components of a research project. It turned out to be a great source of learning prior to embarking on the main applied research project. I started the SSRP with a formal proposal that included ethical consideration and informed consent by the two research participants. This small scale service research project studies the lived experiences of two executive leadership coaches who coached 11 professional managers to increase their leadership capacity in a Middle Eastern university. During the study, I examined the literature that addresses organizational leadership coaching in a university context. The qualitative research methodology used an interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) approach to gather and analyze data from the interviews of the two coaches that resulted in five emergent themes: commitment to evolve and grow, the role of goal-setting in coaching, impact of self-efficacy on goal attainment, 3-way meetings for accountability and support, and coaching for the development of organizational leadership. The research participants agreed that coaching is not for everyone but a selected few who are committed and ready to evolve and grow in their leadership roles. It was argued that organizational commitment for coaching is also critical for its success. It was found that goal setting plays a vital role in the effectiveness of the coaching process. The two coaches concurred that self-efficacy and self-determination of 172oaches significantly influence the goal attainment in coaching engagements. The research offers some insights for the managers of coaching engagements and the coaches in the university. Managers and coaches may like to support administrative leaders by focusing on their commitment and accountability for them to become more effective leaders. These results, however, cannot be generalized to other universities or leaders. The project helped me learn about the research method and its utilization to collect and analyze the data for qualitative research. I also learned how to discuss the findings in an academic style.

Overall, it prepared me to take on my main research project that followed immediately afterward.

6.2.3 Applied Research Project

This is the most important and largest element of the portfolio. It also integrates the first element (literature review) into this project. In this applied research project, I studied the lived experiences of academic Deans in a leading Middle Eastern university. Based on the literature review and in keeping with the purpose of the research, the following three questions guided the study:

- What are the learning experiences of academic Deans that contribute to their role?
- What are the learning opportunities for Deans that may be addressed through coaching?
- How may the learning experiences of academic Deans inform the design of a leadership coaching framework?

This study is directly related to the important issue of leadership development of academic Deans in universities. It presents a review of the literature related to the role of academic Deans, relevant learning theories and coaching frameworks and models. It covers the Deans' role, competencies and explores how Deans learn in the context of their role. The study employs a qualitative research method: Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) to understand the lived learning experiences of five academic Deans. Open-ended interviews were recorded and analyzed. Five super-ordinate, to some extent overlapping, themes emerged from the analysis of the interview transcripts. These themes are:

- Theme 1: Role of the Deans is to attract and retain faculty
- Theme 2: Disciplinary background influences learning of Deans
- Theme 3: Deans learn by observing behaviours and interactions

- Theme 4: Deans are reflective learners
- Theme 5: Deans think clearly when relaxed

By understanding the role, context and experiences of Deans, through the lens of classic learning theories, a heuristic is described that is particularly relevant to academic Deans. Despite this, it may also have transferrable elements to other middle-level academic leader contexts.

The study involved several discussions with my supervisory team. Most of these discussions were around research questions, research method, data collection and findings. More discussions followed after the supervisors reviewed the first draft of the Applied Research Report.

6.2.4 Report on Professional Practice

The Report on Professional Practice (RPP) is yet another essential component of my portfolio-based Ph.D. in Professional Practice: Psychological Perspectives Programme. It directly links the findings of my large-scale research that explored the learning experiences of Academic Deans and reflections of a leadership coach who coached these Deans over several months. Based on the above research and pertinent literature, it is likely that current coach competency frameworks prescribed by professional bodies may not be sufficient for coaching academic Deans. This case study based research, therefore, aims to explore the following question: *do existing coaching competency frameworks adequately address the complex task of coaching academic deans*? The unit of analysis of this interpretative and evaluative case study is the coaching practice that is based on the core competencies as prescribed by International Coaching Federation (ICF) and European Mentoring and Coaching Council (EMCC). I used five different sources of evidence that converge to address the research question. I studied the coaching competencies frameworks of the ICF and EMCC because they are global and regional whereas others are local

or a country-specific. The main source of data is the interview of the coach who worked with the Deans over a period of eight months and provided valuable insights into the coaching of the Deans. A coaching satisfaction survey was conducted to assess the satisfaction level of the coachees for the above engagement. The report concludes that coaching this level of a person is a complex task; a qualified coach who is competent according to the ICF and EMCC competency frameworks is not sufficient for this complex task; and evidence based practice that integrates scientific knowledge i.e. learning theory, contextual knowledge and skilled expertise is required. Therefore, an ICF or EMCC competent coach is not sufficient to enable inspired insights for the complex task of coaching Deans. A deeper understanding of the purpose, relevant learning theories, and context are other sufficient conditions for effective coaching engagements.

The study has some limitations. It has been conducted in a single university with a single coach and five Deans. Therefore, the findings may not be generalized to other leaders and industries. However, it does raise the question of whether the existing coaching competency frameworks effectively address the complex task of coaching for senior leaders such as Deans? Further research is recommended to determine the adequacy of the competency frameworks in other institutions of higher education and for other leaders playing complex roles in various public and private sectors.

6.3 The Lived Experience - Reflective Observations

My learning journey has two parallel tracks. The first one is as a researcher and the second as a practitioner coach. As a practitioner, the entire journey left a profound impact on me. It helped me understand that coaching is more sophisticated than I used to think and believe. My learning of the learning theories helped me improve my deeper understanding that how could I as a coach may accelerate learning of my coachees in a structured conversation. I started paying more attention of my coachees' learning styles and learning

biases during my sessions. I found that the repertoire approach is more effective rather than a specific model or steps. I also understood the value of context and conditions while coaching people of varying organizational levels and cultural backgrounds. Moreover, I also leveraged my organizational role to support development of the coaching culture in my organization. In future, I may play a role in selection of coaches who could address the inherent complexity of coaching academic leaders.

My experience of conducting the research has a full spectrum from boring routines to highly creative moments of breakthroughs. It may be characterized by iterative processes of thinking and writing in order to improve the quality of outcomes. Although each element of the portfolio has its own learning experience, however, many things are common. Each time I had to prepare and submit a proposal, define research question(s), find an appropriate research method, engage the research participants, identify themes and then discuss the findings where I had to interpret the lived experiences of those research participants. This section presents my reflections on the above experiences.

6.3.1 Preparation of a Proposal for Research

I prepared and submitted a separate proposal for my Small Scale Research Project (SSRP), Applied Research Project and Report on Professional Practice. Each of these experiences are valuable and progressively more and more learning. The proposal for SSRP has the main proposal document and an integral ethical form signed by me and the chair of my supervisory panel. The main proposal provided content like objectives, stakeholders, intended outcomes, research method, data collection strategy and analysis and timeline to complete the project. The ethical form highlighted the importance of ethical considerations and issues like confidentiality and data protection. The given structure gave me sufficient freedom to add sections that I thought would strengthen my proposed research. For example, I detailed the design and context of the proposal so that I could create clarity

for myself and my supervisory team. Initially, I missed the informed consent by the two research participants, however, I obtained and included that in the proposal.

The second proposal was a more serious and major one. It's about Applied Research Report. However, I was prepared by my experience of working on the SSRP. This proposal is more structured with eighteen sections. This kind of structure is useful because it compels a researcher to follow the discipline of providing answers to all possible questions. The main content included justification for the research, research questions, methodology, informed consent and interaction with participants, duration, place, data analysis and anticipated contribution of research. Preparation of clear answers to the above questions became a great source of clarity for me. I also attached signed copies of the informed consent by research participants. As a matter of fact, securing signed informed consent by my participants was a significant experience. All of them asked me a lot of questions before signing the consent. This was beyond my expectations but it did increase their commitment to support my research. Some of them took a longer time to review, assess and then commit to interviews. It is important to note here that my participants in this proposal are academic Deans who are well experienced in conducting and supervising research projects. To be honest, completion of this task gave me a great sense of achievement.

