AN EXPLORATORY QUALITATIVE STUDY OF EMPLOYEE PERCEPTIONS OF EFFECTIVE MANAGER COACH-EMPLOYEE RELATIONSHIP

by

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Abstract

Previous researchers showed manager coaches face challenges setting up effective employee coaching relationships with their direct reports. Previous quantitative studies about the employee coaching relationship have not fully captured the common factors of effective coaching relationships that contribute to successful coaching outcomes. The purpose was to explore employee beliefs to find the factors that led to an effective manager-coach and employee relationship. One research question guided the study: What are the factors that employees believe lead to an effective manager coach-employee relationship? The researcher used a qualitative, exploratory, theoretical, thematic research design, from a constructivist paradigm to provide greater understanding about employee coaching relationships. The participants were lower-level employees from various industries who had experienced positive employee coaching relationships and outcomes with their manager-coaches. The researcher recruited 18 participants online from LinkedIn using nonrandom, purposive snowball sampling. The researcher collected qualitative data via in-depth, open-ended, semi-structured, telephone interviews. The researcher analyzed the data using deductive and inductive approaches for theoretical thematic analysis through the conceptual lens of social interdependence theory. Eight factors emerged for setting up an effective employee coaching relationship: (a) manager-coach and employee positive interdependence, (b) manager-coach person-set, (c) manager-coach role-set, (d) manager-coach and employee partnership, (e) manager-coach and employee psychological processes, (f) manager-coach and employee relationship, (g) employee coaching growth, and (h) employee coaching outcomes. Results showed that positive interdependence was an antecedent for effective manager-coach and employee relationships. All 18 (100%) of the participants indicated they established positive interdependent relationships with their manager-coaches in
organizational settings. The results also showed manager-coach and employee relationships were mutually dependent partnership-oriented relationships that positively evolved over time to become personal and professional working relationships. Eight (44%) of the 18 participants reported that their manager-coaches treated them as equals. Also, 12 (67%) of the 18 participants reported that their manager-coaches treated them as friends. The researcher concluded that positive social interdependence was necessary to establish effective manager-coach and employee relationships. Organizations can use the results of this study to build effective manager-coach and employee coaching programs.
Dedication

Thank you, God, for allowing me to dream big and for making my dreams come true. I immigrated to the United States when I was 29 years old and since then my life has changed. This dissertation is dedicated to my beloved parents, family, and other special people in my life. My father, Guido Pedro Alejandro Albarracin Rivero, passed away when I was 18 years old, but since then, I know he has been with me spiritually in all milestones of my life. My daddy and I always had a special connection. He was a very rational man, and I miss his company, care, and our logical conversations so much. I LOVE YOU, DADDY!

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CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

Introduction

United States business organizations work in fast-paced, highly competitive global markets, and a critical aspect to success is the ability to attract, develop, and keep talented professionals (Maamari & Alameh, 2016). Other important aspects are the ability to support employees with learning (Agwu & Luke, 2015) by engaging, motivating, and committing them to professional development (Roter, 2016), and by building effective interpersonal working relationships (Di Fabio, 2016). Organizations are aware that people, intellectual capital, and talent are fundamental to organizational success and to keep competitive advantage (Ibidunni, Osibanjo, Adeniji, Salau, & Falola, 2016). As a result, the practice of employee coaching in organizations has emerged as a significant managerial style to increase retention efforts (Ibidunni et al., 2016) and strengthen organizational performance (Weer, DiRenzo, & Shipper, 2016). However, there were few investigations into the practice of employee coaching (Pousa & Mathieu, 2015).

Researchers called for more investigations to understand the main components of manager coach-employee relationships that impact coaching outcomes (Grant, 2014; Gregory & Levy, 2010, 2012; Joo, Sushko, & McLean, 2012; O’Broin, 2016). Previous research conducted using quantitative methodologies (Gregory & Levy, 2010, 2012) did not fully capture the common factors of successful coaching relationships that contribute to positive coaching outcomes. Therefore, this study’s goal was to fill the gap in the manager coach-employee
literature by using a qualitative exploratory research design. This study used a qualitative method to obtain rich, thick descriptions for thematic analysis to gain new insight into effective manager coach-employee relationships (Smeulers, Onderwater, Van Zwieten, & Vermeulen, 2014). Employee experiences and the meaning employees assign to coaching relationships add unique insight into manager-coach relationships (Percy, Kostere, & Kostere, 2015).

Researchers found that managers who coach employees face difficulties setting up effective coaching relationships with their direct reports. According to McCarthy and Milner (2013), for example, managers are unable to coach their direct reports effectively because they lack coaching skills and specific knowledge about how to create positive environments to foster employee growth. McCarthy and Milner described how managers face difficulties as they work to create supportive cultures for employee coaching; therefore, manager coaches need to know what the specific coaching skills are to successfully coach their direct reports. Manager coach-employee relationships were the focus of the study because they are important tools to improve organizational performance.

Chapter 1 begins with a review of organizational difficulties due to globalization in the 21st century. Chapter 1 also includes an introduction to the background of the study by presenting the topic of coaching in the workplace, briefly reviewing seminal and recent articles related to the manager coach-employee relationship and explaining the conceptual framework. Chapter 1 also includes the (a) need for the study, (b) purpose and significance of the study, (c) research question, (d) definitions of terms, (e) research design, and (f) assumptions and limitations.
**Background of the Study**

This section includes information about the importance of employee coaching with a discussion about workplace manager and coach-employee relationships. The manager coach-employee relationship has emerged as a potential managerial tool and talent management strategy to increase employee performance and boost a manager-coach’s effectiveness for managing employee motivations and needs (Engle et al., 2017; Lakshman, 2016; Surijah, 2016). As a result, a manager coach-employee relationship can drive an organization’s productivity and outcomes. Manager coaches, however, are still unclear and unable to name (a) what the required behaviors are to develop effective manager coach-employee relationships, and (b) how the behaviors influence their relationships with their direct reports for better organizational outcomes (McCarthy & Milner, 2013). Researchers, therefore, have called for more investigations to find the most important components of coaching relationships that positively affect coaching outcomes (Grant, 2014; Gregory & Levy, 2010, 2012; Joo et al., 2012; O’Broin, 2016). The need to find the components of effective coaching relationship behaviors, thus, created the demand for this study.

**Organizational Context and Challenges in the 21st Century**

Organizations in the 21st century are facing workforce management challenges because of continual, fast-paced, and abrupt changes in business environments in the United States and globally (Militaru & Zanfir, 2016). New dimensions and multiple variables in business environments have emerged, and they have created constant pressure and a need for the organization to adapt to new workplace management requirements (Militaru & Zanfir, 2016). Surijah (2016) found that businesses try to create new strategies to compete in the global
environment during a period of rapid changes in technology; however, human capital affects the execution and implementation of their strategies. Human capital and processes are essential to implementation of an organization’s overall strategies (Surijah, 2016). Surijah described how effective human capital influences the ability to attract, develop, and keep employees to achieve and preserve competitive advantage.

Employee retention and employee turnover are constant business problems (Lakshman, 2016). Employee retention and turnover are barriers to successful implementation of long-term growth strategies (Lakshman, 2016) because they affect employee productivity (Punnoose & Ajit, 2016). The Society for Human Resource Management ([SHRM], 2016) conducted a random survey of 798 human resource (HR) professionals and found that employee turnover and retention were the top workforce management difficulties in 2016. Ibidunni et al. (2016) posited that employee relationships with their direct supervisors affected employee job satisfaction and intentions to stay. Other research supported the same conclusions. The SHRM (2015) found that an employee’s relationship with their direct supervisor was an important contributor to employee job satisfaction. The SHRM study results were congruent with the results of Hegarty and Cusack (2016) who found that poor relationships between supervisors and direct reports negatively impacted job satisfaction. In a qualitative study, Engle et al. (2017) found employee coaching was a potential strategy for managers to (a) increase their effectiveness implementing new innovative initiatives in health care and (b) increase employee job satisfaction. Also, Utrilla, Grande, and Lorenzo (2014) found that employee coaching has the potential to drive up business and employee performance.
Employee Coaching in the Workplace

Coaching is a valuable human development tool (Shoukry, 2016), and coaching has emerged as an important managerial style in some corporations (Weer et al., 2016). Batson and Yoder (2012) defined employee coaching as a dyadic relationship between a manager and a subordinate to improve subordinate skills and knowledge to achieve high performance. Also, recent studies have focused on the impact of employee coaching on innovation (Engle et al., 2017; Schaubroeck, Carmeli, Bhathi, & Paz, 2016) and change (Gormley & van Nieuwerburgh, 2014; Pousa & Mathieu, 2015). Other researchers focused on the impact of employee coaching on employee effectiveness (Kim, 2014; Kim & Kuo, 2015) and positive relationships (Batson & Yoder, 2012; Filsinger, 2014; Hagen, 2012; McCarthy & Milner, 2013; Turner & McCarthy, 2015). There are several implications of the research conducted to date.

The trend in the literature about employee coaching highlights the need for organizations to explore new solutions and strategies to successfully cope with fast-paced globalization and continued abrupt changes in the business environment while increasing employee effectiveness and organizational performance (Kim, 2014). In congruence with this trend in employee coaching, Surijah (2016) noted that organizations need to focus on their human capital and their learning culture. However, a high-quality relationship between managers and subordinates is a fundamental need for effective manager coach-employee relationships (Ye, Wang, Wendt, Wu, & Euwema, 2015).

Manager Coach-Employee Relationship

Researchers across various disciplines agree that peer coaching (Parker, Wasserman, Kram, & Hall, 2015) and leadership and executive coaching (Forde, McMahon, Gronn, &
Martin, 2013; Gan & Chong, 2015) can positively affect businesses. Researchers also found that manager and follower programs (Fischer & Montalbano, 2014; Hegarty & Cusack, 2016) and coaching (Bachkrova, Sibley, & Myers, 2015; Gessnitzer & Kauffeld, 2015; Mosteo, Bautista-Foguet, Mckeever, & Serlavos, 2016) can have positive effects. The employee coaching relationship discipline holds similar agreements (Filsinger, 2014; McCarthy & Milner, 2013; Turner & McCarthy, 2015). The quality of the coaching relationship significantly influences the effectiveness of the manager coach-employee relationship (Gregory & Levy, 2011; Weer et al., 2016). As defined by Gregory and Levy (2010), an employee coaching relationship is a working partnership between a manager and an employee that addresses the employee’s performance and development needs. While the practice of employee coaching is evolving, there is little research about the manager coach-employee relationship (Pousa & Mathieu, 2015).

This exploratory qualitative study sought to expand the existing knowledge base about manager coach-employee relationships by exploring the common factors that lead to effective coaching relationships from the employees’ perspectives. Also, this study discusses the research problem found in the employee coaching relationship literature. McCarthy and Milner (2013) noted that manager-coaches faced difficulties building effective coaching relationships with their direct reports. Managers who are coaches still do not know the behaviors needed to develop an effective coaching relationship, nor do they know how the behaviors influence their direct report relationships for better organizational outcomes (McCarthy & Milner, 2013). Social interdependence theory (Deutsch, 1949a, 1949b, 1962; Johnson & Johnson, 1989, 2005, 2009; Kelley, 1984; Kelley & Thibaut, 1978) offered essential theoretical elements and the basis to understand manager coach-employee relationships.
Need for the Study

Seminal studies on employee coaching focused on the coaching manager’s role and skills (Graham, Wedman, & Garvin-Kester, 1993, 1994; Orth, Wilkinson, & Benfari, 1987). More recent research on employee coaching focused on creating instruments to measure the skills of coaching managers (Ellinger, Watkins, & Bostrom, 1999; McLean, Yang, Kuo, Tolbert, & Larkin, 2005). The focus switched from the coaching manager’s roles and skills to explore the quality of the employee coaching relationship (Gregory & Levy, 2010, 2011, 2012).

Previous quantitative studies (Gregory & Levy, 2010, 2012) have not fully captured the common factors of effective coaching relationships that contribute to successful coaching outcomes. Researchers, therefore, have called for more studies to find the main components of coaching relationships that impact coaching outcomes (Grant, 2014; Gregory & Levy, 2010, 2012; Joo et al., 2012; O’Broin, 2016). Scholars have shown, thus, that coaching relationships can have positive impacts on organizational outcomes (Filsinger, 2014; McCarthy & Milner, 2013; Turner & McCarthy, 2015). Coaching managers face difficulties setting up effective coaching relationships with their direct reports (McCarthy & Milner, 2013); therefore, there was a need to uncover factors common to successful manager coach-employee relationships.

The research on the employee coaching relationship shows that earlier quantitative studies (Gregory & Levy, 2010, 2011, 2012) did not fully capture the common factors of effective coaching relationships that contribute to successful coaching outcomes. Research also shows coaching managers face difficulties setting-up effective coaching relationships with their direct reports (McCarthy & Milner, 2013). There was a need, thus, to find the critical
components of manager coach-employee relationships that positively affect coaching outcomes (Grant, 2014; Gregory & Levy, 2010, 2012; Joo et al., 2012).

**Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this exploratory qualitative research was to find the factors associated with an effective manager coach-employee relationship. The results offer more information for implementing manager coach-employee programs that could help recruitment and retention efforts (Ibidunni et al., 2016). Successful recruitment and retention of top employees lead to positive organizational outcomes and supports continued organizational growth (Cox, Bachkirova, & Clutterbuck, 2014). The results also offer more information to help manager-coaches (a) become role models for practicing effective coaching skills and (b) create a positive environment to foster developmental employee coaching relationships (McCarthy & Milner, 2013). As asserted by McCarthy and Milner (2013), coaching developmental training programs could help managers to develop coaching skills such as relational skills, listening skills, non-directive skills, shared power skills, and confidentiality.

**Significance of the Study**

The practice of coaching in organizational settings has become more established in the past 10 years (Beattie et al., 2014). Previous quantitative studies (Gregory & Levy, 2010, 2012) have not fully captured the common factors of an effective manager coach-employee relationship. This qualitative exploratory study, therefore, bridged a gap that existed in the manager coach-employee relationship literature.

This study expanded earlier knowledge and offered broader understanding of the existing literature about the manager coach-employee relationship. Previous quantitative studies (de
Haan, Duckworth, Birch, & Jones, 2013; Gregory & Levy, 2012) have not entirely shown the common factors of the employee coaching relationship that contribute to successful coaching outcomes. Grant (2014) described the need to study this gap in the literature. Therefore, the researcher used an exploratory qualitative research design with qualitative interviews to gather rich information to answer the research question.