My third and last proposal is for Report on Professional Practice. At the outset, I was not aware that I have to submit a proposal for this element of a portfolio as well. However, it wasn't difficult because I had already had several discussions with my supervisory team. I was able to quickly prepare one and submit for review and approval. All of the above-mentioned proposals are very valuable as these provided me with great clarity on the next steps. One of my learnings remains that clarity eases out action taking. I don't take action when I'm confused or uncertain.

6.3.2 Defining the Clear Purpose of Research

Defining a clear purpose of research is a fundamental work that helps to establish the direction of research. It also guides the scope of the contribution of the research to the body of knowledge and practice. With some broad sketches in mind, I started my literature review. At this stage, I knew that I'm going to research coaching for academic leaders. Soon, I was convinced that a true academic leader is the dean of a faculty or college in a higher education institution. So I focused on understanding the roles and challenges of academic deans. Parallel to the above, I was trying to learn what coaching truly is all about. The literature review helped me understand that a coach facilitates the learning of a coachee. Therefore, it is relevant to study the theory and practice of learning. Now, I had the clarity I needed to focus on the learning preferences of deans so that I could identify some implications for their coaching.

The purpose of research for my Small Scale Research Project (SSRP) was a bit different though. During this project, my focus was to learn how to conduct research. It was also influenced by an opportunity in a university where two professional coaches were engaged to support the leadership development of eleven administrative leaders. The purpose of research for the SSRP was to understand the lived experiences of the two coaches and make recommendations for such coaching engagements in the future. However, the purposes of the studies for Applied Research Project (ARP) and Report on Professional Practice (RPP) were direct influenced by the opportunities for research identified from the review of the literature. As a matter of fact, my work on ARP led to the identification of the purpose of the RPP research. It is my recognition of the complexity in the process of coaching academic Deans that defined the aim of the study in the Report on Professional Practice – a critical review of coaching competency frameworks.

6.3.3 Framing the Right Research Question(s)

Defining the research question is a critical part of a research project. It not only guides the inquiry but also measures the contribution of the research. Led by the purpose of the research, I framed specific research question(s) for each element of the portfolio. The two research questions for the literature review guided the search and critical review of the literature related to academic Deans and learning theories. These questions helped me set boundaries of my literature review that in turn validated my research questions for the Applied Research Project. Subsequently, the results of the Applied Research Project gave birth to the main research question for the Report on Professional Practice. The above series and interdependence in research questions give some sense of continuation of inquiry and derivative conclusion about how academic Deans learn and what coaches who support their leadership development may learn to add some sophistication to their practice. The research questions for the Small Scale Research Project (SSRP) were different from the other three elements of the portfolio. Although guided by the purpose and literature review, the three questions for the SSRP focused on the lived experiences of the professional coaches and their observations about the role of goal setting in the coaching process. Despite its limitation in the scale of research, the SSRP turned out to be a great source of learning when it comes to framing a research question. This learning was very useful in defining the research questions for Applied Research Project as well as Report on Professional Practice.

6.3.4 Importance of an Appropriate Research Method

The purpose and questions of the research largely determined my choice of research methods. For both the SSRP and the ARP, I chose Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) design to explore the lived experiences of the participants. These are qualitative research studies that are concerned with the quality and meaning of human experiences (Draper, 2004). I used

a qualitative method (IPA) because as agreed by Oh (2015), while it is possible to use both qualitative and quantitative methods, it would be paradoxical to analyse the results by using two different methods due to inherent research objectives. Although IPA is a relatively new research method (Smith et al., 2009), it is informed by phenomenology and hermeneutics which are long standing philosophies and brought together by Martin Heidegger (Dahlberg et al., 2008). Many researchers including Passmore and Mortimer (2011), Lech et al. (2018), and Dodds and Grajfoner (2018) who have conducted coaching studies, have used IPA as a research approach. Passmore and Mortimer (2011) cautions that while applying IPA design the researchers must be aware of their own influence and bias and focus on the detailed examination of a particular participant's account. However, Smith et al. (2009) defend it by saying that qualitative analysis itself is an interpretative work by a researcher. I found the IPA research design suitable for both the SSRP and the ARP because it supported my interest, as an insider, in understanding the phenomenon of leadership coaching as experienced by the coaches who coached the 11 professional managers as well as interpret the learning experiences of the five Deans.

For the Report on Professional Practice (RPP), I decided to use the case study research method mainly because I wanted to study the case of coaching using the professional competency frameworks developed by the ICF and the EMCC. It helped me to use various sources of evidence that I collected to support my critical review of the competency based coaching practices. I approached this research from interpretive and evaluative perspectives that require a research method which is flexible and capable of capturing multiple realities as well as being descriptive and context-sensitive (Yilmaz, 2013). It also made me responsible to understand and interpret the phenomena under review rather than generalising or identify a cause and effect relationship (Carson et al., 2001). I found case study as a flexible methodology, which can accommodate a variety of research

designs, data analysis methods and epistemologies (Simons, 2009). It also allowed me to analyse the single phenomena of coaching in the background of the context in which it takes place so that the context can help shed light on the phenomena (Kyburz-Graber, 2004). Many researchers including Wortruba (2016), Cull (2006) and Hanna (2004) have studied coaching and mentoring by using case studies as a research method. All of the selected case studies explore a phenomenon, factors or impact by using multiple sources of data realities of knowledge and data in a rather flexible manner. The above studies were a great source of guidance for me to validate my thoughts about the research method.

6.3.5 Engagement of the Research Participants and Ethical Considerations

For both the SSRP and the ARP, I worked closely with participants of my research who are coaches and academic Deans. Most qualitative research projects involve a close relationship between participants and the researcher. Brinkmann and Kvale (2005) warn that false relationships for the motive of obtaining data can be softer and seductive forms of power through manipulated dialogue, and misusing empathy and intimacy. In my case, I knew most of the participants through my professional relationships. However, they had no hesitation to share their personal lived experiences for the research since there was significant trust between us. In addition, I had signed informed consent forms and explained the purpose of the research quite well. I remember two of the Deans showed some nervousness when they learned that I'm going to record the interviews. However, they agreed after I assured them about keeping the recordings in a safe place and not sharing the personal data with anyone. For the RPP, I interviewed a coach who worked with the academic Deans for several months. His input became one of the important evidence materials for the case study. The lived experience of this senior leadership coach helped me validate the findings of the case study that a competent coach is not

sufficient to coach academic Deans due to the inherent complexity and learning preferences of the Deans.

6.3.6 Identification of Themes

Once the data were collected and analysed, I identified themes by following a certain process that involved clustering of sub-ordinate and then super-ordinate themes. The process was greatly influenced by the research method. Here the role of interview questions is an important one as I learned during my Small Scale Research Project (SSRP) and then improved further during the Applied Research Project (ARP). According to Anfara et al. (2002), the questions used in an interview provide the scaffolding for the research and become the basis of the analysis. In the case of the ARP, I also drew the interview questions from the corresponding learning theories. The relationship between the questions and the learning theories was instrumental to link the answers of the Deans to the theories. It was also helpful while identifying the themes as well as during the discussion of the findings. The research questions of the SSRP helped me identify the interview questions. Data analysis using the IPA research method is a complex and time-consuming activity (Pietkiewicz and Smith, 2012). During the steps of the data analysis, I immersed myself in the data or content by reading the transcriptions multiple times to understand the participants meaning-making of the phenomena under investigation as well as the context in which they play their roles. At the end, it is also my interpretation of the same phenomena though I did not add my own meaning into it. In the process of the data analysis, I used the commonalities and connections between emerging themes to group them based on their similarities. It involves clustering of emerging (subordinate) themes into super-ordinate themes. Some of the themes were found weak and dropped during the clustering exercise.

6.3.7 Findings and Implications

Unlike the experiments in the natural sciences, the interpretative phenomenological analyses of these studies belong to human sciences that are represented by the lived experiences of the coaches and academic Deans in a university. Since only those that have experienced the phenomena can communicate their experiences to the outside world. These projects, therefore, provide an understanding of experiences from those who have actually lived it. The participants narrate their experiences in the form of stories, incidents, and points of view. Nonetheless, they construct their narratives through mental models of their worlds. My synthesis of the data and the pertinent literature supported the various themes discussed in the SSRP and the ARP.

For the Report on Professional Practice, I had multiple sources of evidence to construct and present my arguments. The findings must be seen in their own context of academic Deans within a university. However, these findings may open or extend to other similar topics of research where the complexity of the coaching process is acknowledged. There are clear implications for the practice of coaching for academic Deans who prefer to learn in certain ways that is not necessarily consistent with a professional coach who is trained in a specific way of coaching as mentioned in the implications for the practice section of the Report on Professional Practice.

The above sections are written based on my reflections of the various milestones in my journey of conducting the research assembled in this portfolio. This non-linear journey of seeking knowledge and deep inquiry resulted in new learning for me as presented in the next chapter.

6.4 The New Learnings - Abstract Conceptualization

My concrete experience of developing the four elements of the portfolio and then reflective observations of the lived experience have led to the abstract

conceptualization stage of this experiential learning cycle. In this stage, I would discuss four major contextual learnings as follows:

i.   What did I learn about the role of the academic Deans?
ii.   How do learning theories may inform the coaching of academic Deans?
iii.   Are the leading competency frameworks sufficient for coaching academic Deans?
iv.   What did I learn as a researcher?

What did I learn about the role of the academic Deans?

Academic Deans are the key participants of this research though I also worked with coaches to obtain their perspectives on the issues. These Deans are playing middle management roles that are often conflicting with the aspirations of their faculty and students and senior leaders of the university. They also deal with an unexpected conflict within themselves due to their dual role as an academic and a manager. These conflicts and other role-based issues expose them to challenges they find hard to deal with especially when they are not prepared for those roles. The Deans found coaching a useful development intervention because the coach worked on an individual basis and explored their personal and professional issues. The Deans also highlighted the organizational systemic factors that affect their roles. The cultural and other contextual parameters must also be considered to understand the roles of an Academic Dean.

How do learning theories may inform the coaching of academic Deans?

This is the biggest area of my new learning that is informed by learning theories. While there is no theory that is unique to coaching (Brunner,1998; Passmore et al. 2013; Peltier, 2001), it is possible to examine a range of learning theories and find resonances with the ideas presented in the coaching literature. A set of 'proxy theories' indicates that coaching has the potential at least to be a very powerful learning process. Both coach and coachees are learners (Garvey et al.

2018). As Stelter (2019) points out, the coach needs to learn from their coachees in order to develop the art of dialogue. According to Cox (2013), coaching is a facilitated, dialogic learning process and its demand has risen due to the need to overcome increasingly complex problems in the world. Arguably at least, adult learning theories comprise the largest set of theories that have relevance for the coaching processes. An understanding of adult learning principles and theories could therefore support the learning processes of both coaches and coachees.

The learning theories offer an opportunity to understand the learning experiences of Academic Deans who are exposed to many challenges and their ability to learn and act is critical to their ability to perform the role. It is not argued that Academic Deans learn in different ways to other people in a similar middle leadership role. On the contrary, it is very likely that Academic Deans are exposed to similar challenges found in any middle leader's learning environment. For example, goal setting, intrinsic and extrinsic motivations, political knowledge, professional judgement, tension-filled situations, accumulated experiences, problem-solving, and need for self-actualization and congruence with their values. In relation to this, Winters & Latham (1996) argue that when a task is straight-forward, specific goal setting often leads to improved performance. However, when the task is complex, for example in the complexities of being a middle-leader or Dean (as is this study), Seijts et al. (2004) argue that 'learning goals' are more relevant and it is through these that there is a shift away from specific task outcomes and towards the 'discovery of task-relevant strategies or procedures' (p.229).

The learning theories remind us about the importance of contexts and conditions for learning, reflection on assumptions, beliefs, and choices of action and outcomes. However, it has been argued (Gray, et al. 2016) that an over emphasis on outcomes can drive out the relational aspects of the coaching dyad and others (de Haan, 2008; Stelter, 2019) argue that it is the relational aspects

that are crucial to the success of coaching. However, it is important to be aware of cultural aspects of the context. For example, in an organizational context like a university, these aspects may include power distance or a specific academic leadership role. As discussed in the ARP, Deans emphasized on the behaviours that were prevalent due to the culture in which they are operating.

Are the leading competency frameworks sufficient for coaching of academic Deans?

Another key learning that I experienced from this portfolio of research is that if it is true that coaching of academic Deans is a complex process, then are the coaching competencies prescribed by the ICF and the EMCC sufficient for the task? In view of this new learning, I decided to conduct a critical review of the latest competency frameworks to assess their adequacy for a complex coaching process. Thus it became the main research question for the report on professional practice. As discussed in the Report on Professional Practice, this learning will have possible implications on the education of professional coaches as well as their professional practice.

What did I learn as a researcher?

Prior to my enrolment as a Ph.D. student or researcher, I had some limited knowledge about applied research. However, I learned almost everything about how to conduct research in a portfolio based programme during my journey as a Ph.D. student. It includes defining the research topic (s), searching the literature in various libraries, knowledge resources, and databases, defining of research questions, data collection methods, research methods, and discussion of results. However, the real learning happened when started writing various sections of my research projects. Here I discovered that I have to write within certain boundaries of the literature and evidence found in the data though there is some room to add my own voice. Nonetheless, this voice should have an articulation that is supported by the theories and data presented in the

research project. Another important area of my learning is ethical considerations in the research. It touches all areas of research activities. However, it is especially important when dealing with research participants and keeping records of data collection such as interviews. Here, I'd also underscore the significance of transparency of the entire research process to enhance its trustworthiness. In qualitative research, transparency is equal to validity in quantitative methods of research. Specifically, I have developed an ability to synthesize my learning rather than descriptive writing. Above all, I was always cognizant of my contribution through research that is worthy of the Ph.D. programme. In this respect, I have co-authored two publications in a refereed journal and presented three webinars as invited speakers that gave me a good degree of confidence and recognition to my contribution which is articulated in the next section of this report.

6.5 Contribution to Knowledge & Practice – Active Experimentation

Overall, the entire research has added some unique value to the current body of knowledge. It also offers insights to improve the practice of coaching. Some distinct contributions that may be credited to this research are as follows:

- This thesis adds a unique value to the existing knowledge of coaching by conducting two distinct studies (SSRP and ARP) to evaluate the roles of coaching for performance only and coaching for learning and development of the coachees. It has been concluded that coaching adds more value for academic leaders when viewed as a learning process rather than a goal-oriented performance process. Coaching practitioners may therefore prefer setting learning goals rather than specific performance goals when coaching executives who navigate significant complexity in their engagements.

- Learning and complexity theories can provide a solid foundation to further explore the balance between knowledge, skills and practice for

the development of coaches who are well prepared through an education rather than training process to address the complexities of the coaching process. The learning theories can help to inform how Academic Deans learn about themselves and the roles they play in their institutions. These learning experiences of Deans can then inform the architecture of the learning process in the shape of a facilitated conversation and a learning journey.

- Another unique value of this research is for coaching practitioners. It can help coaches in the understanding of how Academic Deans learn to become more effective to play their roles. The outcomes of this research included various themes and a heuristic that can guide coaches to have more productive learning conversations with Academic Deans in the university.

- This research has identified some limitations of the competency-based frameworks for the development of professional coaches as well as coaching managers with significant complexity in their jobs such as academic Deans. In this respect, the research has concluded that a competent or skilled coach may not be enough to generate inspired insights for the complex task of coaching Deans. A deeper understanding of the purpose, relevant learning theories, and context are other sufficient conditions for effective coaching engagements.

- If a coach is to understand the context, they need some sociological knowledge as well and that only knowing about coaching or psychology may not be sufficient.