Organizations implement the practice of employee coaching as a strategy to stay competitive (Kim, 2014). Other researchers reported that organizations use employee coaching as a source of competitive advantage (Pousa & Mathieu, 2015). Batson and Yoder (2012), for example, showed that the primary goal of employee coaching at the organizational level was to meet organizational goals. McCarthy and Milner (2013) found that organizations lack strategies to support managers in their roles as employee coaches. Therefore, the results of this exploratory qualitative study offer greater understanding of the topic.

There is an imperative need for managers to practice employee coaching (Ellinger, 2013). Gregory and Levy (2010) described the need for effective employee coaching relationships for successful coaching outcomes; yet, coaching managers have failed to deliver helpful learning experiences (Beattie et al., 2014). Managers need more training to tackle coaching challenges (McCarthy & Milner, 2013). This exploratory qualitative study, therefore, informed the practice of coaching to overcome the challenges (Grant, 2014).

**Research Question**

**Research question.** What are the factors that employees believe lead to an effective manager coach-employee relationship?
Definition of Terms

*Employee coaching relationship.* An employee coaching relationship is a working partnership between a manager and an employee that addresses the employee’s performance and development needs (Gregory & Levy, 2010).

*Mutual collaboration.* Mutual collaboration is a term used to describe how two people can work together to reach common goals (VanVactor, 2012).

*Mutual communication.* Mutual communication is dialogue where two people explore ideas to learn together (Knight & van Nieuwerburgh, 2012).

*Mutual connection.* Mutual connection is building a strong rapport and a mutual understanding between two people (Bachkirova et al., 2015).

*Mutual task.* A mutual task needs coordination, communication, and cooperation (Bertucci, Johnson, Johnson, & Conte, 2016).

*Partnership.* A partnership is a relationship where two people are equals and have more significant experiences based on collaborative choices (Knight & van Nieuwerburgh, 2012).

*Social interdependence theory.* Social interdependence theory (SIT) describes a close relationship where two people mutually influence each other’s thoughts, emotions, and behaviors (Deutsch, 1949a; Johnson & Johnson, 2009; Kelley & Thibaut, 1978).

Research Design

This study used an exploratory qualitative research design based on a social constructivist paradigm (O’Neil & Koekemoer, 2016). Percy et al. (2015) defined an exploratory qualitative design as a basic qualitative approach that allows participants to describe the content of a given real-world experience or issue by offering opinions, beliefs, feelings, and perspectives. A
qualitative approach allows a researcher to explore, identify, and seek to understand the rich
descriptions of real-world experiences (Percy et al., 2015). The factors that lead to an effective
manager coach-employee relationship are elusive (Grant, 2014). An exploratory research design,
thus, allowed the researcher to explore, identify, and seek an in-depth understanding of the
factors that lead to an effective manager coach-employee relationship.

The participants for this study were successfully coached employees in the United States.
The researcher recruited potential participants using LinkedIn. The researcher employed
nonrandom, purposive snowball sampling as described by Creswell (2013). The primary method
of data collection was in-depth, open-ended, semistructured telephone interviews. The researcher
used thematic analysis (Percy et al., 2015) to examine data gathered via telephone interviews.
Further, the researcher used QRS NVivo 11 to search for patterns from which the themes
emerged.

Assumptions, Limitations, and Delimitations

Assumptions

This section holds the assumptions of this qualitative exploratory study. What follows is a
description of the general methodological assumptions, theoretical assumptions, and topic-
specific assumptions. As suggested by Kathlke (2014), the researcher’s ontological,
epistemological, and axiological beliefs are the foundation for general methodological
assumptions. The theoretical foundation for the study was SIT (Deutsch, 1949a, 1949b, 1962;
assumptions were based on earlier research assumptions pointed out by researchers in the field of
employee coaching and employee coaching relationships (O’Broin, 2016).
**General methodological assumptions.** The researcher based the methodological assumptions of this exploratory qualitative research on a set of paradigmatic beliefs and philosophical assumptions. In a seminal review of qualitative research, Guba (1990) defined *paradigm* as a set of beliefs that directs a researcher’s actions. The researcher conducted this exploratory qualitative research from a social constructivist paradigm, which guided the research design and choice of methodology, methods, and procedures. Additionally, Kathlke (2014) defined philosophic assumptions as the researcher’s standpoint on reality (i.e., ontology), knowledge (i.e., epistemology), and values (i.e., axiology). Therefore, the researcher’s social constructivist standpoint and philosophical assumptions guided the study.

The researcher designed this exploratory qualitative research from a social constructivist paradigm. O’Neil and Koekemoer (2016) defined the social constructivist paradigm as a traditional set of beliefs that accepts an individual’s view of valid and multiple realities. Specifically, the authors described how (a) individuals construct reality, (b) knowledge is socially constructed through social interaction and dialogue, and (c) individual values are expressed through subjectivity, experiences, and interpersonal relationships. Thus, the researcher employed nonrandom, purposive, snowball sampling to allow the participants to share their unique realities of the manager-coach and employee experience.

Regarding epistemological assumptions, the researcher used in-depth, open-ended, semistructured telephone interviews, as recommended by Percy et al. (2015). Semistructured telephone interviews allowed the researcher and participants to cocreate knowledge (Sutton & Austin, 2015). The researcher asked topical questions, and participants responded and shared their perceptions and knowledge on the topic. Regarding axiological assumptions, the researcher
built close, positive relationships with the participants, as recommended by Gelling (2015). The relationship started from the point of participant selection. The positive relationships continued as the researcher obtained consent forms, scheduled telephone interviews, conducted telephone interviews, and closed the loop with participants using a check-in about the transcribed data (Ghafouri & Ofoghi, 2016).

**Theoretical assumptions.** In a theoretical framework analysis, Anfara and Mertz (2015) defined theory as building blocks to frame an understanding of a unique perspective of the world. The building blocks ranged from basic level abstractions, propositions, assumptions, constructs, and concepts to more complex levels of existing experiences and sensations for understanding the world. As proposed by Anfara and Mertz (2015, p. 2), “To understand a theory is to travel in someone else’s mind and become able to perceive reality as that person does.” Researchers use a set of logically developed theoretical propositions or assumptions to define and explain new constructs and their relationships to a phenomenon of interest. This creative invention of new constructs and the relationships among them is known as *theory*.

This qualitative exploratory study about the manager coach-employee relationship used a set of theoretical propositions or assumptions based on the seminal work describing SIT (Deutsch, 1949a, 1949b, 1962; Johnson & Johnson, 1989, 2005, 2009; Kelley, 1984; Kelley & Thibaut, 1978). The goal was to find factors that lead to building successful manager coach-employee relationships. A situational, daily, positive interdependent working partnership is a necessary condition for an effective employee coaching relationship (Deutsch, 1949b, 1962; Fausing, Joensson, Lewandowski, & Bligh, 2015; Johnson & Johnson, 1989; Kelley & Thibaut, 1978). A partner (i.e., a manager-coach) engages in daily situations to address the other partner’s
(i.e., an employee’s) psychological needs, safety and security needs, social and belonging needs, self-esteem needs, and self-actualization needs. Additionally, when partners engage in daily situations, they create positive experiences and feelings of gratification and fulfillment (Kelley, 1984).

Partners build positive interdependence when they interact with each other to foster each other’s goals and enhance their relationships (Deutsch, 1949b, 1962; Johnson & Johnson, 2009). Partners also engage in promotive interactions to foster positive interdependence. Partners display positive interdependence through mutual influence, motivation, help, support, benefits, and trust (Deutsch, 1949b). Partners engage in effective behaviors by showing mutual responsibility and accountability toward their relationship and toward their common goals (Deutsch, 1949b). Additionally, partners display positive attitudes and positive energy behaviors to enhance their relationship and well-being (Deutsch, 1949b). Some examples of positive and effective social skills and positive and effective processing skills are (a) respect, (b) support, and (c) getting to know each other to build mutual self-esteem (Johnson & Johnson, 2009; Yager, Johnson, Johnson, & Snider, 1986).

Deutsch (1949b), Kelley and Thibaut (1978), and Johnson and Johnson (2009) used SIT to describe how partners initially set up, develop, and keep their relationships by engaging in mutual behaviors. The four mutual behaviors they described were (a) mutual connection, (b) mutual communication, (c) mutual collaboration, and (d) mutual tasks. Partners engage in a close relationship to build a secure connection displayed as a working and professional friendship (Kelley & Thibaut, 1978). Additionally, partners engage in reciprocal, two-way open communication by showing openness and by self-disclosing (Deutsch, 1949b). Partners interact
through positive conversations and by practicing mutual feedback (Deutsch, 1949b; Johnson & Johnson, 2005). Partners also engage in mutual collaboration to sustain their partnership by maximizing rewards and minimizing cost; partners are equal and share the creation of meaning (Kelley & Thibaut, 1978). Partners engage to work on mutual tasks through goal planning, and they share tasks and common goals (Deutsch, 1949b; Johnson & Johnson, 2009).

**Topic-specific assumptions.** Nurturing a coaching relationship was a major topic-specific assumption for coaching researchers (Spaten, O’Broin, & Lokken, 2016). Spaten et al. (2016) and O’Broin (2016) described the need for greater understanding of the coaching relationship through specific research questions. They suggested researchers ask (a) whether coaching really works; (b) whether the coaching relationship should be tied to a specific context; (c) how the coaching relationship functions; (d) how the coaching relationship is established, developed, and maintained; (e) determining the interpersonal and relational themes of the coaching relationship; (f) determining how the coaching relationship influences the coaching outcomes; (g) the role of power in the coaching relationship; and (h) understanding the coach’s effective attributes that lead to productive coaching relationships and coaching outcomes. This qualitative exploratory research focused on some of the topic-specific assumptions related to coaching. Specifically, this research focused on manager coach-employee relationships in an organizational context. Other researchers described similar topic-specific assumptions associated with the coaching relationship.

Researchers called for more clarity and deeper understanding into the relationship between supervisors and subordinates before coaching (Gregory & Levy, 2012; McCarthy & Milner, 2013). Gregory and Levy (2012) assumed that supervisors and employees shared an
established working and professional relationship before they started practicing coaching. Gregory and Levy (2012) called for a need to better understand an existing relationship’s context before coaching begins. McCarthy and Milner (2013) concurred with Gregory and Levy’s (2012) assumptions; however, McCarthy and Milner (2013) added that the supervisor’s credibility from was an important element. The current qualitative exploratory research took these earlier research assumptions into account as part of the literature about employee coaching and the employee coaching relationship.

Limitations

This section is a discussion of the limitations and delimitations of this exploratory qualitative research. There were design and method limitations for the current study. A small sample size, for example, was a limitation because a small sample size does not allow the researcher to generalize the results (Malterud, Siersma, & Guassora, 2016). Additionally, the researcher’s decisions about the design and methods employed in the study were delimitations. Costa, Breda, Pinho, Bakas, and Durao (2016) stressed that the researcher controls all decisions about participant selection and the inclusion criteria.

This exploratory qualitative study had two basic limitations. One limitation was the small sample size because qualitative researchers use small representative samples to gain participant perspectives (Bellamy, Ostini, Martini, & Kairuz, 2016). In the current study, it was impossible to obtain information from all successfully coached employees; thus, the researcher’s goal was to gain a representative sample. Even though the researcher tried to recruit participants from all industries, the participants mainly came from health care, government agencies, banking, manufacturing, retail, and information technology organizations. The researcher used purposive
snowball sampling, and the initial goal was to obtain between 15 and 20 participants; thus, as with all qualitative research, the small sample size was a limitation (Reay, 2014).

A second limitation was credibility. A researcher’s personal biases and subjective interpretations of the resulting data can affect the credibility of the results (Ghafouri & Ofoghi, 2016). As recommended by Ghafouri and Ofoghi (2016), the researcher used a member check-in to ensure the accuracy of the interpretation of the transcriptions. Participants received a copy of the transcribed interviews to confirm whether the transcribed information was exact. Additionally, the researcher engaged in a reflective practice to reflect on his thoughts and decision-making during the study (Orange, 2016); the researcher used a personal journal to track the methodological decisions, the data analysis procedures, and any emerging ideas.

**Delimitations**

The researcher controlled the delimitations of this exploratory qualitative study. Costa et al. (2016) defined delimitations as the researcher’s decisions to set the boundaries for the research scope, research design, and methods to manage the research process. The goal, therefore, was the investigation of a specific, representative sample of all employees in the United States successfully coached by their direct supervisors in an organizational setting. For example, the inclusion criteria were (a) participants who successfully received coaching from their direct supervisors, (b) participants with established working relationships with their direct supervisors for longer than six months, and (c) participants who experienced improvements in their relationship because of coaching from their direct supervisors.
**Organization of the Remainder of the Study**

Chapter 1 offered and introduction to the study. Also offered were the background, need for the study, the purpose of the study, the significance of the study, the research question, the definition of terms, the research design, and the theoretical assumptions and limitations. Chapter 2 presents the literature review including the methods for searching the literature, SIT as the theoretical orientation of the study, a review of the literature on employee coaching relationship, a synthesis of research findings, a critique of earlier research methods, and a summary. Chapter 3 includes the research methodology, the research question, the research design, the target population and sample, the procedures, the instruments, the ethical consideration, and a summary. Chapter 4 presents the results of data collection, and Chapter 5 offers a summary and discussion of results, the conclusions based on results, a comparison of findings with the theoretical framework and earlier literature, an interpretation of the findings, the limitations, the implications for the practice of employee coaching relationships, the recommendations for further research, and a conclusion.
CHAPTER 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

Chapter 2 gives an analysis and a discussion of the literature review about employee coaching relationships in organizational settings. Additionally, this chapter presented (a) methods of searching, (b) the theoretical orientation for the study, (c) a review of the literature, (d) a synthesis of the research findings, and (e) a critique of previously used research methods. Furthermore, Chapter 2 ends with a chapter summary.

Methods of Searching

The researcher found peer-reviewed articles using Summon Academic Search Engine, ProQuest, Academic Research Premier, and Google Scholar with word searches using terms including employee coaching relationship, employee coaching, managerial coaching, manager-as-coach, employee coaching and outcomes, and employee coaching relationship and outcomes. As suggested by Grant (2016), the search included multidisciplinary, peer-reviewed articles to indirectly inform the researcher as he gathered the information necessary to answer the research question. Multidisciplinary words and terms related to the manager employee-coach relationship used in the search included coaching, coaching relationship, coaching and coaching outcomes, sports coaching relationship, executive coaching relationship, sports coaching and coaching outcomes, executive coaching, and coaching outcomes. Another way the researcher found peer-
reviewed articles was by reviewing the reference lists of each peer-reviewed article for more sources.

**Theoretical Orientation for the Study**

The purpose of this qualitative exploratory study was to find the factors that led to effective manager coach-employee relationships in organizational settings to answer the research question: what are the factors that employees believe lead to an effective manager-coach and employee relationship? The theoretical foundation included seminal literature on SIT (Deutsch, 1949a, 1949b, 1962; Johnson & Johnson, 1989, 2005, 2009; Kelley, 1984; Kelley & Thibaut, 1978). Four core SIT factors emerged: (a) mutual connection, (b) mutual collaboration, (c) mutual feedback, and (d) mutual goal-setting. What follows is an overview of the research conducted about the SIT.

**Social Interdependence Theory (SIT)**

The researcher took a comprehensive approach to review the seminal literature on SIT to integrate the tenets of SIT and build a conceptual framework for the study. The conceptual framework served as the theoretical foundation of this research. Social interdependence theory (Deutsch, 1949a, 1949b, 1962; Johnson & Johnson, 1989, 2005, 2009; Kelley, 1984; Kelley & Thibaut, 1978) offered essential theoretical elements and the basis to understand manager coach-employee relationships. Johnson and Johnson (1989) defined social interdependence as shared influence between two people. Social interdependence exists when an individual’s actions influence their own and other’s actions (Johnson & Johnson, 1989). Additionally, Kelley and Thibaut (1978) found that the most important factor of all interdependent relationships is
closeness. Kelley and Thibaut believed that people in a close interdependent relationship collaborate to maximize common rewards and minimize common costs.

Deutsch (1949a, 1962) found two types of social interdependence: positive interdependence and negative interdependence. Positive interdependence exists when partners use effective behaviors to foster common goals, and negative interdependence exists when partners use ineffective behaviors to impede the accomplishment of common goals (Deutsch, 1949a, 1962). Positive interdependence exists when an individual’s actions foster the other partner’s goals to reach common goals. On the other hand, negative interdependence occurs when an individual’s actions impede the attainment of joint goals (Deutsch, 1949a, 1962).

Similarly, effective actions positively impact the quality and the outcomes of interdependent relationships and improve efforts to achieve common goals. On the other hand, ineffective actions impede partners’ efforts to achieve their goals because ineffective actions damage their relationships (Johnson & Johnson, 2009).

The basic tenets of SIT. The researcher integrated the basic tenets of SIT from seminal studies (Deutsch, 1949a, 1949b, 1962; Johnson & Johnson, 1989, 2005, 2009; Kelley, 1984; Kelley & Thibaut, 1978). The basic tenets of SIT included (a) positive interdependence (Johnson & Johnson, 2009) and (b) psychological processes (Deutsch, 1949a, 1949b, 1962). The basic tenets of SIT also included (a) promotive interaction (Deutsch, 1962), (b) social and group processing skills (Johnson & Johnson, 2009), and (c) interdependence situation (Kelley, 1979, 1984b Kelley & Thibaut, 1978). What follows is a discussion of the basic tenets of SIT linked to the manager coach-employee relationship.
Positive interdependence and the manager coach-employee relationship. Positive interdependence is a positive correlation that fosters the achievement of common goals between two partners (see Figure 1; Johnson & Johnson, 2009). Johnson and Johnson (2009) believed, “Individuals perceived that they could attain their goals if and only if the other individuals with whom they are cooperatively linked attain their goals” (p. 366). In coaching, Gabriel, Moran, and Gregory (2014) found that collaboration could foster the process and effectiveness of coaching. Therefore, goal attainment in coaching is a collaborative process (Gabriel et al., 2014), and the adoptions of positive interdependence could enhance the coaching relationship and streamline the process of achieving mutual goals (Johnson & Johnson, 2009). Also, Deutsch (1962) claimed that the impact of effective actions on positive interdependence involves three psychological processes.

Psychological processes and the manager coach-employee relationship. Substitutability, cathexis, and inducibility are three psychological processes that could effectively impact positive interdependence through effective actions or behaviors (Deutsch, 1949b). Substitutability is the feelings of responsibility and accountability of each partner in the relationship toward common goals. In the coaching relationship, Grant (2014) found that coaches could promote coachee feelings of responsibility and accountability by asking the coachee to offer weekly progress reports and updates on the achievement of goals. Therefore, substitutability could enhance coach and coachee feelings of responsibility in the coaching relationship (Deutsch, 1949b).

Cathexis is the mental energy and attitude formation invested in the relationship to enhance the well-being of both partners in the relationship (Deutsch, 1949b). In a theoretical
study of the coaching relationship, Gabriel et al. (2014) proposed that informal meaningful conversations and fun activities could enhance well-being. Gabriel et al. asserted that coaches and coachees could talk about and do fun things to boost mutual appreciation and create positive effects in their relationship. Therefore, cathexis (Deutsch, 1949b) could enhance the coaching relationship if those involved practiced informal meaningful conversations and undertook fun activities (Gabriel et al., 2014).

Inducibility is the willingness of both partners to show openness in the relationship to influence each other and set the basis for cooperation toward common interest (Deutsch, 1949b). In a quantitative study, Gan and Chong (2015) reported that openness and honest communication between coach and coachee could enhance the coaching relationship. Coach and coachee could influence each other by sharing professional and personal information (Gan & Chong, 2015). Therefore, inducibility (Deutsch, 1949b) could enhance the coach and coachee’s willingness to show openness in the relationship and foster the coaching relationship (Gan & Chong, 2015). Deutsch (1949b) found that promotive interaction cultivated positive interdependence.

Promotive interaction and the manager coach-employee relationship. Promotive interaction is the reciprocal and contributive activities in a partnership that exists when two partners act to increase their chances of success to reach mutual goals (Deutsch, 1949b). Deutsch reported that variables, such as shared influence, reciprocal help, a motivation for mutual benefit, and shared trust, enhance promotive interaction between two partners. In a coaching study, Cox
(2012) found that trust was the foundation of coaching relationships. Cox reported coaches and coachees formed trusting bonds based on respect and mutual appreciation, which allowed them to be open and share personal information.

In a study on motivational coaching climate, Appleton, Ntoumanis, Quested, Viladrich, and Duda (2016) found that supportive social behaviors, such as coaches’ comfort behaviors, personal involvement, showing care, and active listening, positively empowered coaches to reach their goals. Appleton et al. (2016) also reported a positive correlation between socially supportive behaviors and coachee satisfaction with coaching. Therefore, promotive interaction (Deutsch, 1949b) can enhance coaching relationships by building mutual trust (Cox, 2012) and creating a motivational climate (Appleton et al., 2016). Promotive interaction needs proper social skills and routine group processing skills (Deutsch, 1962).

**Social and group processing skills and the manager coach-employee relationship.**

Johnson and Johnson (2009) defined social skills and group processing skills as useful positive skills that foster the achievement of mutual goals. Coaches and employees need social skills and group processing skills to reach high-quality cooperation between partners with shared purposes (Johnson & Johnson, 2009). Social skills must involve behaviors that enhance the partners’ relationship by (a) getting to know and trusting each other, (b) communicating accurately, and (c) accepting and supporting each other (Johnson & Johnson, 2009). In a coaching study, Gan and Chong (2015) found that a good connection in the coaching relationship develops when coaches and coachees get to know each other. In a coaching study about communication, Agwu and Luke (2015) reported that setting and communicating clear expectations could enhance coaching relationships.
Yager et al. (1986) claimed that group processing skills are conditional requirements for successful partnership work processes. In group processing, partners must reflect on their progress toward their common purpose, and they must also show respect for each other as human beings (Yager et al., 1986), which serves to drive up partners’ self-esteem (Smith, Tyler, Huo, Ortiz, & Lind, 1998). In a theoretical coaching study, Gabriel et al. (2014) proposed that showing relational behaviors, such as valuing, appreciating, and respecting coachees, could potentially enhance coaching relationships. In a sports coaching study, Freeman, Coffee, Moll, Ress, and Sammy (2014) found that emotional support through enhancement of the coachee’s self-esteem could positively affect coaching outcomes. Therefore, group processing skills (Johnson & Johnson, 2009) can positively affect coaching relationships if managers value, respect, and appreciate coachees (Gabriel et al., 2014), and if managers enhance coachee self-esteem (Freeman et al., 2014).

**Interdependent situations and the manager coach-employee relationship.** An interdependence situation is a relational process or pattern of interaction between two people (Kelley & Thibaut, 1978). In this pattern of interaction, people interact and assess their needs, thoughts, feelings, and motivations in the context of a given situation (Kelley, 1984). For example, within a gratifying interaction, people display prosocial behaviors and are responsive to attend other people’s primary needs, such as psychological needs, safety security needs, and social and belonging needs, Kelley (1979). In a quantitative study, Krot and Lewicka (2012) reported that working managers enhanced relationships by exhibiting trusting benevolent behaviors, such as interest for employee needs and welfare. Therefore, interdependent situations as described by Kelly and Thibaut (1978), could improve the quality of coaching relationships;
therefore, it is vital that managers encourage trusting relationships and show interest in the needs and welfare of employees (Krot & Lewicka, 2012).

**Social Interdependence Theory’s Contributions to Other Fields**

This section discusses the most recent progress of research about SIT and the contributions of SIT in other fields. The most recent research about SIT added new theoretical understanding. Additionally, some researchers made significant contributions in the fields of leadership, management, education, and nursing. Table 1 offers a summary of the most recent research in SIT and its contribution in other fields, followed by research advancements of SIT.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area of Study</th>
<th>Sources</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Leadership</td>
<td>Eberly &amp; Fong, 2013; Han &amp; Bai, 2014; Fasuring et al., 2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>Barnett &amp; McCormick, 2016; Bertucci et al., 2016; Beverbore, Sleegers, &amp; Van Veen, 2015; Elliot et al., 2016; Johnson, 2014; Torre, Vleuten, &amp; Dolmans, 2016; Scager, Boonstra, Peeters, Vulperhorst, &amp; Wiegant, 2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nursing</td>
<td>Everett, 2016; Medvene &amp; Coleman, 2012; Ortega, Sanchez-Manzanares, Gil, &amp; Rico, 2012</td>
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Advancement of SIT

Researchers using SIT have expanded the knowledge base about the theory and added new elements of interdependence. The added elements included (a) joint control interdependence (Ballie et al., 2016), (b) interdependence and commitment (Weigel & Ballard-Reisch, 2014), and (c) task, accountability, and outcome interdependence (Converse et al., 2014; Courtright et al., 2015; Halevy & Katz, 2013). In a theoretical study, Balliet et al. (2016) proposed joint control as a type of interdependence based on cooperation. Balliet et al. (2016) defined complete joint control interdependence as an interdependent situation where partners share control of the relationship by adjusting to each other’s behaviors. The authors proposed interdependence strategies where each partner influences the other, such as (a) committing to cooperate, (b) setting up a norm of keeping promises, and (c) sharing information about personal preferences.

Researchers gave other insights about interdependence. Converse et al. (2014) explored the association between perceived accountability and outcome interdependence. Converse et al. found that one partner’s perceived accountability positively influenced the other’s task-related motivations and actions. One managerial implication of the study suggested that employee’s goal setting should be cooperative and should include components of perceived accountability and interdependence. For instance, a manager should set regular meetings with employees to talk about goals, efforts, and performance toward goal achievement. While Converse et al. focused on studying interdependence and accountability, Weigel and Ballard-Reisch (2014) made a significant contribution to reliance and commitment.

In a quantitative study, Weigel and Ballard-Reisch (2014) found that interdependent partners could perceive their expressions of commitment. For example, partners in a close
interdependent relationship could recognize the existence of their relationship and their influence on each other’s behaviors by spending time together, doing activities together, and planning and supporting mutual goals. Weigel and Ballard-Reisch found some relationship commitment factors were relationship maintenance strategies. Partners practiced strategies, such as supportiveness, through active listening and by paying attention to the needs and interests of others. A second approach was treating the partner with courtesy and helping the partner to feel better about himself or herself. A third plan was working together toward a shared future, such as making plans, setting goals, celebrating milestones, and spending time together. Other approaches included showing ethical behaviors, such as (a) integrity, (b) honesty, (c) keeping promises, (d) making efforts to communicate regularly, and (e) discussing problems.

Other researchers made essential contributions to SIT. Halevy and Katz (2013), for example, investigated how partners construct outcome interdependence in each situation. Halevy and Katz reported that partners can build outcome interdependence when both partners hold similar subjective perceptions about the task and when they worked collaboratively toward reaching common goals. The authors also found that best interdependent outcomes included collaboration (i.e., cooperation) between partners. One managerial implication was that employee motivations for goal attainment likely influence their perceptions about collaborating in interdependent situations. Other research focused on the association between task and outcome interdependence.

In a quantitative study, Courtright et al. (2015) reported that behavior interdependence included task-planning behaviors, such as defining goals, checking progress, tracking resources, and coordinating efforts. Courtright et al. also found that process interdependence, or means
interdependence, involved interconnection and coordination of efforts and resources between group members, including skills, data, materials, information to carry out the task, and having access to different resources. Additionally, Courtright et al. reported that group members shared higher levels of pro-social motivation, which increased the bond of group members toward managing their group relationship and maintaining a positive work environment.

**SIT, leadership, and management.** Contemporary researchers studied leadership (Eberly & Fong, 2013; Han & Bai, 2014; Fausin et al., 2015) and management (Biron & Boon, 2013; DeOrtentiis et al., 2013; Liu et al., 2017) using SIT. These researchers used quantitative methodologies to investigate the possible associations between leadership, management, and interdependence. Some researchers (Biron & Boon, 2013; Han & Bai, 2014; Liu et al., 2017) focused their attention on investigating the relationship between leadership behaviors and task interdependence. Liu et al. reported that task interdependence functions as (a) a structural factor that supports the creation of reciprocation between leaders and employees and (b) a key piece for building a cooperative environment. Additionally, the authors found that task interdependence helped communication exchange and set the stage for a positive climate where subordinates felt they had a voice to express themselves. This finding was significant because employees need to speak up to engage in information exchange.

Biron and Boon (2013) focused on exploring the possible relationships between employee performance, turnover, and employee relationships with their direct supervisors. Biron and Boon linked task interdependence with positive outcomes. Biron and Boon asserted that task interdependence increased the degree of support, help, job satisfaction, feelings of responsibility toward job outcomes, group member identification, and the quality of group processes.
Additionally, the authors found that task interdependence needs frequent interaction and high proximity between members of a group. Task interdependence, thus, is a development tool (Biron & Boon, 2013). Another finding was that good group performers perceived task interdependence as a developmental instrument because it helped them find their strengths and weaknesses. Biron and Boon suggested that to keep high performers, organizations should (a) promote high-quality relationships between leaders and subordinates and (b) invest in building social relationships at work. One managerial implication emphasized the use of task interdependence in groups because it provided relational structure between group members.