- There is a need for revisiting the competencies-based models and considering knowledge-based coaching models. Knowledge-based models follow repertoire approaches that are expected to have a balanced approach by giving due weight to both science and art of the coaching practice.

- I believe that I have contributed to the research methods as well. I used Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) for the Small Scale Research Project (SSRP) as well as the Applied Research Project (ARP) to research the coaching related questions of research in both studies. My conclusion is that IPA is also a suitable research method for coaching research projects, among other research methods. It is notable that in the above research projects I have explored the lived experiences of both the coaches and the coachees in an institution of higher education. In addition to IPA, I used the case study method for conducting the critical review of the coaching competencies frameworks of the two leading professional bodies.

- I also found that the case study method is an appropriate one for the research presented in the Report on Professional Practice. The case study research method enabled me to collect evidence from multiple sources to complete my review of the competency frameworks.

6.6   Conclusions and Future Research

This reflective report portrays my experience of conducting qualitative research and aspects of the social phenomena in their entirety and within the context of those experiencing them. I acknowledge the unique, holistic and dynamic aspects of human experience and the presence of multiple realities, which I have tried to elicit using multiple ways of understanding. This process of inquiry enables us not only to learn about ourselves as well as others - stakeholders and participants. As a researcher, I emerged with new learning and understandings, the origins of which were not entirely clear and/or were at least confusing to me at the outset. If research is a dialogue, then reflexivity is indeed a journey of framing and reframing.

Overall, the study researched and also raised several key issues related to coaching academic as well as non-academic leaders in Higher Education Institutions (HEIs). Leadership coaching justifies its value when it provides a

customized learning space to a leader in a safe and trusted environment. This space and the environment may differ from a leader to leader. I found that academic Deans differ in their context, conditions and challenges from their counterparts in the administrative functions. The higher the role of the leader the more complexity it is likely to bring in a coaching session. The inherent conflict in the role of an academic Dean may also add another dimension to the complexity. The conflict lies in keeping the balance between the managerial job and the scholarly pursuits of Deans. A good understanding of the Deans' role and learning preferences that is beyond a competency framework is expected to produce better value for a leadership coaching engagement in the university sector. My research recognizes the complexity of the coaching process while working with the academic Deans as coachees, and it offers useful insights for both researchers and practitioners of coaching.

Future research may be conducted on the agentic role played by the professional job of an academic and/or non-academic leaders. The new research may exploit the complexity theory and its applications for complex learning interventions such as executive coaching. More research is also needed to promote coaching as a process rather than a set of competencies so that it could address the inherent complexities found within the various purposes and contexts of coaching. Learning and complexity theories may provide a solid foundation to further explore the balance between knowledge, skills and practice for the development of coaches who are well prepared through an education rather than training process to address the complexities of the coaching process.

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Appendix 3-A

Ethics Release Form for Work-Based (Small Scale Service) Project

Ethics Release Form for Work-Based (Small Scale Service) Project

All candidates are required to complete this Ethics Release Form and to submit it to their Learning Advisor and then to PDF prior to commencing the investigation. Please note the following:

- You must demonstrate an understanding of ethical considerations central to planning and conducting your research.

- Approval to carry out research does not exempt you from the specific approval from institutions within which you may be planning to conduct the research, e.g. organisations; hospitals etc.

Please answer all of the following questions:

1. Has a research proposal been completed and submitted to the program Advisor?
   ~~Yes~~   No*

2. Will the research involve either or both of the following:

   a] A survey of human participants
      Yes*   ~~No~~

   b] Intervention with a cohort of human participants, and/or an evaluation of outcome of an intervention?

      Yes*   ~~No~~

3. Is there any risk of physical or psychological harm to participants (in either a control or experimental group)?
   Yes*   ~~No~~

4. Will all participants receive an information sheet describing the aims, procedure and possible risks, in easily understood language? (Attach a copy of the participant's information sheet)
   ~~Yes~~   No*

5. Will any person's treatment or care be in any way prejudiced if they choose not to participate in the study?
   Yes*   ~~No~~

6. Will all participants be required to sign a consent form, stating that they understand the purpose of the study and possible risks, i.e. will informed consent be given?
   ~~Yes~~   No*

7. Can participants freely withdraw from the study at any stage without risk or harm of prejudice?

Yes ~~Yes~~(X)   No*

8. Will the study involve working with or studying minors (i.e. <16 years)?

Yes*   No (X)

- if yes, will signed parental consent be obtained?

Yes   No*

9. Are any questions or procedures likely to be considered in any way offensive or indecent?

Yes (X)   No*

10. Will all necessary steps be taken to protect the privacy of participants and the need for anonymity?

Yes (X)   No*

- Is there provision for the safe-keeping of video/audio recordings of participants?

Yes (X)   No*

11. If applicable, is there provision for de-briefing participants after the intervention or study?

Yes (X)   No

12. If psychometric instruments are to be employed, will their use be controlled and supervised by a qualified psychologist?

Yes (X)   No*

13. If you have placed an X in any of the items marked *, please provide further information on a separate sheet.

Candidate's Name: **Iftikhar Nadeem**

Learning Advisors: **David Lane, Bob Garvey, Martin Down**

Programme: **PhD in Professional Practice: Psychological Perspectives**

Title of Research Project: **Leadership Coaching: Enhancing Self-Efficacy for Effective Goal Achievement**

Signature of Candidate: ......*Nadeem*........

Signature of Academic Advisor: ......*Bob Garvey*......

Signature of 2nd Advisor: ......*Martin Down*......

Date: ....16/07/18....

Appendix 3-B

Consent to Participate in the Research Study

Consent to Participate in the Research Study

Title of Study: **Leadership Coaching: Enhancing Self-Efficacy for Effective Goal Achievement**
Researcher: **Iftikhar Nadeem, Saudi Arabia**

Introduction: You are requested to participate in a research study of *Leadership Coaching: Enhancing Self-Efficacy for Effective Goal Achievement.* You have been selected as a participant because you recently coached several administrative leaders. Please read this form and ask any questions that you may have before agreeing to be in the study.

Purpose of Study: The purpose of the study is to understand the self-efficacy behaviors of the coachees to achieve set goals effectively. Ultimately, this research may be published. However, your identity will never be disclosed.

Description of the Study Procedures: If you agree to be in this study, you will be asked to answer several open-ended questions over a period of about one hour. This semi-structured interview may be conducted through Zoom/Skype and recorded for the purpose of research. The questions are related to your professional coaching practice. It doesn't include any personal question. Nonetheless, you have right to decline any question.

Risks/Discomforts of Being in this Study: The study has no foreseeable known risks whatsoever.

Confidentiality: I will not be collecting or retaining any information about your identity. The records of this study will be kept strictly confidential. Research records will be kept in a locked file, and all electronic information will be coded and secured using a password protected file. I will not include any information in any report I may publish that would make it possible to identify you.

Right to Refuse or Withdraw: The decision to participate in this study is entirely up to you. You may refuse to take part in the study *at any time* without affecting your relationship with the researcher of this study. Your decision will not result in any loss or benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. You have the right not to answer any single question, as well as to withdraw completely from the interview at any point during the process; additionally, you have the right to request that the interviewer not use any of your interview material.

Right to Ask Questions and Report Concerns: You have the right to ask questions about this research study and to have those questions answered by me before, during or after the research. If you have any further questions about the study, at any time feel free to contact me through my email ifti@kfupm.edu.sa or by telephone +966 505880953.

Consent: Your signature below indicates that you have decided to volunteer as a research participant for this study, and that you have read and understood the information provided above.

Participant's Name: _____

Participant's Signature: _____ Date: _____

Researcher's Signature: _____ Date: _____

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Appendix 3-C

Questionnaire for Semi-Structured Interviews

Q1.   What is your overall experience of coaching the administrative leaders in a public   sector   university in Saudi Arabia?

Q2.   What is your experience in using the coaching framework in this engagement?

Q3.   What role goal setting has in a coaching process?