Some researchers focused on investigating interdependence and its impact on effectiveness (DeOrtentiis et al., 2013; Fausing et al., 2015) and connection to others (Eberly & Fong, 2013). In a quantitative study, Fausing et al. (2015) found that interdependence was an antecedent of shared leadership. Particularly, Fausing et al. found that (a) empowerment and (b) task and goal interdependence were conditions for effective shared leadership. The authors found a positive correlation between interdependence and shared leadership ($\beta = 0.43, p < 0.001$, one-tailed). Additionally, Fausing et al. reported that interdependence facilitated cooperative relations, interactions, and behaviors such as solidarity. One important implication for effective leadership was to build interdependence by using goal interdependence, task interdependence, cooperative relationships, cooperative interactions, and cooperative behaviors to reach the leaders’ and employees’ mutual goals.

In a quantitative study, DeOrtentiis et al. (2013) reported that interdependence influenced employee effectiveness through promotive interdependence. DiOrtentiis et al. also found that employee (a) positive perceptions and beliefs about the need to work together, (b) willingness to
work together, and (c) ability to work together positively correlated with group member effectiveness. The workgroups described how factors like trust, unity, and satisfaction were important (DeOrtentiis et al., 2013). Particularly, trust allowed the workgroups to stay together and be cohesive. Trust was also a condition for members of the workgroups to show vulnerability and take part in interdependent actions. The authors claimed that workgroup members built trust by being genuinely open with each other and by accepting each other’s strengths, weaknesses, and mistakes. Additionally, the authors found that creating a trusting environment influenced group member happiness and their interactions because environments with trust enhanced group closeness.

In a quantitative study, Eberly and Fong (2013) found that interdependent individuals are other-focused. Eberly and Fong reported that interdependent individuals begin and maintain social relationships by using interdependence to stay connected with others. Empathy was a core factor for interdependence because it allowed them to build stronger and more effective interpersonal bonds. Interdependent individuals who showed empathy to others, for example, could better understand and re-experience the situation of others. One managerial implication suggested that leaders should learn to show other-focused interest and emotions to foster interdependence with their direct reports (Eberly & Fong, 2013).

**SIT and education.** Researchers using SIT in the field of education focused on the association between interdependence and effectiveness. Johnson (2014) reported a positive correlation between interdependence and group effectiveness in the context of learning. When group member relationships become more positive, group member effectiveness increases. Examples included (a) the commitment to each other’s professional development and success
and productivity, (b) a willingness to listen, (c) increased satisfaction and morale, (c) increased motivation to achieve goals, and (d) personal responsibility for reaching goals. Additionally, absenteeism and turnovers decreased. Johnson and Johnson also reported that the foundation of cooperative efforts was positive interdependence. Similarly, Bertucci et al. (2016) found that positive goal interdependence significantly affected cooperation and higher achievement.

Whereas Beverborg et al. (2015) studied interdependence and efficient coordination, Scager et al. (2016) investigated interdependence and collaboration using different methodologies. In a quantitative study, Beverborg et al. (2015) found that task interdependence offered the infrastructure needed to promote interaction and efficient coordination between group members. Additionally, Beverborg et al. reported that teams need shared goals for goal interdependence because they found positive correlations between goal interdependence and exchange of information, open discussions, and knowledge sharing. On the other hand, in a qualitative study, Scager et al. (2016) found that social interaction was critical to effective collaboration. Also, the authors reported that the quality of interaction was an antecedent of positive outcomes. Eight factors influenced collaboration including (a) mutual support and motivation, (b) promotive interaction, (c) process factors, (d) rewards, (e) a positive interdependence, (f) responsibility, and (g) complementing each other.

In a quantitative study, Elliot et al. (2016) found that the effectiveness of goal achievement depended on members’ cooperative behaviors. Cooperative behaviors in the study entailed valuing, liking, helping, and working together with other members of the group to achieve mutual goals. Barnett and McCormick (2016) added on to the findings of Elliot et al. about cooperative behaviors. Barnett and McCormick found other actions, such as setting clear
expectations and offering positive feedback, also worked. Cooperating was important because it allowed group members to effectively manage their behaviors to achieve common goals.

Similarly, Torre et al. (2016) reported that group successes increased with clear expectations and with specific and nonjudgmental feedback. Torre et al. also found that frequent group member check-ins led to a higher accountability.

**SIT and nursing.** Social interdependence theory also made significant contributions to the nursing field. In a qualitative study, Medvene and Coleman (2012) explored factors that affected the relationship between SIT and certified nurse assistant-resident relationships. Medvene and Coleman found that acknowledgment of a relationship, the commitment, the pro-relationship behaviors, trust, and empowerment positively influenced relationships between certified nurse assistants and residents. Additionally, the authors found that the factor *acknowledgement of the relationship* was the chief factor because its emergence revealed the interdependence between the certified nurse assistants and the residents. Furthermore, the emergence of the sub factor *relationship awareness* for the factor *acknowledgement of the relationship* signified a unity between the certified nurse assistants and the residents.

Medvene and Coleman (2012) concurred with Agnew, Van Lange, Rusbult, and Langston, (1998) who conducted a seminal study on cognitive interdependence and pro-social behaviors. The Medvene and Coleman (2012) results also concurred with recent research on beliefs about interdependence (Voyer & Reader, 2013). Agnew et al. (1998) posited that cognitive interdependence is partner-oriented thinking, which supports pro-relationship behaviors and motivation toward the partner to sustain the relationship. Partner-oriented thoughts
and actions are characteristics of close and committed partnerships. Another aspect was a tendency to describe a relationship as a central part of the self.

Partner-oriented individuals are more committed to their partner’s needs and interests, and they held greater positive thoughts toward their relationship (Agnew et al., 1998). Voyer and Reader (2013) found similar results. The authors recruited nurses and doctors in their study. Voyer and Reader found individual beliefs about interdependence critical to shaping attitudes and behaviors regarding collaborative working relationships. Therefore, partner-oriented individuals are more committed to their relationships and use pro-social behaviors to build and keep positive relationships.

Other research in nursing highlighted the importance of interdependence and cooperation (Everett, 2016; Ortega et al., 2012). In a qualitative study, Everett (2016) investigated the association among interdependence, leadership, and followership in the context of academic-practice partnerships. Everett reported that leadership-follower relationships needed complex cooperative and coordination behaviors and flexibility. The author claimed that effective alliances embrace and acknowledge reciprocity behaviors, such as shared knowledge, mutual respect, and shared goals. In a quantitative study, Ortega et al. (2012) investigated nurses’ task interdependence to explore group learning. Ortega et al. reported that group members need task interdependence and close cooperation to achieve common goals. The authors also found that group member beliefs about their relationships could affect group performance via group processes such as group communication, flexibility, and coordination. The next section presents the conceptual framework, which the researcher based on SIT.
**Conceptual Framework**

The current study is the first study using SIT to understand and describe the phenomenon of the manager coach-employee coaching relationship. Researchers suggested that the manager coach-employee coaching relationship is an interdependent working partnership carried out through positive social interdependence and promotive interaction (Johnson & Johnson, 2009). Partners influence each other (Kelley & Thibaut, 1978) by engaging in mutual connection (Phillips-Salami, Haase, & Kookan, 2011) and communication (Saavedra, Earley, & Van Dyne, 1993). Partners also influence each other through collaboration (Thomson, Perry, & Miller, 2007), and tasks (Van de Ven, Delbecq, & Koenig, 1976). Figure 2 presents the conceptual framework of this study.
Review of the Literature

Mace (1950) conducted the first study about manager coach-employee relationships in organizational settings. Mace presented the employee coaching relationship as a form of employee development in organizations. Mace stressed the crucial relational role of leaders in
business settings and was the first researcher to introduce the idea of working relationships (i.e., leader-employee partnerships) in organizations. Seminal research in employee-coaching relationships (Mills, 1986; Stowell, 1988; Terry, 1977) focused on reporting a manager’s coaching traits and skills (Frankel & Otazo, 1992). These researchers laid the groundwork for contemporary studies (Gregory, 2010; Ladyshewsky, 2010; McLean et al., 2005).

Contemporary research in employee coaching relationships was empirical research (Beattie, 2006; Wycherley & Cox, 2008) centered on examining a manager’s coaching role (Ellinger, Ellinger, Bachrach, Wang, & Bas, 2011). Researchers also measured a manager’s coaching behaviors using scales (McLean et al., 2005, Gregory & Levy, 2010). Gregory and Levy (2011) and O’Brien and Palmer (2010) researched employee coaching using empirical quantitative research designs. Huang and Hsieh (2015) focused on exploring the association among employee coaching. Gregory and Levy (2012) focused on the employee coaching relationship. Kim (2014) and Kim and Kuo (2015) researched employee coaching outcomes. However, though the employee coaching relationship literature has historically evolved in content and methodology, it is still in its infancy (O’Brien, 2016). Consequently, there were some weaknesses in the literature.

Multidisciplinary research indirectly and notably informed the practice of employee coaching relationships (Netolicky, 2016). A review of multidisciplinary research, such as sport coaching and executive coaching relationships (Alvey & Barclay, 2007; Appleton & Duda, 2016; Chiniara & Bentein, 2016; Jowett, 2003; Kilburg, 2001; Olympiou, Jowett, & Duda, 2008), was necessary because of a lack of research on the employee coaching relationship. Also, Gabriel et
al. (2014) and O’Broin (2016) reported the need for a theory to understand the practice of employee coaching better.

This extensive review found some calls for the need of more research about the ingredients of the employee coaching relationship (Beattie et al., 2014; Filsinger, 2014; Grant, 2014; Graham et al., 1993; Hagen, 2012; Joo et al., 2012; Jowett, Kanakoglou, & Passmore, 2012; Mace, 1950; O’Broin, 2016). There were calls for more research because researchers have not captured most factors affecting employee coaching relationships (Grant, 2014; Gregory & Levy, 2010, 2012, Joo et al., 2012; O’Broin, 2016). Researchers also have not uncovered managerial issues related to a manager’s ability to create positive coaching relationships with subordinates (McCarthy & Milner, 2013). The next section offers the purpose and organization of this literature review.

**Purpose and Organization of the Literature Review**

The researcher’s intent was to give an exhaustive examination and analysis of the chronological evolution of the employee coaching relationship literature. There were three purposes: (a) to set the stage for the context of the study, (b) to justify the business and managerial need for this research, and (c) to ensure continuance of the scholarly and academic conversation. The review includes three sections. The first, second, and third sections offer a chronological and thematic review of the literature of coaching relationships. Table 2 and Table 3 display a summary of sources.
Table 2. *Chronological Summary of Literature Review Source*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Seminal &gt; 50 years old 1950-2004</th>
<th>Contemporary &gt; 10 years old 2005-2011</th>
<th>Recent &lt; 5 years old 2012-2017</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Employee coaching studies</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employee coaching relationship studies</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multidisciplinary studies</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peer-reviewed articles</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>118</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classic book</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>119</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3. *Summary of Literature Review Type and Peer-Reviewed Source*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Literature and Source</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Employee coaching</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employee coaching relationship</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multidisciplinary studies in coaching relation</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>59%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>118</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Chronological and Thematic Seminal Review of the Employee Coach Relationship**

Reports on manager’s traits, characteristics, and skills of effective employee coaching dominated the seminal literature (Axmith, 1982; Bowers & Seashore, 1966; Mace, 1950; Terry, 1977). Some studies on the employee coaching relationship (Orth et al., 1987; Stowell, 1988; Terry, 1977) emerged in the literature to highlight the importance of working relationships and employee empowerment (Evered & Selman, 1989) in business settings. Mace (1950) wrote the first classic work on the employee coaching relationship. The study focused on the relational role
of leadership in business settings. Only Ellinger et al. (1999) and Ellinger, Ellinger, and Keller (2003) conducted empirical studies to examine managers’ effective coaching behaviors and their impact on employee outcomes. Empirical interdisciplinary studies in organizational behavior (Stinglhamber & Vandenberghe, 2003) and sport coaching (Chelladurai & Riemer, 1997; Jowett, 2003) played a crucial role in the seminal literature of the employee coaching relationship because they indirectly informed the practice of employee coaching with empirical support (Axmith, 1982; Marsh, 1992; Orth et al., 1987; Stowell, 1988). Seminal researchers agreed there was a need for more research on employee development (Mace, 1950) and manager-subordinate relationships (Graham et al., 1993).

The primary purpose of this literature review was to find manager traits, characteristics, skills, elements, and other components that could lead to uncovering effective coaching factors. The seminal literature review in this section is presented in a chronological and thematic way to (a) highlight early and classic seminal studies, (b) identify their contributions in the field, and (c) describe how research about the employee coaching relationship has evolved. Appendix A holds a summary of employee coaching relationship factors from the seminal research.

**Nonempirical studies in employee coaching.** Seminal researchers (Axmith, 1982; Buzzota, Lefton, & Sherberg, 1977; Clarke, 1971; Frankel & Otazo, 1992; Minter & Thomas, 2000) focused their interest on prescribing managers’ traits and the characteristics of effective coaching. Axmith (1982) asserted that managers should practice coaching and counseling every day to improve employee performance. Axmith found characteristics of effective coaches, such as two-way communication, sharing thoughts and feelings, offering specific feedback, active listening, being empathetic, showing respect and liking, being sincere, being genuine and honest,
creating a safe environment, being nonjudgmental, and encouraging employee autonomy. To advance the practice of employee coaching, Clarke (1971) found several characteristics of effective coaches, such as being observant, listening, offering appraisals, and discussing tasks. Like Clarke (1971), Buzzota et al. (1977) found that attentive listening was an important factor for optimal coaching. Buzzota et al. stressed that effective coaching required other coaching behaviors such as genuine two-way exchanges, candor, openness, and skillful probing.

Some research results intersected (Axmith, 1982; Buzzota et al., 1977; Clarke, 1971; Frankel & Otazo, 1992). Frankel and Otazo (1992) used a coaching inventory to find effective manager coaching characteristics, and they found similarities in earlier studies about giving feedback and being non-judgmental (Axmith, 1982) and listening (Buzzota et al., 1977; Clarke, 1971). The authors found other characteristics, such as caring about employees, setting goals, and praising employees. Additionally, they asserted that progressive discipline and performance appraisal gained employee compliance while coaching increased employee commitment. Implications for managers included using coaching as a preliminary action to discipline, and they stressed that coaching was not part of either a progressive discipline or performance appraisal (Frankel & Otazo, 1992).