Q4.   What is your understanding of self-efficacy?

Q5.   What is role of self-efficacy in goal attainment?

Q6.   How self-efficacy could be improved?

Q7.   How would you assess coaching as a method of leadership development?

Q8.   If you have coached managers in private sector, how did you find it different in the   government sector organization?

Q9.   What contribution a coachee makes towards his success?

Q10.   How did you support your coachees to achieve results?

Q11   What the university should do differently to make it more effective in future?

Q12.   What did you learn as a coach in this coaching engagement?

Appendix 4-A

Ethics Release Form for the Applied Research Project

Canterbury Christ Church University

Salomons Centre for Applied Psychology
Ethics Panel in partnership with Professional
Development Foundation Board of Studies
Form for Scrutiny of Research Projects

Notes: Please fill in every part of this form, answering 'Not Applicable' if some questions do not seem to apply to your project. Please attach securely copies of any accompanying research material such as questionnaires, consent forms, information sheets, advertisements, or other materials proposed for use in the research. This form is available in electronic form on blackboard. **Four** completed forms together, with attachments, should be submitted once approved by your supervisory team to Tracey Plunkett, in Runcie Court, Salomons Campus – if you have any queries please call 0333 011 7090 or e-mail tracey.plunkett@canterbury.ac.uk. The completed forms must be submitted as hard copies.

Section One

Name: **Iftikhar Ali Nadeem**

Professional Position: Researcher
Address for correspondence: P. O. Box 531, KFUPM, Dhahran 31261, Saudi Arabia. Tel. +966 50 588 0953

Are you the principal researcher?
Yes.
Names and professional positions of any co-researchers:
None.

Research Supervisor: Prof. Bob Garvey and Martin Down

Professional Position: 1st Academic Supervisor, 2nd Supervisor

Do you have professional or personal insurance that covers you to conduct this research?

No, since it is an interview based exploratory research that does not pose any threat or possible harm to the participants.

If yes, please attach a copy of evidence of your insurance cover
If no, please state why you think this is not relevant or necessary in this case:

Project Title:

A LEARNING-INFORMED COACHING MODEL FOR ACADEMIC DEANS

Section Two

Background to the research:
(There is space later in the form to describe the contribution that the research is anticipated to make to the field of study. Here please describe the theoretical background, and any other justification for the proposed research, in not more than 800 words.)

The research shall be carried out at a leading university in Saudi Arabia. Based on its recent positive experiences, the university administration is supportive to undertake research to develop a leadership coaching model for the academic/college deans. Academic deans are at the centre of academic decision-making and represent middle management of an institution of higher education (Buller, 2007). To become an effective academic dean, one has to learn continually at both personal and professional levels. Coaching

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offers an opportunity to facilitate this learning and change through a managed conversation (Gallwey, 2000). While coaching can help coachees in their learning and personal development, coaching process models, however, help coaches. (Lennard, 2010). Chapman (2010) and Stout-Rostron (2014) also support the importance of coaching models that provide a structure for coaching conversations as well as the overall coaching journey.

(please see proposal for more details)

Section Three

Research Questions

The main purpose of this qualitative research is to explore a coaching model for the academic deans that is informed by their learning experiences. Based on the literature review and in keeping with the purpose of the research for this applied research project, I framed the following two questions that guide the study:

- What are the learning experiences of academic deans that contribute to their role?

- How may the learning experiences of academic deans inform the design of a leadership coaching model?

Section Four

Duration of the Study: please state when it is proposed to begin, when it is anticipated the study will finish

The study will be carried out over a period of 18 calendar months effective January 2019.

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Section Five

Where will the Study take place? Please describe the setting/s or the target organisations or institutions that the study involves. Include details of where participants will be seen (home? Or other setting?)
(use a separate sheet if necessary)

The study will be conducted at a leading university located in Dhahran, Saudi Arabia. The participants (academic college deans) are available at the campus of this university and easily accessible by the researcher.

Section Six

Describe the Design of the research with its rationale, in not more than 300 words:

This study shall use a qualitative approach based on an Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) design. A choice of research method is largely determined by the purpose and/or questions of the research. I chose qualitative method rather than quantitative due to exploratory nature of the study involving understanding of lived experiences of academic deans. Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) is a research approach for examining how people make sense of, and understand their lived experiences (Smith et al., 2009). According to Benner (1994), these lived experiences are daily routines, habits, activities, practices, and meanings of concern to people as they relate to and interact with their world. Van Manen (1990) suggests that true meaning of a lived experience usually is hidden from a

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person living it because he/she generally lives in an automatic mode of our everyday habits. Many researchers, who have conducted coaching studies, have used IPA as a research approach. Passmore and Mortimer (2011) used IPA to explore the experiences of approved driving instructors in the UK in using coaching as a method for novice driving learning. Lech et al., (2017) applied IPA design to understand and explore the experience of PhD students who had received coaching. Dodds and Grajfoner (2018) used IPA design to explore the interaction between national culture and coaching methods that executive coaches use in the United Arab Emirates (UAE). The purpose of this study is aligned with phenomenological approach since it is about learning from the lived experiences of the academic deans. Specifically, Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) research design is suitable for this study because it supported my interest, as an insider, in understanding the phenomenon of academic leadership coaching as experienced by the deans or prospective coachees in the university.

Section Seven

Describe the measures and procedure planned (attaching copies of any questionnaires to be used or any interview protocols)
(use separate sheet if necessary)

The data will be collected through semi-structured interviews of academic/college deans of the university. According to Smith et al.

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(2009), sample size of five is enough for studies employing Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) research method. A set of interview questions corresponding the research questions will be prepared. It will ensure that open-ended questions are prepared in advance and they comprehensively cover the research questions. The transcripts of the interviews will be then analysed as per Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) method. It includes preparation of exploratory notes out of the transcripts of each interview, identification of themes, and then clustering of those themes to manageable number for analysis.

Section Eight

A – Participants (number, sampling, description)
(use a separate sheet if necessary)

It is almost full population. Five out of six college deans will be interviewed. The sixth one is newly appointed and thus lacks sufficient experience of working as a dean of a college.

B – Describe Recruitment Procedures (include how permission / consent will be obtained from organisations, from participants, from other relevant parties)
[copies of consent forms, information sheets and any other materials used in recruitment must be attached]

Academic/college deans are personally invited to participate in the research in a confidential one to one meeting where their participation is fully discussed. Each participant agreed and signed the informed Consent Forms as attached herewith. To my knowledge they are not aware of, or concerned about the other participants and therefore it is

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unlikely that that will feel any social pressure to participate or not. I was particularly satisfied with their level of commitment to participate in the research. The approach to the selection of participants is in line with the adopted methodology of the research – Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis – where there is a need for a homogenous sample of individuals.

In addition to the above, organizational permission has been sought from the official concerned as shown in the attached copy herewith.

C – Do you anticipate using any public advertising to recruit to this research?

                                                                NO

If yes, please attach a copy of the proposed advert and say where it is planned to display it:

Section Nine

Describe any briefing or debriefing that will be provided to participants or organisations, or other relevant parties:
(use a separate sheet if necessary)

The participants have been verbally briefed about the purpose and expected outcomes of the research project.

Section Ten

List any incentives or inducements, or any kind of payment that is offered for participation in the research to organisations, participants or other relevant parties. Please state the rationale for these payments:
(use a separate sheet if necessary)

No incentives (monetary or otherwise) will be given to participants.

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Section Eleven

Is it anticipated that there will be any discomfort or distress caused to participants or organisations as a result of this research?

NO

If yes: describe what these negative effects could be and what procedures are in place to eliminate or minimise them?
(use a separate sheet if necessary)

Section Twelve

Are there any threats to the safety of the researcher in conducting this research?

NO

If yes, please state what these threats could be and what mechanisms will be in place to eliminate or minimise them:
(use a separate sheet if necessary)

Section Thirteen

Describe the analysis of data planned (include any statistical power analysis for quantitative research):
(use a separate sheet if necessary)

The transcripts of the interviews will be analysed as per Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) method. It includes preparation of exploratory notes out of the transcripts of each interview, identification of themes, and then clustering of those themes to manageable number for analysis.