Minter and Thomas (2000) discussed coaching, mentoring, and counseling as effective approaches to develop employees. Minter and Thomas developed a managerial model to address subordinate performance issues. The authors asserted (a) managers should practice coaching with high performance employees (HPE), (b) mentoring should be effective for helping subordinates with average performance, and (c) counseling should be used to help below average employees.
The authors found seven coaching core values for effective coaching, such as supportiveness, consideration, patience, trust building, openness, goal clarity, and vision.

Minter and Thomas (2000) agreed with earlier research about respect and liking (Axmith, 1982), and mutual openness (Buzzota et al., 1977). Minter and Thomas described supportiveness as behaviors related to supporting employees with resources, information, and learning when employees made mistakes. Another supportive behavior found was asking questions to help employees overcome self-doubt. Minter and Thomas described consideration as behavior associated with taking time to know direct reports’ likes and dislikes, feelings, thoughts, motivation, strengths, and aspirations.

Minter and Thomas (2000) linked employee coaching and HPE with self-actualization and self-directing behaviors. Minter and Thomas found that practicing coaching enhanced the motivational aspects of an HPE because coaching allowed them to seek self-actualization, obtain self-direction, and undertake tasks with less directive supervision (Minter & Thomas, 2000). The authors’ assumptions on the application of coaching to HPE was a significant distinction from early research. Mace (1950), for example, believed all employees with performance issues should receive coaching, but his findings were like the study of Frankel and Otazo (1992) who differentiated coaching from progressive discipline and performance appraisal.

**Non-empirical studies about the employee coaching relationship.** Some researchers of seminal and non-empirical studies investigated the employee coaching relationship (Evered & Selman, 1989; Mace, 1950; Marsh, 1992; Orth et al., 1987; Stowell, 1988; Terry, 1977). Mace (1950) conducted the first seminal study about employee development, and he acknowledged the crucial importance of a developmental working relationship between superior and subordinate.
Mace recruited administrators from the manufacturing industry who practiced employee
development in their organizations and conducted the first seminal research of the employee
coaching relationship in organizations. Mace reported a comprehensive list of administrators’
developmental traits, characteristics, and behaviors based on field observations (see Table 4).

Table 4. Administrator’s Developmental Traits

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Actor</th>
<th>Developmental Traits/Behaviors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Administrator coach</td>
<td>Giving employees the opportunity to perform through delegation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Getting to know subordinates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Seeing the relationship with subordinates as co-equals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Building a climate for subordinate growth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Practicing self-disclosure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Being a role model</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Having access to the superior</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Accepting subordinates for who they are</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Treating subordinates with fairness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Being sincere and honest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Setting standards for performance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Showing consideration of subordinate’s motivation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Creating a sense of belonging between superior and subordinate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Challenging subordinates to grow</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Fostering subordinates’ participation in decision-making</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Seeking concrete situation to practice coaching</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Adapted from “The growth and development of executives,” by M. L. Mace, 1950. Boston, MA: Division of
Research Graduate School of Business Administration Harvard University. Reprinted with permission.

Some administrators got to know their employees and gained substantial understanding
about subordinates’ skills and capabilities before giving them tasks to perform (Mace, 1950).
Mace found that getting to know employees through self-disclosure was important because it
allowed administrators to find out about employee weaknesses and strengths. Finding out about weaknesses and strengths was a necessary condition for professional employee development opportunities. Administrators were also required to challenge their subordinates with new tasks to enable employees, but they needed to ensure subordinates were ready for the new task. However, results of the study showed issues with some administrators who could not afford the time and necessary energy to learn subordinates’ abilities and skills to perform new tasks. Getting to know subordinates and providing employees with opportunities to perform new tasks, thus, were essential components of the coaching process.

Subordinate professional growth was conditional to the working relationship between superior and subordinate (Mace, 1950). Mace asserted that an antecedent for the growth of employees was the existence of a climate of shared belief between the superior and subordinate. Results suggested that employees felt stimulated and influenced by the superior’s confidence in their capabilities to complete a new challenging task, which in turn, encouraged employees to learn and grow. The author saw, however, that some superiors did not create an environment of belonging with employees. Other results suggested that superiors needed to be aware of the perceptions of their subordinates.

Practicing fairness among employees was another core part of the coaching relationship (Mace, 1950). Mace described the importance of a perception of fairness; subordinates must perceive that their superior is fair for them to be willing to work, develop, and grow. Fair treatment included opportunities for promotions, credit for a work well done, opportunities to learn and progress, and fairness on appraisal evaluations. Mace found discrepancies between
superior and subordinate points of view on fairness. Mace suggested, thus, that superiors needed to understand the employees’ points of view to build positive superior-subordinate relationships.

Mace (1950) defined employee development as a situational-based functional leadership relationship between superiors and subordinates. Mace found that getting along with employees was a common denominator of effective superiors. He also emphasized that superiors needed to be aware that getting along with subordinates was situational. However, the author found that a superior’s capacity and abilities to get along with subordinates were contingent upon the organizational environment where the situation took place. The author recommended future research on the relationship between superiors and subordinates in the context of coaching and administration, which served as a stepping stone for future research in employee coaching relationships (Gregory 2010; Gregory & Levy, 2011). Although Mace’s study lacked a theoretical foundation, his study directly informed the practice of employee coaching relationships with significant contributions as previously described. Further studies made contributions in the characteristics of the coaching relationship (Orth et al., 1987; Terry, 1977).

Several seminal studies recognized the importance of relational characteristics in managerial coaching (Orth et al., 1987; Stowell, 1988; Terry, 1977). In research about effective management, Terry (1977) described how managerial relational characteristics needed to effectively direct subordinates, such as, the capacity to work with people, build rapport with subordinates, the ability to be socially savvy, and being skilled at understanding subordinates’ behaviors. Orth et al. (1987) discussed the role of coaching, mentoring and the development of employees by managers. Orth et al. particularly stressed that coaching required a positive relationship between manager and employee, which concurred with Mace’s (1950) study. The
authors also pointed out some positive coaching relationship characteristics such as, create a supportive and helping environment, develop trust, foster open two-way communication, respect employee’s individuality, being supportive rather than judgmental and offer helpful feedback. Within a similar focus on the coaching relationship characteristics, researchers made more contributions.

Researchers found supportive managerial behaviors were necessary for effective employee coaching relationships. Stowell (1988), for example, interviewed leaders \((N = 26)\) to produce a model of effective coaching. The author based the coaching management model on three categories and specific coaching behaviors. The author stressed coaching factors related to collaboration included expressing concern about employee’s needs, empathy, recognition, and building a partnership with employees. Stowell suggested that a coaching situation was an opportunity to show supportive behaviors, and effective coaches need to see their subordinates as partners, which was parallel with the results of Orth et al. (1987). Stowell concluded that most successful coaching events included high levels of supportive behaviors by the manager, low levels of non-supportive behaviors, and a moderate amount of initiating behaviors, such as feedback. Other researchers described the importance of reinforcing managerial relationships through the practice of empowerment.

Evered and Selman (1989) described a new management paradigm based on empowerment and committed partnerships enhanced coaching relationships. Evered and Selman viewed coaching as a new management paradigm based on empowerment and mutually committed partnerships (see Figure 3). They called the new paradigm acknowledge-create-empower (ACE), which had people at the center of the new paradigm (Evered & Selman, 1989).
The authors considered coaching as the heart of management, and they related the term coaching with people-oriented managers. Equally important, the authors described characteristics of effective coaches, such as partnership, acceptance, honoring uniqueness of subordinates, being non-judgmental, listening, collaborating, and being mutually supportive. Their results concurred with the findings in other seminal studies, such as Mace (1950), Orth et al. (1987), Stowell (1988), and Terry (1977).

![Figure 3. The coaching relationship in generic terms. Adapted from “Coaching and the art of management” by R. D. Evered and J. C. Selman, 1989, Organizational Dynamics, 18, p. 24. doi:10.1016/0090-2616(89)90040-5. Reprinted with permission.](image-url)

Marsh (1992) echoed the importance of the working relationship between superiors and subordinates, which was like earlier researchers. Marsh interviewed managers (N = 8) and sales consultants (N = 22), in a large computer company and examined the effective elements of the coaching process. Marsh found that managers built working relationships with subordinates in the coaching process by showing supportive behaviors. Furthermore, the author found that
practicing feedback was key to the development of employees, which supported earlier research results on feedback (Axmith, 1982; Stowell, 1988).

**Empirical research about the employee coaching relationship.** Mills (1986) surveyed subordinates \( (N = 207) \) to find coaching traits that impacted employee satisfaction. Mills found that information sharing was the key factor affecting employee satisfaction. This result suggested that satisfied employees believed that the central role of their manager-coach was to share job-related information. Other seminal research also showed that information sharing was an essential characteristic of the manager-employee coaching relationship.

In a quantitative descriptive study, Graham et al. (1993) conducted telephone interviews with employees \( (N = 87) \) to collect data on manager’s coaching effectiveness based on a pre- and post-coaching training program for managers. Graham et al. found that coaching skills did not come naturally to all managers, but they found people could learn coaching skills. Such findings led to a significant contribution to coaching because they set the foundation for implementing coaching training for managers to improve their skills (Graham et al., 1993). The authors used a dependent t-test to analyze the data. Results showed statistical significance for two coaching factors: (a) sharing information \( 0.64, p < .01 \) (two-tailed) and (b) providing feedback \( 0.62, p < .01 \) (two-tailed), which concurred with earlier results about information sharing \( 0.67, p < .01 \), (Mills, 1986). Graham et al. (1993), like Mace (1950), recommended further research to examine superior-subordinate relationships in organizations.

In a mixed method study, Graham et al. (1994) surveyed and interviewed account representatives \( (N = 83) \) and found specific manager behaviors related to effective coaching. Graham et al. (1994) found that developing a warm, friendly relationship with subordinates
scored the highest (mean = 8.28), which paralleled with and provided empirical support for the work of Buzzota et al. (1977) on building rapport with subordinates. Further, as opposed to earlier research on the significance of feedback (Graham et al., 1993; Mills, 1986), Graham et al. (1994) found that performance feedback scored the lowest (mean = 6.39), which showed managers needed training on performance feedback. The authors described how managers should practice listening, being caring, being sensitive, and showing concerned behaviors to build more effective warm working relationships with direct reports. A second implication suggested that managers needed training in feedback skills because managers can learn effective coaching behaviors through training (Graham et al., 1993). Training can help managers feel more confident with practicing performance feedback with direct reports. Ellinger et al. (1999) used a critical incident technique to gather qualitative data on effective coaching behaviors.

In a descriptive qualitative study, Ellinger et al. (1999) examined how managers helped learning in organizations. They interviewed managers (N = 12) to find what types of behaviors contributed to the role of managers as successful facilitators of learning. Ellinger et al. (1999), used a person-role model framework, and they proposed that employee coaching was a new form of facilitating learning. The authors found two central themes and 13 coaching behaviors, which defined the role of managers as facilitators of learning. Theme one was empowerment behavior, which included probing questions, encouraging subordinates to think, removing obstacles, giving ownership to subordinates, and using questions instead of telling subordinates how to do something. Theme two was a facilitating behavior, which was about giving feedback to subordinates, working together with employees by talking things through, building and fostering a learning environment, offering up-front expectations, helping them to see the big picture,
understanding employee perspectives, helping those hired to see things differently, using scenarios, analogies and examples, seeking feedback from and engaging subordinates. The results of Ellinger et al. related to empowering behaviors extended the research of Evered and Selman (1989).

Ellinger et al. (2003) examined the association between supervisory coaching behaviors on (a) employee job satisfaction and (b) employee performance. Ellinger et al. (2003) found that employee retention was a severe issue in the warehouse distribution industry, and they wanted to find out whether supervisory coaching behaviors could improve employee satisfaction, performance, and retention. Ellinger et al. (2003) used a reliable instrument that had a Cronbach’s alpha of 0.829 for its eight-items. The authors set out to answer two research questions. First, they wanted to know to what extent supervisory coaching behaviors occurred in an industrial context. Second, they wanted to know if there was an association between supervisory coaching behaviors and employee job satisfaction. The results suggested there was a correlation between supervisory coaching behaviors and employee job satisfaction and performance (Ellinger et al., 2003). The coefficient of determination ($R^2$) indicated that 44% of the variance in subordinate perceptions of job satisfaction was due to employee coaching, even if direct supervisors exhibited low to moderate levels of employee coaching. Similarly, the coefficient of determination ($R^2$) showed that 11% of the variance in supervisor’s perceptions of their employees’ performance was due to employee coaching, even with low to moderate levels of employee coaching. The authors recommended more empirical studies on the employee coaching phenomenon, and they emphasized an urgent need to create instruments to measure managers’ coaching skills. Hence, the Ellinger et al. (2003) study was one of the very few
empirical studies about employee coaching that provided credibility for the effectiveness of managerial coaching.

Ellinger, Ellinger, and Keller (2005) surveyed workers ($N = 438$), and examined supervisory coaching behaviors associated with employee job satisfaction and performance in the logistic industry. Ellinger et al. (2005) replicated an earlier study in which Ellinger et al. (2003) explored the effectiveness of supervisory coaching behaviors on worker job satisfaction and performance as means to develop and keep workers. Ellinger et al. (2003) found that open, two-way communication between supervisors and warehouse workers was a critical strategy for employee retention. The results offered empirical support for earlier non-empirical seminal studies (Axmith, 1982; Orth et al., 1987) pertaining the importance of two-way and open communication between manager-coaches and employees.

**Empirical, multidisciplinary studies regarding coaching relationships.** Empirical studies in executive coaching (Kilburg, 2001), organizational behavior (Stinglhamber & Vandenberge, 2003), and sports coaching (Jowett, 2003) offered the practice of employee coaching empirical evidence. In an interdisciplinary study about executive coaching, Kilburg (2001) developed a conceptual model with eight components of successful executive coaching. Kilburg described how one piece of successful executive coaching related to coaching relationships. Kilburg pointed out that effective coaching relationships involved trust, mutual respect, empathy, warmth, non-possessive positive regard, tolerance, diversity dimensions, playful challenge, tact, authenticity, and genuineness. Kilburg’s results paralleled with earlier research on empathy (Axmith, 1982; Stowell, 1988), trust (Orth et al., 1987), and respect (Axmith, 1982).
Stinglhamber and Vandenberghe (2003) informed the practice of employee coaching and stressed the possible connection between perceived supervisor support and employee turnover. In a longitudinal study, Stinglhamber and Vandenberghe used employees ($N = 238$), and structural equation modeling (SEM) to investigate the relationship between perceived support and affective commitment to the supervisor and voluntary turnover. Stinglhamber and Vandenberghe found that perceived supervisor support completely mediated the effect of favorable intrinsically satisfying job conditions. Job conditions that satisfied the needs of the employee, thus, were antecedents for, or good predictors of, perceived supervisor support. The authors asserted that managers created good job conditions by showing caring and respect behaviors. Additionally, the results supported seminal research, such as Axmith (1982).