Section Fourteen

Describe the proposed management of the data (how they will stored, for how long, in what form, what protections will be in place to protect the identity of participants and organisations)
(use a separate sheet if necessary)

The interview voice data will be stored in electronic media with password secured access. The storage will last until the data are

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validated and research is completed and accepted. The MS Word transcripts will also be kept in a secured medium as above.

Section Fifteen

What is the contribution that it is anticipated that this research will offer to the field of study? Please state in not more than 100 words.

The applied research project will result in a final report that will be beneficial for its intended audience. It includes senior administration as well as directors of organizational development and leadership development in universities, and coaching community who are supporting leadership development of academic deans. The findings of the research will be presented at internal and external conferences. The researcher also aims to publish this work in the relevant academic and industry journals.

Section Sixteen

What feedback will be given to participants, and organisations if relevant, about the results of the research? Please state what form this will take.

The accepted/approved research report may be shared with the organization and the participants.

Section Seventeen

Is it planned that this research will be published in a public forum?
                                        YES
If yes, will participants and organisations involved, be informed of this possibility?

Yes, It will be treated as anonymous at the time of publication.

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Section Eighteen

Please state if there are any other ethical considerations to the proposed research that have been considered by the proposers or others, state what these are and how they are to be addressed.
(use a separate sheet if necessary)
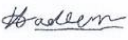
None.

Please list the attachments, by name and number, which accompany this completed form:

1. Permission from the Organization to conduct research
2. Informed Consent Forms signed by Participants

Names and Signature:

Name:	Role:	Signature:	Date:
Iftikhar A. Nadeem	Researcher	*Nadeem*	17/12/2008
David Lane	Chair, Supervisory Panel	*[signature]*	20.01.2019
Bob Garvey	First Supervisor	*[signature]*	19/12/18
Martin Down	Second Supervisor	*[signature]*	19|12|18.

Independent Reviewer name: Prof Sarah Corrie
Approved by Ethics Panel following review   *[signature]*   20.01.2019
Ethics Panel Chair Diana Osborne

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Appendix 4-B

Consent to Participate in the Research Study

Consent to Participate in the Research Study

Title of Study: Learning-Informed Coaching Model for Academic Deans
Researcher: Iftikhar Nadeem, Saudi Arabia

Introduction: You are invited to participate in a research study of *Learning-Informed Coaching Model for Academic Deans*. You have been selected as a participant because you have performed as an academic dean of a college in a university. Please read this form and ask any questions that you may have before agreeing to be in the study.

Purpose of Study: The purpose of the study is to develop a learning-informed leadership coaching model for academic deans. Ultimately, this research may be published. However, your identity will never be disclosed.

Description of the Study Procedures: If you agree to be in this study, you will be asked to answer several open-ended questions over a period of about one hour. This semi-structured interview will be conducted in-person and shall be recorded for the purpose of research. The questions are related to your learning while in a position of an academic college dean. It doesn't include any personal question. Nonetheless, you have right to decline any question.

Risks/Discomforts of Being in this Study: The study has no foreseeable known risks whatsoever.

Confidentiality: I will not be collecting or retaining any information about your identity. The records of this study will be kept strictly confidential. Research records will be kept in a locked file, and all electronic information will be coded and secured using a password protected file. I will not include any information in any report I may publish that would make it possible to identify you.

Right to Refuse or Withdraw: The decision to participate in this study is entirely up to you. You may refuse to take part in the study at any time without affecting your relationship with the researcher of this study. You have the right not to answer any single question, as well as to withdraw completely from the interview at any point during the process; additionally, you have the right to request that the interviewer not use any of your interview material.

Right to Ask Questions and Report Concerns: You have the right to ask questions about this research study and to have those questions answered by me before, during or after the research. If you have any further questions about the study, at any time feel free to contact me through my email ifti@kfupm.edu.sa or by telephone +966 505880953.

Consent: Your signature below indicates that you have decided to volunteer as a research participant for this study, and that you have read and understood the information provided above.

Participant's Name: ███████████████████

Participant's Signature: ████████████████   Date: 23 Dec '18

Researcher's Signature: _Nadeem_   Date: 24/12/18

Appendix 4-C

Questions for Semi-Structured Interview

#	Question
1	What is the role of a college dean in your views?
2	What are the key challenges of a college dean?
3	How do you make key decisions?
4	What makes you stressful at work?
5	What part of your job is most satisfying?
6	How do you balance between your personal values and demands of your role as a college dean?
7	What are your profound learning experiences?
8	How much of your disciplinary background influences your learning style?
9	What motivates you to learn new things?
10	How much of your learning is influenced by problem solving opportunities?
11	What is the role of your intuition in making professional judgements?
12	How do you overcome your current learning to be open to new learning?
13	What are your experiences that didn't lead to any new learning?
14	What conditions makes your learning more lively?
15	What shifts your perspectives or principles?
16	How often you reflect during or post an action?
17	How comfortable are you in making decisions in unstructured and/or ambiguous situations?
18	What do you learn from inter-cultural communications in your role?
19	What difference it makes when you are relaxed or not so relaxed?
20	How much you learn by observing others?
21	What makes you unstuck?
22	How often a structured conversation helps you get a new idea or possible solution to a problem?

Appendix 5-A

Informed Consent by the Coach

Title of Study: The Adequacy of Competency Frameworks for Coaching Academic Deans
Researcher: Iftikhar Nadeem, Canterbury Christ Church University

Introduction: You are requested to participate in a research study of *The Adequacy of Competency Frameworks for Coaching Academic Deans.* You have been selected as a participant because you recently coached several academic Deans. Please read this form and ask any questions that you may have before agreeing to be in the study.

Purpose of Study: The purpose of the study is to determine the adequacy of the coaching competency frameworks for academic Deans. Ultimately, this research may be published. However, your identity will never be disclosed.

Description of the Study Procedures: If you agree to be in this study, you will be asked to answer several open-ended questions over a period of about one hour. This semi-structured interview may be conducted in-person and recorded for the purpose of research. The questions are related to your professional coaching practice. It doesn't include any personal question. Nonetheless, you have right to decline any question.

Risks/Discomforts of being in this Study: The study has no foreseeable known risks whatsoever.

Confidentiality: I will not be collecting or retaining any information about your identity. The records of this study will be kept strictly confidential. Research records will be kept in a locked file, and all electronic information will be coded and secured using a password protected file. I will not include any information in any report I may publish that would make it possible to identify you.

Right to Refuse or Withdraw: The decision to participate in this study is entirely up to you. You may refuse to take part in the study *at any time* without affecting your relationship with the researcher of this study. Your decision will not result in any loss or benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. You have the right not to answer any single question, as well as to withdraw completely from the interview at any point during the process; additionally, you have the right to request that the interviewer not use any of your interview material.

Right to Ask Questions and Report Concerns: You have the right to ask questions about this research study and to have those questions answered by me before, during or after the research. If you have any further questions about the study, at any time feel free to contact me through my email ifti@kfupm.edu.sa or by telephone +966 505880953.

Consent: Your signature below indicates that you have decided to volunteer as a research participant for this study, and that you have read and understood the information provided above.

Participant's Signature and Date   : ___Signed on March 12, 2020_____

Appendix 5-B

Letter of Permission by the Organization

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

Ministry of Higher Education

King Fahd University of Petroleum & Minerals

Deanship of Faculty & Personnel Affairs

وزارة التعليم العالي

جامعة الملك فهد للبترول و المعادن

عمادة شؤون الأساتذة والموظفين

December 9, 2018

To Whom It May Concern

We are aware that Mr. Iftikhar Ali Nadeem is enrolled in a PhD Programme at Canterbury Christ Church University in partnership with Professional Development Foundation. As a part of his research, Mr. Nadeem will conduct interviews of various college deans in the university. Please be informed that the university has no objection for contacting and interviewing college deans for his research. Mr. Nadeem holds high moral and ethical standards in his conduct and professional work, and the university fully supports his work.

Sincerely,

Mohammed Yahya Al-Ghamdi

Director General, Faculty & Personnel Affairs

Appendix 5-C

ICF Core Competency Model

A. Foundation

1. Demonstrates Ethical Practice

Definition: Understands and consistently applies coaching ethics and standards of coaching

1.1	Demonstrates personal integrity and honesty in interactions with clients, sponsors and relevant stakeholders
1.2	Is sensitive to clients' identity, environment, experiences, values and beliefs
1.3	Uses language appropriate and respectful to clients, sponsors and relevant stakeholders
1.4	Abides by the ICF Code of Ethics and upholds the Core Values
1.5	Maintains confidentiality with client information per stakeholder agreements and pertinent laws
1.6	Maintains the distinctions between coaching, consulting, psychotherapy and other support professions
1.7	Refers clients to other support professionals, as appropriate

2. Embodies a Coaching Mindset

Definition: Develops and maintains a mindset that is open, curious, flexible and client-centered

2.1	Acknowledges that clients are responsible for their own choices
2.2	Engages in ongoing learning and development as a coach
2.3	Develops an ongoing reflective practice to enhance one's coaching
2.4	Remains aware of and open to the influence of context and culture on self and others
2.5	Uses awareness of self and one's intuition to benefit clients
2.6	Develops and maintains the ability to regulate one's emotions
2.7	Mentally and emotionally prepares for sessions
2.8	Seeks help from outside sources when necessary

B. Co-Creating the Relationship

3. Establishes and Maintains Agreements

Definition: Partners with the client and relevant stakeholders to create clear agreements about the coaching relationship, process, plans and goals. Establishes agreements for the overall coaching engagement as well as those for each coaching session.

3.1	Explains what coaching is and is not and describes the process to the client and relevant stakeholders

3.2	Reaches agreement about what is and is not appropriate in the relationship, what is and is not being offered, and the responsibilities of the client and relevant stakeholders
3.3	Reaches agreement about the guidelines and specific parameters of the coaching relationship such as logistics, fees, scheduling, duration, termination, confidentiality and inclusion of others
3.4	Partners with the client and relevant stakeholders to establish an overall coaching plan and goals
3.5	Partners with the client to determine client-coach compatibility
3.6	Partners with the client to identify or reconfirm what they want to accomplish in the session
3.7	Partners with the client to define what the client believes they need to address or resolve to achieve what they want to accomplish in the session
3.8	Partners with the client to define or reconfirm measures of success for what the client wants to accomplish in the coaching engagement or individual session
3.9	Partners with the client to manage the time and focus of the session
3.10	Continues coaching in the direction of the client's desired outcome unless the client indicates otherwise
3.11	Partners with the client to end the coaching relationship in a way that honors the experience

4. Cultivates Trust and Safety

Definition: Partners with the client to create a safe, supportive environment that allows the client to share freely. Maintains a relationship of mutual respect and trust.

4.1	Seeks to understand the client within their context which may include their identity, environment, experiences, values and beliefs
4.2	Demonstrates respect for the client's identity, perceptions, style and language and adapts one's coaching to the client
4.3	Acknowledges and respects the client's unique talents, insights and work in the coaching process
4.4	Shows support, empathy and concern for the client
4.5	Acknowledges and supports the client's expression of feelings, perceptions, concerns, beliefs and suggestions
4.6	Demonstrates openness and transparency as a way to display vulnerability and build trust with the client

5. Maintains Presence

Definition: Is fully conscious and present with the client, employing a style that is open, flexible, grounded and confident

5.1	Remains focused, observant, empathetic and responsive to the client
5.2	Demonstrates curiosity during the coaching process
5.3	Manages one's emotions to stay present with the client
5.4	Demonstrates confidence in working with strong client emotions during the coaching process
5.5	Is comfortable working in a space of not knowing
5.6	Creates or allows space for silence, pause or reflection

C. Communicating Effectively

6. Listens Actively

Definition: Focuses on what the client is and is not saying to fully understand what is being communicated in the context of the client systems and to support client self-expression

6.1	Considers the client's context, identity, environment, experiences, values and beliefs to enhance understanding of what the client is communicating
6.2	Reflects or summarizes what the client communicated to ensure clarity and understanding
6.3	Recognizes and inquires when there is more to what the client is communicating
6.4	Notices, acknowledges and explores the client's emotions, energy shifts, non-verbal cues or other behaviors
6.5	Integrates the client's words, tone of voice and body language to determine the full meaning of what is being communicated
6.6	Notices trends in the client's behaviors and emotions across sessions to discern themes and patterns

7. Evokes Awareness

Definition: Facilitates client insight and learning by using tools and techniques such as powerful questioning, silence, metaphor or analogy

7.1	Considers client experience when deciding what might be most useful
7.2	Challenges the client as a way to evoke awareness or insight
7.3	Asks questions about the client, such as their way of thinking, values, needs, wants and beliefs
7.4	Asks questions that help the client explore beyond current thinking
7.5	Invites the client to share more about their experience in the moment
7.6	Notices what is working to enhance client progress
7.7	Adjusts the coaching approach in response to the client's needs
7.8	Helps the client identify factors that influence current and future patterns of behavior, thinking or emotion
7.9	Invites the client to generate ideas about how they can move forward and what they are willing or able to do
7.10	Supports the client in reframing perspectives
7.11	Shares observations, insights and feelings, without attachment, that have the potential to create new learning for the client

D. Cultivating Learning and Growth

8. Facilitates Client Growth

Definition: Partners with the client to transform learning and insight into action. Promotes client autonomy in the coaching process.

8.1	Works with the client to integrate new awareness, insight or learning into their worldview and behaviors
8.2	Partners with the client to design goals, actions and accountability measures that integrate and expand new learning

8.3	Acknowledges and supports client autonomy in the design of goals, actions and methods of accountability
8.4	Supports the client in identifying potential results or learning from identified action steps
8.5	Invites the client to consider how to move forward, including resources, support and potential barriers
8.6	Partners with the client to summarize learning and insight within or between sessions
8.7	Celebrates the client's progress and successes
8.8	Partners with the client to close the session

Appendix 5-D

Questions for the Semi-Structured Interview with the Coach

1. What is the role of a college Dean, in your views?
2. What are the key leadership challenges of a Dean?
3. What makes Deans stressful at work?
4. What are their profound learning experiences?
5. What motivates them to learn in things in their role?
6. How much of their disciplinary background influence their learning?
7. How much do they appreciate critical thinking in coaching sessions?
8. How do they deal with problem solving in their roles?
9. What conditions make them learn more lively?
10. What shifts their perspectives on issues?
11. How often they learn through reflections?
12. How structured conversation like coaching helps them generate insights?
13. What makes a coaching session complex?
14. Are competencies (like ICF/EMCC) good enough to coach academic Deans?
15. What are limitations of competency frameworks to coach Deans?
16. How understanding of learning theories may help become a better coach?
17. What else would you like to say on coaching of academic Deans?