Results related to supervisor coaching behaviors were described, such as personal development opportunities, value employee’s contribution, caring about employee wellbeing, autonomy opportunities, recognition and promotions, and creating positive work experiences (Stinglhamber & Vandenberghe, 2003). Stinglhamber and Vandenberghe (2003) also suggested that affective commitment to the supervisor negatively affected voluntary turnover. Affective commitment to a supervisor, thus, is an antecedent for, or a good predictor of, voluntary turnover (Stinglhamber & Vandenberghe, 2003). The literature on organizational behavior has significantly and indirectly informed coaching (Grant, 2016).

Jowett (2003) interviewed a single coach-athlete dyad to examine how the coaching relationship impacted interpersonal conflict. Jowett used the $3+1Cs$ conceptual mode and to look for potential relationships between interpersonal relationships and interpersonal conflict components in the coach-athlete dyad. She collected qualitative data through interviews using 75
open-ended questions. The author conducted content analysis to analyze data. Jowett showed that the dyad dealt with agreements and disagreements in the development of their working relationship. An affirming theme was the concept of closeness, which included feelings of unity, emotional connectedness, and commitment. There were strong intentions to stay close and work together, including give-and-take behaviors, a co-orientation, and embracing common ground, goals, values, and beliefs. Also, closeness behaviors encompassed personal feelings and generic feelings. Co-orientation behavior covered shared knowledge and shared understanding. Complementary behaviors needed reciprocal practices and helping transactions. Negative themes included a lack of closeness behaviors, lack of co-orientation behaviors, and lack of complementary behaviors. Also, lack of closeness behaviors involved feeling unattached and feeling distressed. Lack of co-orientation behaviors entailed disconnection, contention. Lack of complementary behaviors required opposed behaviors, and ineffectual support.

Jowett (2003) notably contributed to the literature of employee coaching. Jowett’s results gave empirical support for research about employee coaching that described manager traits and characteristics, such as belief (Mace 1950), respect (Axmith, 1982; Kilburg, 2001; Orth et al., 1987), rapport (Terry, 1977), shared thoughts (Axmith, 1982), support and help (Orth et al., 1987; Stowell, 1988), and trust (Minter & Thomas, 2000; Orth et al., 1987). Other researchers also described the importance of acceptance (Evered & Selman, 1989; Mace, 1950; Stowell, 1988), openness (Buzzota et al., 1977; Orth et al., 1987), and understanding (Axmith, 1982; Terry, 1977). One significant contribution was managers’ self-disclosing behaviors, which helped build common ground (Jowett, 2003).
Section Summary

An analysis of the early literature offered three significant findings. First, the review showed early researchers formed ideas they would later describe as a new perspective of leadership. Second, the researcher found similar coaching behaviors across all coaching disciplines. Third, the review of the research showed researchers made a distinction between the employee coaching relationship and employee coaching. The next section discusses these three significant results. First, the researcher will describe the new perspective of leadership that emerged.

The review of the seminal literature on employee coaching supported an emerging perspective of leadership through employee coaching (Axmith, 1982; Buzzota et al., 1977; Clarke, 1971; Frankel & Otazo, 1992; Minter & Thomas, 2000; Ellinger et al., 1999; Graham et al., 1993, 1994), the employee coaching relationship (Evered & Selman, 1989; Mace, 1950; Marsh, 1992; Mills, 1986; Orthet al., 1987; Stowell, 1988; Terry, 1977), and multidisciplinary studies on coaching relationships (Kilburg, 2001; Jowett, 2003; Yukl, Gordon, & Taber, 2002). As suggested by Mace (1950), leadership is situational, relational, functional for people, about working relationships to enhance employee performance (Ellinger et al., 2003), about the fulfillment of employees’ self-actualization needs (Minter & Thomas, 2000), and about achieving organizational excellence (Stowell, 1988). Mace was the first researcher to describe a link between relational leadership and employee development. Mace introduced a term called working relationship, which referred to a partnership between superiors and subordinates.

The researcher analyzed the literature across coaching disciplines and found 15 common coaching relationship factors (Evered & Selman, 1989; Minter & Thomas, 2000). Many studies
about employee coaching focused on manager coaching traits rather than the coaching relationship (Axmith, 1982, Buzzota et al., 1977; Clarke, 1971; Ellinger et al., 1999; Frankel & Otazo, 1992; Graham et al., 1993, 1994; Minter & Thomas, 2000). Their results, however, converged with the results of those studying employee coaching relationships (Evered & Selman, 1989; Jowett, 2003; Kilburg, 2001; Mace, 1950; Marsh, 1992; Mills, 1986; Orth et al., 1987; Stowell, 1988; Terry, 1977). Researchers had similar results about displaying supportive behaviors and the employee coaching relationship (Evered & Selman, 1989; Jowett, 2003; Marsh, 1992; Minter & Thomas, 2000; Orth et al., 1987; Stowell, 1988).

Employee coaching researchers acknowledged the importance of the employee coaching relationship to enhance the effectiveness of employee coaching and coaching outcomes (Frankel & Otazo, 1992; Graham et al., 1993). Unexpectedly, Frankel and Otazo and empirical study (Graham et al., 1993) in employee coaching highlighted the crucial importance of the relationship between manager and subordinate in their studies on the manager’s traits, characteristics, and attributes of effective coaching. Frankel and Otazo stressed that the core ingredient for a successful employee coaching was the degree of trust in the manager-employee relationship. Similarly, Graham et al. (1993) asserted that a new role of leaders as manager-coaches was changing the command and control approach to a manager-subordinate relationship based on trust and respect, which enhanced employee learning.

Orth et al. (1987), Marsh (1992), and Kilburg (2001) recognized the coaching relationship as an antecedent and necessary condition for effective employee coaching and successful coaching outcomes. Orth et al. suggested that effective employee coaching required a positive relationship between managers and subordinates and was contingent upon managers’
skills and capabilities in building mutually valuable relationships with subordinates. Marsh echoed Orth et al. and added that good working relationships between managers and subordinates had to exist before beginning employee coaching. Kilburg highlighted that significant and ongoing coaching relationships were good conditions for effective coaching and successful coaching outcomes, which concurred with Stowell’s (1988) results. Stowell said that managers could achieve organizational distinction only through working relationships with their subordinates.

**Chronological and Thematic Review of the Contemporary Research Regarding the Employee Coaching Relationship**

The review of the literature showed there was a lack of empirical research about the employee coaching relationship. The researcher found only three studies in the literature about the employee coaching relationship (Gregory, 2010; Gregory & Levy, 2010, 2011). Ellinger et al. (2003) called for self-assessments to measure a manager’s coaching skills. In response, McLean et al. (2005) created a scale to measure manager coaching skills, while Gregory and Levy (2010) developed a scale to measure the quality of the coaching relationship. While research about employee coaching continued to focus on a manager’s coaching role in organizations (Beattie, 2006; Ladyshewsky, 2010), and researchers continued to measure effectiveness of manager’s coaching behaviors (Wheeler, 2011), very few studied the ingredients of an employee coaching relationship (Gregory, 2010; Gregory & Levy, 2011). There was a call for research to find managerial coaching antecedents and outcomes (McLean et al., 2005). There were also calls to find the ingredients of the employee coaching relationship in business settings and the actual coaching outcomes (Gregory & Levy, 2010; Gyllensten & Palmer, 2007). Finally,
there was a call to uncover factors affecting collaborative coaching relationships (Boyce, Jackson, & Neal, 2010).

The primary purpose of this contemporary literature review was to identify managers’ traits, characteristics, skills, elements, and other components that could lead to uncovering effective coaching factors to build effective manager coach-employee relationships in organizational settings, and their impact on employee outcomes. This section includes a chronological and thematic review of the contemporary literature, shows the researchers’ contributions to the field, and describes how the employee-coach relationship has evolved over time. Appendix B holds a summary of contemporary employee coaching relationship factors.

**Empirical employee coaching studies.** Contemporary empirical researchers studying employee coaching focused on the manager coach’s role in business settings (Beattie, 2006; Ladyshewsky, 2010; Wheeler, 2011; McLean et al., 2005). In a quantitative study, McLean et al. (2005) developed a scale to measure manager coaching behaviors in response to Ellinger et al.’s (2003) recommendation to create self-assessments to measure managerial coaching behaviors. McLean et al. tested the new scale, which had an overall coefficient alpha of 0.83, and created a theoretical framework based on the existing literature on managerial coaching (see Figure 4). The scale measured managers’ coaching behaviors, such as open communication, valuing people over the task, accepting the ambiguous nature of the work environment, and the value of a team approach. The authors found that the highest correlation was between team approach and valuing people over the task (0.66), while the second greatest correlation was between open communication and valuing people (0.51). The authors recommended future researchers focus on coaching antecedents and outcomes (McLean et al., 2005).
In a qualitative study, Beattie (2006) examined managerial developmental behaviors that could influence employee learning in organizations. Beattie set out to find what line managers did to help learning by creating a hierarchy of developmental behaviors. For example, some core managerial developmental behaviors were (a) challenging behaviors and (b) empowering behaviors. Additionally, other important managerial developmental behaviors were (a) thinking, (b) assessing, and (c) advising. Lastly, other fundamental managerial developmental behaviors were (a) caring, (b) informing, and (c) being professional. Beattie stressed that managers and employees recognized caring behaviors as crucial components to building positive learning environments.

Beattie’s (2006) results about trust were like the findings of earlier researchers (Evered & Selman, 1989; Frankel & Otazo, 1992; Graham et al., 1993; Jowett, 2003; Mace, 1950; Mills,
One implication for practice was Beattie’s assertion about the development of trust and learning partnerships; the author emphasized that people build trust and learning partnerships by setting up positive developmental relationships and by interacting often. Qualitative data showed that social care supervision played a crucial role in finding, reflecting, and evaluating employees’ learning opportunities (Beattie, 2006). One practical recommendation was that managers needed to improve two high-level facilitating behaviors to be effective facilitators of learning. The two developmental behaviors were challenging behaviors and developmental behaviors (i.e., develop employees to practice peer development).

In a qualitative case study, Ladyshewsky (2010) interviewed managers ($N = 74$) to examine the role of managers-as-coaches and factors affecting the coaching relationship. Ladyshewsky found that trust was an antecedent or predictor of the coaching relationship. Trust enhanced the coaching relationship by improving cooperation, engagement, and motivation of employees (Ladyshewsky, 2010). Ladyshewsky asserted that to set up successful coaching experiences, managers needed to give up power and control over employees and ensure mutual respect in day-to-day interactions. The author reported factors that can increase trust, such as shared values by getting to know employees at the personal level, manager capability, manager supportive behaviors, confidentiality between manager and subordinate, manager investing time in the relationship, and manager showing integrity, honesty, and authenticity toward subordinates.

In a qualitative study, Wheeler (2011) interviewed frontline managers ($N = 6$) and frontline employees ($N = 7$) to explore how the implementation of coaching behaviors by frontline managers affected the attainment of corporate goals. Wheeler found specific coaching behaviors
that affected organizational goals, such as offering information, transferring ownership, role modeling, dialoguing, building a coaching culture through collaboration, support, encouragement, praise, being non-hierarchical, being inclusive, and alignment of values.

Wheeler (2011) claimed that coaching is about having dynamic conversations where information exchange occurs between managers and subordinates. The author grouped specific behaviors about dialogue with earlier research results (Ellinger et al., 1999; Buzzota et al., 1977; Marsh, 1992). One implication for practice was to combine three coaching behaviors while having a dialogue with subordinates’ question framing, broadening perspectives and not offering answers to stimulate employees to think on their own, find answers on their own, enhance autonomy, and increase their performance levels.

Few empirical studies about the employee coaching relationship. The researcher found only three empirical studies that examined attributes of the quality of the employee coaching relationship in business settings (Gregory, 2010; Gregory & Levy, 2010, 2011). In a quantitative dissertation, Gregory (2010) collected data through online surveys from supervisors ($N = 155$) and direct reports ($N = 729$) in the manufacturing setting and developed a scale called the perceived quality of the coaching relationship (PQCR). The PQCR grew from an exploratory model of employee coaching relationships based on theory from the literature review in employee coaching, executive coaching, and multidisciplinary studies related to constructs of the PQCR scale. Also, four dimensions formed the PQCR: (a) genuineness of the relationship, (b) effective communication, (c) conforming to the relationship, and (d) facilitating development. These were the best predictors (antecedents) of the quality of employee coaching relationship (Gregory, 2010). One significant finding of this study was the core role played by trust in the
quality of the employee coaching relationship between supervisors and subordinates. Another significant finding was the critical role of the feedback environment and subordinate feedback orientation in the coaching relationship. A third significant result was the important role of the employee’s perception of empathy (Gregory, 2010).

Gregory and Levy (2010) recruited employees online through LinkedIn and Facebook from Fortune 500 global manufacturing organizations for their research. They collected data using online surveys to redefine the constructs of a newly created scale to measure the quality of the coaching relationships and to explore how businesses build coaching relationships. In this study, the authors added one more dimension called distinctiveness of the relationship to the PQCR scale, which initially had four dimensions: genuineness of the relationship, effective communication, comfort with the relationship, and facilitating development. The authors removed the distinctiveness of the relationship aspect from the model because they did not measure the same concept in the PQCR. The researchers also used the term working partnership to define the coaching relationship. The authors recommended future research to better understand the development of the employee coaching relationship in business settings and actual coaching outcomes (see Figure 5; Gregory & Levy, 2010).
In a quantitative study, Gregory and Levy (2011) recruited supervisors ($N = 221$) and direct reports ($N = 1290$) from a Fortune 500 global manufacturing organization in the United States to test their new scale (Gregory & Levy, 2010). They called the new scale the *perceived quality of the employee coaching relationship* (PQECR), and their goal was to find predictors of employee coaching relationship associated with context variables that can affect the coaching relationship. Gregory and Levy (2011) used four context variables: (a) transformational leadership, (b) emotional intelligence, (c) implicit person theory (IPT), and (d) organizational feedback environment. One dimension of transformational leadership is *individual consideration*, which was significantly more crucial in building high-quality relationships than practicing a transformational leadership style (Gregory & Levy, 2011). Another significant finding was that feedback environment (Gregory & Levy, 2011) was an antecedent for high-quality coaching relationships. The authors suggested that managers could be more successful
building coaching relationships by practicing individual considerations and creating a friendly coaching context based on feedback.

**Empirical, multidisciplinary studies regarding the coaching relationship.** In a mixed method exploratory study, O’Broin and Palmer (2010) used a purposive snowball strategy to recruit coaches \(N = 6\) and coachees \(N = 6\) to explore the formation of coaching relationships. O’Broin and Palmer found that formation of coaching relationships depended on three components: (a) coach attributes, (b) bond and engagement (i.e., trust), and (c) collaboration. Trust was a core part of the coaching relationship linked to characteristics of engagement, such as listening, rapport and openess. The authors argued that the establishment of trust occurred when coachees felt they could share sensitive information with coaches, and when coachees perceived coaches would have nonjudgmental reactions (O’Broin & Palmer, 2010). Also, most participants reported the importance of the quality of the bond between coach and coachee; coachees needed to feel a sense of connection and understanding.

The degree of engagement in a rapport process mediates the quality of the connection between coaches and coachees. There is a need for genuine openness and transparency by both the coach and the coachee (O’Broin & Palmer, 2010). The authors stressed that listening was a vital part of the coaching relationship because it allowed coaches to understand the coachee’s situation to act and support them. Also, O’Broin and Palmer linked openness and listening, and rapport and trust as necessary conditions for effective engagement between coaches and coachees. Furthermore, collaboration was another part of good coaching relationships. Coaches and coachees reported collaboration was a reciprocal, two-way process with shared
understanding. One contribution to practice was the co-creation of coaching relationships between coaches and coachees (O’Broin & Palmer, 2010).

In a qualitative study in executive coaching, Wycherley and Cox (2008) found a link between trust and rapport. The authors linked trust to a coach’s integrity behaviors and competencies. Wycherley and Cox alleged that when executives trusted their coaches, executives committed to the coaching process and could build rapport with their coaches. Rapport was fundamental in the first stage of the coaching relationship and decreased in importance over time (Wycherley & Cox, 2008). Similarly, Boyce et al. (2010) found a link between trust, rapport, and commitment in the relationship process of leadership coaching.

In a quantitative study in leadership coaching, Boyce et al. (2010) used a conceptual framework to examine and advance the understanding of the relationship process and coaching outcomes of leadership coaching. Boyce et al. argued that when trust existed in the coaching relationship, clients were more likely to share personal information, which concurred with O’Broin and Palmer’s (2010) findings. Quantitative data suggested that rapport mediated mutual appreciation, understanding, agreement, and linking. Additionally, the authors found rapport was an antecedent of high levels of self-disclosure and effective coaching outcomes coach-client rapport \((t (66) = 3.47, p < 0.01)\) and trust \((t (66) = 2.80, p < 0.01)\) predicted client’s reactions. A commitment was the effort and devotion invested in a coaching relationship, which involved confidence in each other’s abilities; commitment \((t (66) = 1.97, p < 0.05)\) predicted the clients’ results. The authors recommended future research on collaboration because collaborative relationships can create goal achievement.
In a phenomenological qualitative study, Gyllensten and Palmer (2007) used semi-structured interviews to explore workplace coaching and coaching relationships. Gyllensten and Palmer found that trust, confidentiality, and valuing coaching were core components of the coaching relationship. Coaches built trust when they practiced confidentiality both within and outside of coaching sessions; when trust and confidentiality existed in the relationship, clients shared personal and sensitive information. Clients also reported that the value of coaching and transparency of the coach helped to build a close relationship between them (Gyllensten & Palmer, 2007). Gyllensten and Palmer’s findings agreed with other contemporary researchers (Alvey & Barclay, 2007; Boyce et al., 2010; O’Broin & Palmer, 2010). The authors recommended future research on a need to find factors affecting good coaching relationships.

In a qualitative study in executive coaching, Alvey and Barclay (2007) built theory and found the precursors of trust in executive coaching relationships. Alvey and Barclay found that antecedents of trust were a client’s willingness to self-disclose, their desire to seek and receive feedback, and their motivation toward change and growth. The authors found that trust existed in the executive coaching relationship when coaches and clients experienced reciprocal interactions.

Another antecedent of trust was the relational situation, which involved goal setting, evaluations, and coaching outcomes. When coaches and clients took time to set ground rules at the beginning of their relationships, they set up clarity and purpose (Alvey & Barclay, 2007). Gyllensten and Palmer (2007) suggested that trust builds executive coaching relationships, and independent factors influence the relationships. The authors alleged that the connections between
coaches and clients developed over time in the form of professional friendship relationships, characterized by bonds, trust, and confidential agreements.

In a quantitative study about executive coaching, Baron and Morin (2009) recruited managers \( (N = 73) \) and coaches \( (N = 24) \) to examine the association between coaching relationships and coaching outcomes. Baron and Morin found three antecedents to the executive coaching relationship’s (a) facilitation of coach learning, (b) coach support behaviors, and (c) frequency of coaching sessions. The authors’ findings on these three antecedents of the coaching relationship contrasted with the results related to trust and confidentiality in other contemporary studies (Alvey & Barclay, 2007; Gyllensten & Palmer, 2007). Baron and Morin gave empirical evidence that coaching relationships played a mediating role between coaching and coaching outcomes, which concurred with seminal researchers (Frankel & Otazo, 1992; Graham et al., 1993; Kilburg, 2001; Marsh, 1992; Orth et al., 1987).

Several multidisciplinary studies stressed the importance of supportive behaviors in the coaching relationship (de Haan, Culpin, & Curd, 2011; Fernandez, Cho, & Perry, 2010; Lafreniere, Jowett, Vallarand, & Cambonneau, 2011; Mahsud, Yukl, & Prussia, 2010; Pearson, 2011; Philippe, Sagar, Huguet, Paquet, & Jowett, 2011; Rhind & Jowett, 2010). In a qualitative study about sports coaching, Rhind and Jowett (2010) used structured interviews to collect data. They interviewed coaches and athletes \( (N = 12) \) to examine how to maintain high-quality relationships between coaches and athletes. Rhind and Jowett found seven themes related to maintenance strategies, such as conflict management and openness. Additionally, Rhind and Jowett found coaches and clients needed belongingness with others. To aid belongingness, they practiced supportive behaviors such as listening, asking questions, showing curiosity, and
empowering. In a quantitative leadership study, Mahsud et al. (2010) used hierarchical regression and standard error of the mean (SEM) path analysis to investigate the influence of empathy, ethical values, and relations-oriented behaviors on the leader-member-exchange style (LMX). The authors found that the leader’s relations-oriented behaviors mediated leader’s empathy on leader-member exchange style and moderately mediated the impact on ethical leadership behaviors. Results showed a significant correlation between empathy and relations-oriented behavior of the leader (0.57, \( p < 0.01 \)), which suggested that leaders needed to practice more supportive, developing, helpful, and encouraging behaviors to assist employees with challenging tasks. Other findings revealed a positive association between the quality of LMX and relation-oriented behaviors (0.75, \( p < 0.01 \)). Similarly, in a quantitative study, Lafreniere et al. (2011) interviewed coach-athlete dyads (\( N = 103 \)) and found that autonomy-supportive behaviors predicted high-quality coaching relationships by coaches who had a passion for sports coaching. The authors suggested that coaches could practice autonomy-supportive behaviors by considering an athlete’s perspective, encouraging the athlete’s self-initiative, and providing an explication or background on the performance of tasks, which led to athletes feeling understood and respected.

In a qualitative sports coaching study, Philippe et al. (2011) interviewed coaches (\( N = 2 \)) and top elite swimmers (\( N = 8 \)) to examine the nature and development of coaching relationships. The authors found that power relations between the coach and athlete changed over time. Similarly, in a study of leadership, Fernandez et al. (2010) found that creating a supportive work environment could enhance employee’s job satisfaction and motivation. Like Mahsud et al. (2010), de Haan et al. (2011) also found executive coach empathy was a helpful quality.
In a qualitative phenomenological study about executive coaching, Cremona (2010) used semistructured interviews to explore the lived experiences of executive coaches to examine how executive coach emotions affected coaching relationships. Cremona found that executive coaches wanted their coachees to see them as developmental partners. The author asserted there was a connection between positive emotions, learning, and the change process, and positive emotions were fundamental for creating stable relationships. Similarly, in a study about nursing, Kowalski and Casper (2007) made a coaching model based on four components: (a) building relationships, (b) setting expectations, (c) observing coach behaviors, and (d) self-reflection. Kowalski and Casper reported that coaches and coachees co-created partnerships, and the partnerships developed from mutual understanding about the relationship.

In a cross-sectional quantitative study about sports coaching, Olympiou et al. (2008) recruited British athletes \(N = 591\) to study motivational factors in the coaching relationship. Olympiou et al. found that athletes perceived partnerships with coaches as core channels through which they could express and fulfill their needs in a task-involvement climate that fostered cooperation. Data suggested that both coaches and athletes experienced superior levels of friendship and commitment (Olympiou et al., 2008). Fernandez et al. (2010) similarly found several relation-oriented leader behaviors. Fernandez et al. concluded that relations-oriented leadership behaviors enhanced a supportive work environment affecting subordinates’ job satisfaction and motivation.

Several researchers found that closeness between coaches and coachees took a form of friendship (Jowett, 2006, 2009; Philippe et al., 2011; Philippe & Seiler, 2006). In a quantitative study, Jowett (2006) surveyed Greek coaches \(N = 140\) and athletes \(N = 140\) and reported that
a coaching relationship was a form of relational leadership characterized by bi-directional, and reciprocal interactions. Jowett (2006) recommended future research on coaching relationships and their impact on coaching outcomes. In a quantitative study, Jowett (2009) used the coach-athlete relationship questionnaire (CART-Q) scale and a relationship model in sports (Jowett & Ntoumanis, 2004) to test coaching relationships. Jowett (2009) found that a coach-athlete relationship was fundamental for effective coaching, and the author described it as a dyadic relationship, which offered the foundation for four functions of the coaching relationship to fulfill basic needs. One practical implication of dyadic relationships was practicing situational interpersonal exchanges (Jowett, 2009).

In a qualitative study, Philippe and Seiler (2006) interviewed elite swimmers ($N = 5$) to examine the quality of their relationships with their coaches. The authors found that friendship was a core part of the relationship. The swimmers reported two core components: (a) essential requirements and (b) social relationships. Swimmers emphasized the need to combine their professional and friendship relationships with coaches to achieve high-quality coaching (Philippe & Seiler, 2006). Philippe et al. (2011) interviewed coaches ($N = 2$) and athletes ($N = 8$) and used thematic analysis to investigate the development of coaching relationships from the perspective of coaches and athletes in sports settings. Philippe et al. found that coaching relationships developed in three dimensions over time. The authors describe the three dimensions as the development of (a) bonds, (b) cooperation, and (c) power relations.

Similarly, Rhind and Jowett (2010) interviewed coaches and athletes ($N = 12$) and studied strategies to maintain high-quality relationships in sports. Rhind and Jowett reported that two-way communication and giving and receiving feedback counted with frequencies of 12%
and 16.5% respectively. Athletes said that the ability to talk about anything was very important (Rhind & Jowett, 2010). Similarly, Jowett (2006) found that open communication fostered shared nuances and shared understanding, which positively affected coaching outcomes. Like Rhind and Jowett and Philippe and Seiler (2006) found that verbal communication was key because it enhanced athletes’ performance.

**Section Summary**

Contemporary researchers found several coaching relationship behaviors that were components of the conceptual framework for the current study (Alvey & Barclay, 2007; Baron & Morin, 2009; Beattie, 2006; Boyce et al., 2010; Cremona, 2010; Gregory, 2010; Gregory & Levy, 2010; Gyllensten & Palmer, 2007; Ladyshewsky, 2010; Mahsud et al., 2010 McLean et al., 2005; O’Broin & Palmer, 2010; Philippe & Seiler, 2006; Wheeler, 2011; Wycherley & Cox, 2008). For example, trust was an antecedent and predictor of high-quality employee coaching relationships (Ladyshewsky, 2010; Gregory, 2010). While Gregory and Levy (2010) found that perceived trust was a strong predictor of the coaching relationship, O’Broin and Palmer (2010) and Wycherley and Cox (2008) found that trust was a core part of high-quality coaching relationships, and they linked trust to active listening, building rapport, and creating openness. Boyce et al. (2010) found that when trust existed in the coaching relationship, coachees were more willing to share personal information, and they built trust by keeping coaching conversations confidential (Alvey & Barclay, 2007; Gyllensten & Palmer, 2007). Therefore, contemporary researchers seemed to agree on the importance of trust to predict high-quality coaching relationships.
Gregory and Levy (2010) found that showing empathy was a strong predictor of the effectiveness of coaching relationships. Mahsud et al. (2010) found a significant positive association between empathy and relations-oriented behaviors of leaders (0.57, $p < 0.01$), which suggested that leaders should practice more supportive and developmental behaviors, and more helpful and encouraging behaviors toward employees. In the same line, McLean et al. (2005) found a strong correlation between valuing people over a task and a team approach (0.66), and the vital importance of social relationships at work as a friendship between a coach and an athlete (Philippe & Seiler, 2006). Other researchers emphasized the importance of caring behaviors as a crucial piece for building positive learning environments (Beattie, 2006). Listening was also a key part of the coaching relationship (O’Broin & Palmer, 2010). Therefore, contemporary researchers agreed that empathetic coaching behaviors were a predictor of high-quality coaching relationships.