Appendix 5-E

Questionnaire to Evaluate

Leadership Coaching Program for Academic Deans

At the conclusion of the Leadership Coaching Program for Academic Deans, I would highly appreciate your valuable feedback. In this regard, the following eight (8) questions have been prepared. It is expected to take 3 - 5 minutes of your time. The results from this questionnaire may provide some helpful insights into the effectiveness of different aspects of the program. **Your responses shall be kept strictly confidential.**

1. How easy was it to establish a relationship of trust with your coach? (please tick)

Very easy	☐
Easy, with time	☐
Took an effort	☐
Took a lot of effort	☐
Very difficult	☐
Didn't manage it	☐
Other (please specify below)	

2. Did you gain something from the discussions? (Please specify)

Yes ☐   No ☐   Not sure ☐

3. Did you encounter any of the following problems with coaching?

Time pressures	☐
Incompatibility with coach	☐
Dislocation (e.g. move of job location)	☐
Confidentiality	☐
Achieving a focus for the relationship	☐
Misunderstanding each other	☐
The relationship didn't work	☐
No problems	☐
Other (please add)	

4. What were the main benefits for you from the coaching process? (You may choose multiple answers)

New learning	☐
Greater realism	☐
Greater self-confidence	☐
Enhanced ability to cope with new situations	☐
Strategic thinking	☐
Improved decision making	☐
Develop ideas I could implement	☐
Helping myself through change	☐
Helping others with change	☐
Making change happen	☐
Managing my time better	☐
Developing self-insights	☐
No benefit (please explain)	☐
Other (please add)	

5. How would you assess the success of your coaching? (Please tick)

Achieved something	☐
Developed a good relationship	☐
Improved performance	☐
Actions I can take	☐
Felt stretched	☐
Career progress	☐
More confident	☐
Personal growth	☐
Confidence	☐
Increased personal awareness	☐
New ideas	☐
No success (please explain)	☐
Others (Please specify)	

6. Would you participate in a coaching program again?

Yes ☐   No ☐   Maybe ☐

7. On a scale or 1 to 10 where 10 is excellent and 1 is poor, how would you rate your coaching experience?

1 ☐   2 ☐   3 ☐   4 ☐   5 ☐   6 ☐   7 ☐   8 ☐   9 ☐
         10 ☐

8. Which is your preferred method of meeting?

Face to Face only	☐
Online only	☐
No preference	☐
A mixture of both	☐

Are there any other comments you would like to make? Please do so here….

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Thank you for completing this short survey.

Coaching Program Manager

Appendix 6-A

Learning Theories and their Potential Contribution to Coaching Process

#	Theorist/Author(s)	Theory	Main Argument	Potential Contribution for Coaching Process
1	Knowles (1980)	Andragogy	Experience provides the richest resource for adult's learning. Learners' prior experiences (habits and assumptions) can shape and limit learner's openness to new perspectives.	Client's openness to new perspectives is influences by their accumulated experiences.
2	Schon (1983)	Reflection-in-Action	Professionals learn spontaneously when character of a situation changes unexpectedly in terms of complexity, uncertainty, instability, uniqueness and value conflicts. It's an artistic process in which a professional applies skills without a rational but with an intuitive sense of correctness, confidence and accumulated experience.	Reflection-in-action can challenge assumptions of a client while performing an action leading to generation of various alternatives as well as different ways of framing situations.
3	Kolb (1984)	Experiential Learning	Knowledge is created through transformation of experience in a cyclic four steps: 1. Concrete experience: engaging in a real time experience	Experiential learning Theory (ELT) is central to understanding how client learn from their past and current experiences and use that

#	Theorist/Author(s)	Theory	Main Argument	Potential Contribution for Coaching Process
			2. Reflective observation: viewing experiencing from multiple perspectives 3. Abstract conceptualization: forming concepts that integrate observations into theories 4. Active experimentation: using theories to make decisions and solve problems	learning to take next actions
4	Lindeman (1926)	Adult Education	Adults are motivated to learn what will help them perform tasks and resolve problems.	It provides a useful foundation for coaching since it emphasizes pragmatic nature of adult learning and self-determination of learners. It supports the problem-oriented and performance-oriented coaching at workplace.
5	Lave & Wenger (1991)	Situated Learning	Knowledge develops in the course of action that is situated in relationships, social roles and situations of active participation in the	The theory supports that action makes a client unstuck and move forward and a client is more likely to take

#	Theorist/Author(s)	Theory	Main Argument	Potential Contribution for Coaching Process
			communities of practice.	action when supported in a community of shared practice.
6	Vygotsky (1978)	Social Development	Lifelong process of development is dependent on social interaction in a cultural context, and that social learning leads to cognitive development. He also argues that zone of proximal development (ZPD) plays an important role in learning process. The ZPD is distance between actual development level and level of potential development under guidance.	The concept that learning requires social interaction and collaboration has particular relevance to coaching and mentoring since greater potential is unleased under guidance.
7	Jarvis (1987)	Social Learning	Learning occurs within a social context and that the learner is social construct. Not all experiences result in learning and not all learning leads to change in behavior. He offers a typology of learning developed from Kolb.	Not all learning leads to action by a coachee. Reflective learning in the form of questions, reframing or developing alternate strategies support coachees in making progress in paradoxical situations.

#	Theorist/Author(s)	Theory	Main Argument	Potential Contribution for Coaching Process
8	Maslow (1987)	Humanism	Individuals feel unthreatened, autonomous and ready to choose the unknown if the environment gratifies their needs for safety, a sense of belonging and respect.	In coaching, coachees make progress when their fears are addressed.
9	Roger (1989)	Humanism	Educational situations promote significant learning when threats to the self of the learner are minimized. He emphasizes the importance of making the climate psychologically safe for learners.	Building a rapport and trust so that the coachee feels safe to express and take action is necessary condition for success of coaching.
10	Mezirow (1991))	Transformative Learning	Adulthood is a transformative process in which adults distance themselves from childhood roles, reframe their perspectives and act on redefined perspectives, then become more engaged in life with a greater sense of self-direction. Transformative learning focuses on adult learner's mental construction of experience and inner meaning.	For Mezirow, the reflection is a process of releasing dysfunctional beliefs, and discourse as a process for validating beliefs. Both processes are integral to coaching.
11	Freire (2000)	Education for Social Change	It is the concept of praxis, a process of moving back and	The key in praxis is the relationship

#	Theorist/Author(s)	Theory	Main Argument	Potential Contribution for Coaching Process
			forth in a critical way between action and reflection. The process increases the learner's awareness of socio-cultural forces that shape their lives. His concept of conscientization is a process of increasing the learner's level of consciousness through dialogue and action.	between reflection and action, made possible through dialogue. It plays the central role in a coaching process.
1 2	Hofstede (1997)	Cultural Differences	Individuals express culture through their values that in turn affect their behaviors. The four cultural value dimensions include affiliation-achievement, certainty-uncertainty, individualism-collectivism and low power distance-high power distance.	Clarifying cultural value dimensions are of paramount importance in coaching since they help in understanding and predicting behaviors of coachees.
1 3	Ting-Toomey (1999)	Identity Negotiation	Identity is viewed as reflective self-images constructed, experienced and communicated by individuals within a culture and in a particular interaction situation. Individuals in all cultures or ethnic groups have basic motivation needs for identity security, trust, inclusion,	The understanding of connection between self-images and cultural values helps in facilitating the learning process of coachees.

#	Theorist/Author(s)	Theory	Main Argument	Potential Contribution for Coaching Process
			connection, and stability.	
14	Singer (1998)	Intercultural Communications	Every interpersonal communication must, to some extent, be an intercultural communication because no two individuals share the exact same group membership or raking of importance to themselves of the group memberships they share.	Coaches should be sensitive to not only to the cultural uniqueness of the people they coach, but also to their own cultural uniqueness.
15	Adler (1998)	Cultural Identity Development	A multicultural person is always in flux, continually redefining one's self, responding, adapting and changing in the face of new experience. He engages in cultural learning and unlearning through series of experiments and explorations to fit the context. A multicultural personality transcends the permanent, fixed, traditional structure of cultural identity.	Coaches recognize full range of human experiences by engaging with people whose cultural orientations are different from them and other coachees.
16	Langer (1997)	Mindful Learning	When we are mindful, we view a situation from several perspectives, see information as novel, attend to the context in which we are perceiving the	The practice of mindful intercultural communication requires paying attention to one's own

#	Theorist/Author(s)	Theory	Main Argument	Potential Contribution for Coaching Process
			information, and eventually create new categories through which this information may be understood.	beliefs, values, assumptions and behaviors, and simultaneously, being aware of other person's cultural frame of reference.

Notes