Gregory (2010) and Gregory and Levy (2010) reported that a feedback environment and a subordinate feedback orientation were antecedents and predictors of high-quality employee coaching relationships. Wheeler (2011) found that dialogue manifested through dynamic conversations based on information exchange was vital in the coaching relationship. McLean et al. (2005) reported that open communication and valuing people had the second highest correlation (0.51) in the managerial coaching relationship, which was in accord with the results of Rhind and Jowett (2010). Rhind and Jowett reported that two-way communication through dialogue was a core component of high-quality coaching relationships in sports. What follows is a review of the most recent research on employee coaching relationship.
Review of the Most Recent Literature Regarding the Employee Coaching Relationship

Most of the recent empirical studies about the coaching relationship focused on exploring the association between coaching and coaching outcomes (Agwu & Luke, 2015; Huang & Hsieh, 2015; Kim, 2014; Kim & Kuo, 2015; Ye et al., 2015; Weer et al., 2016). These studies were in response to a call for research pertaining the impact of coaching on coaching outcomes (Gregory & Levy, 2012; Gyllensten & Palmer, 2007; McLean et al., 2005). Some recent empirical studies (Gregory & Levy, 2012; Huang & Hsieh, 2015; Kim, Egan, Kim, & Kim, 2013; Kim & Kuo, 2015) used well-known seminal (Ellinger et al., 1999; Pousa & Mathieu, 2015) and contemporary (Ellinger et al., 2011; Gregory & Levy, 2010; McLean et al., 2005; Park, 2007; Park, McLean, & Yang, 2008) instruments to measure the effectiveness of managers’ coaching skills and their impact on coaching outcomes. The researcher found only one theoretical study that made theoretical contributions on the employee coaching relationship (Gabriel et al., 2014) by using self-determination theory and a humanistic approach to coaching. Gabriel et al. (2014) proposed several theoretical propositions and a new topic of focus related to the psychological needs of employees and their impact on coaching outcomes. Very few studies used social exchange theory in recent research (Utrilla et al., 2015; Kim & Kuo, 2015).

Recent multidisciplinary studies about the coaching relationship introduced a new topic of exploration associated with the impact of social support and the coaching relationship (Appleton et al., 2016; Batson & Yoder, 2012; Freeman et al., 2014; Lu et al., 2016; Taylor & Bruner, 2012). Recent recommendations for future research called for the need for more studies about (a) the coaching relationship (Jowett, Kanakoglou, et al., 2012; Filsinger, 2014), (b) ingredients of effective coaching relationships (Beattie et al., 2014; Grant, 2014; Hagen, 2012;
Joo et al., 2012), and (c) links between humanistic coaching and relatedness-supportive behaviors (Gabriel et al., 2014). The primary purpose of this recent literature review was to find managers’ traits, characteristics, skills, elements, and other components that could lead effective coaching factors to build effective manager coach-employee relationships in organizational settings. The researcher presented the recent literature review in this section chronologically and thematically to (a) highlight the most recent studies, (b) show contributions to the field, and (c) describe how the employee coaching relationship evolved. See Appendix C for a summary of recent employee coaching relationship factors.

**Empirical Employee Coaching Studies**

Most of the empirical contemporary studies about employee coaching focused on investigating the impact of employee coaching behaviors on employee outcomes (Agwu & Luke, 2015; Engle et al., 2017; Hagen & Peterson, 2014; Huang & Hsieh, 2015; Kim, 2014; Kim & Kuo, 2015; Kim et al., 2013; Lynden, & Avery, 2016; Pousa & Mathieu, 2015; Utrilla et al., 2015; Weer et al., 2016). In a quantitative study, Kim et al. (2013) recruited employees (N = 482) in Korea’s public organizations to investigate the association between perceived employee coaching behaviors and employee work outcomes. Kim et al. used the managerial coaching behaviors scale (Ellinger et al., 2013) to measure the impact of manager coaching behaviors on employee satisfaction, performance, career commitment, and organizational commitment.

By using structural equation modeling, Kim et al. (2013) reported that managerial coaching indirectly and significantly affected job satisfaction (β = 0.17 [0.12, 0.23], p < 0.001), job performance (β = 0.24 [0.16, 0.30], p < 0.001) career commitment (β = 0.49 [0.39, 0.56], p < 0.001) and organization commitment (β = 0.46 [0.38, 0.58], p < 0.001). One critique of the study
results was that the authors showed the impact of managerial coaching behaviors on employee’s outcomes rather than reporting them and their effects individually. Therefore, the authors were unable to single out what was the most effective coaching behavior that impacted employee outcomes. One implication for practice was to implement the practice of managerial coaching behaviors in organizations because employees who received managerial coaching reported clearer role understanding, were happier with their jobs, became more committed to their careers and organizations, and were more willing to stay in their organization.

In a quantitative, cross-sectional survey design, Kim (2014) surveyed South Korean employees \(N = 234\) in private organizations. Kim (2014) used a scale to measure managerial coaching behaviors to investigate the relationship between managerial coaching behaviors and employee outcomes on role clarity, attitude, and performance. Kim (2014) reported that managerial coaching behaviors significantly directly and indirectly influenced employee’s outcomes, which confirmed a past study (Kim et al., 2013) of the indirect effects of managerial coaching on employee outcomes. Managerial coaching, for example had a significant direct impact on employee role clarity \((\beta = 0.69, p < 0.001)\), employee satisfaction with work \((\beta = 0.62, p < 0.001)\). Similarly, the researcher found that employee role clarity was associated with job performance \((\beta = 0.44, p < 0.001)\), and employee satisfaction with work \((\beta = 0.24, p < 0.001)\). Likewise, employee organizational commitment was significantly and positively related to employee satisfaction with work \((\beta = 0.75, p < 0.001)\), and employee job performance positively and significantly affected organizational commitment \((\beta = 0.22, p < 0.001)\). Structural equation modeling analysis showed that setting and communicating clear expectations about employee roles was the most important coaching behavior (Kim, 2014). The author suggested
that role clarity mediated the relationship between manager coaching behaviors and employee job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and employee job performance (see Figure 6).

![Managerial coaching model and structural relations](image)


Using a quantitative research design, Pousa and Mathieu (2015) surveyed financial advisors (N = 373) to examine self-efficacy in managerial coaching and to test the impact of managerial coaching on employee outcomes. The chief contribution of Pousa and Mathieu was that they found the joint effect of managerial coaching behaviors can boost employee self-efficacy, employee behavioral performance, and performance results. Empirical results showed that (a) managerial coaching behaviors positively affected self-efficacy (β = 0.45, p < 0.01); (b) self-efficacy positively affected behavioral performance (β = 0.51, p < 0.01) and results performance (β = 0.68, p < 0.01); (c) behavioral performance positively influenced results
performance ($\beta = 0.40, p < 0.01$). Pousa and Mathieu’s and Kim et al. (2013) analyzed data by using the combined impact of managerial coaching behaviors on employee outcomes, but they were unable to identify the most effective coaching behaviors that influenced employee outcomes.

Agwu and Luke (2015) and Utrilla et al. (2015) investigated the impact of managerial coaching on employee outcomes using quantitative approaches. Agwu and Luke used a quantitative, cross-section design and surveyed employees ($N = 370$) in Nigeria. They found that coaching behaviors, such as setting and communicating clear expectations and creating a sense of belonging, significantly affected employee outcomes by increasing performance by 74.32% and reducing employee’s turnover by 67.57%. Utrilla et al. (2015) employed social exchange theory. They surveyed Spanish employees ($N = 498$), used structural equation modeling, and reported that managerial coaching helped organizations improve their competitive positioning and performance by increasing sales and productivity. Data showed a positive association between the coaching process and employee performance ($\beta = 0.11, p < 0.05$), and a positive relationship between individual performance because of coaching ($\beta = 0.33, p < 0.05$). One recommendation for practice was to ensure a positive exchange between managers and employees, which was in line with the results of Anderson (2013) who asserted that managerial coaching was a two-way reciprocal interpersonal process based on mutuality.

In a quantitative study, Kim and Kuo (2015) recruited employees of an insurance company in Taiwan. The authors used social exchange theory and a managerial coaching skills scale (Park, 2007) to explore the association between managerial coaching and manager trustworthiness on employee outcomes. Park (2007) created the managerial coaching skills scale
using five coaching dimensions: (a) open communication, (b) team approach, (c) valuing people, (d) accepting ambiguity, and (e) facilitating development. In Park’s scale, the dimension of open communication was congruent with the results of Cummings et al. (2014). Cummings et al. used a qualitative exploratory, descriptive design and argued that managerial coaching enhanced communication through empathy and feedback. Cummings et al. reported that managerial coaching was a successful developmental tool to improve employee effectiveness and performance and to improve the organization’s competitive advance.

By using hierarchical multiple regression analysis, Kim and Kuo (2015) showed significant empirical evidence about the impact of managerial coaching on employee outcomes. Managerial coaching behaviors significantly predicted employee organizational citizenship behaviors ($\beta = 0.12, p < 0.01$). Managerial coaching predicted employee organizational citizenship ($\beta = 0.15, p < 0.01$). Managerial coaching significantly predicted trustworthiness ($\beta = 0.11, p < 0.01$). Also, trustworthiness predicted employee in-role performance ($\beta = 0.69, p < 0.01$). Trustworthiness significantly predicted organizational citizenship ($\beta = 0.56, p < 0.01$), and trustworthiness significantly predicted organizational citizenship ($\beta = 0.45, p < 0.01$). Kim and Kuo’s study results about trustworthiness matched with the results of Turner and McCarthy (2015). Turner and McCarthy used a qualitative approach, semi-structured interviews, a critical incident technique, and thematic analysis. The authors found that trust was the chief factor and a necessary condition for managers to (a) practice coachable moments and (b) create a coaching culture.

In a quantitative study, Huang and Hsieh (2015) surveyed supervisor and employee dyads ($N = 343$) from the hotel industry in Taiwan. Huang and Hsieh used a managerial coaching scale
(Park et al., 2008) to examine the association between managerial coaching behaviors, employee in-role behaviors, employee proactive career behaviors, and the mediation of the manager’s psychological empowerment. Huang and Hsieh found that managerial coaching behaviors, as measured by the Park et al. (2008) scale, significantly and positively impacted employee outcomes. For example, the researchers positively correlated coaching behavior with psychological empowerment ($r = 0.49, p < 0.01$), employee in-role behavior ($r = 0.18, p < 0.01$), and proactive career behavior ($r = 0.36, p < 0.01$). Also, the researchers positively correlated psychological empowerment with employee in-role behavior ($r = 0.23, p < 0.01$), and proactive career behavior ($r = 0.44, p < 0.01$).

Kim and Kuo (2015) found similar results about employee outcomes. Kim and Kuo used the same managerial coaching behavior scale (Park, 2007). One important contribution of this study was that managerial coaching behaviors could (a) improve employee in-role job performance and (b) increase employee’s motivation on career self-management. A second important contribution was that manager’s psychological empowerment positively impacted employee motivational needs by stimulating proactive career behaviors. Coaching behaviors, thus, were predictors of manager empowerment and employee intrinsic motivation toward career self-management.

**Lack of empirical research regarding the employee coaching relationship.** In a quantitative study, Gregory and Levy (2012) used online surveys and recruited employees ($N = 479$) of Fortune 500 companies to determine the influence of employee feedback orientations on the quality of the coaching relationship. Gregory and Levy (2012) found that subordinate feedback orientation was a significant predictor of the perceived quality of the coaching
relationship. They tested the association between two scales, the feedback orientation scale (Linderbaum & Levy, 2010) and the perceived quality of the coaching relationship scale (Gregory & Levy, 2010). Regression analysis of the data showed that employees who sought and received feedback from their supervisors were more satisfied and happier with their coaching relationships (Gregory & Levy, 2012). Another result was that the coaching relationship predicted coaching behaviors. However, Gregory and Levy (2012) also asserted that the association between the coaching relationship and employee coaching could be reciprocal, which means that practicing effective coaching behaviors could also enhance the coaching relationship. The authors recommended the cultivation of positive interactions to enhance the quality of coaching relationships. They also suggested there was a need for more empirical studies on the ingredients of effective coaching relationships and their outcomes, which matched future research recommendations by Beattie et al. (2014), Hagen (2012), and Joo et al. (2012).

In a theoretical study, Gabriel et al. (2014) made theoretical contributions to show how self-determination theory and a humanistic approach to coaching can inform the practice of employee coaching. Gabriel et al. reported that employees needed to have their psychological needs met as they pursue professional goals at work. The authors claimed that by satisfying psychological needs of employees, coaching managers could affect employee outcomes, such as employee well-being, dedication to work, intrinsic motivation, job satisfaction, reduction of emotional stress, and voluntary decisions to extend work hours. As a result, the authors proposed four supportive coaching behaviors to address the (a) psychological needs of employees, (b) autonomy-supportive behaviors, (c) competency-supportive behaviors, and (d) relatedness
supportive behaviors. They derived the four coaching behaviors from the integration of the self-determination theory and the humanistic approach to coaching.

Based on employee self-determination theory and a humanistic approach to coaching, three supportive coaching behaviors could predict employee outcomes (Gabriel et al., 2014). First, autonomy-supportive behaviors entailed building a social environment at work. Second, competency-supportive behaviors involved helping to develop and train employees, removing barriers to efficient performance, ensuring the employee’s goals were challenging, and encouraging employees to learn by making mistakes. Finally, relatedness-supportive behaviors required experiencing social support, which led to positive outcomes at work. The authors recommended future research on the link between humanistic coaching and relatedness-supportive behaviors (see Figure 7).
Those who studied leadership, including servant leadership, studied manager supportive behaviors for effective employee coaching (Chiniara & Bentein, 2016; Dierendonck, Stam, Boersma, de Windt, & Alkema, 2014; Singh, Winkel, & Selvarajan, 2013). In a quantitative study, Chiniara and Bentein (2016) recruited front-line employees ($N = 821$) and supervisors ($N = 157$) and used self-determination theory to find out if there was an association between servant leadership behaviors, employee psychological needs, and employee outcomes. By using structural modeling analysis, data showed strong positive empirical evidence between servant leadership and autonomy need satisfaction ($r = 0.56, p < 0.001$), competency need satisfaction ($r = 0.40, < p < 0.001$), and relatedness need satisfaction ($r = 0.53, p < 0.001$). Similarly, autonomy

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need satisfaction was significantly positively associated with employee task performance \( (r = 0.18, p < 0.001) \), OCB-organization \( (r = 0.16, p < 0.001) \), and OCB-individual \( (r = 0.13, p < 0.001) \); competency need satisfaction was significantly positively related to employee task performance \( (r = 0.15, p < 0.001) \), relatedness need satisfaction was significantly positively related to OCB-organization \( (r = 0.21, p < 0.001) \), and OCB-individual \( (r = 0.30, p < 0.001) \).

The authors highly recommended building a work culture where managers could promote the satisfaction of employees’ psychological needs.

**Sports coaching in multidisciplinary studies.** Freeman et al. (2014) recruited athletes \( (N = 306) \) and used the athlete’s perceived support questionnaire to test the impact of social support on the coaching relationship and athlete outcomes. The athlete perceived social support questionnaire had four social dimensions: (a) emotional support, (b) esteem support, (c) informational support, and (d) tangible support (Freeman et al., 2014). The authors suggested that a coach’s perceived social support positively impacted athlete behavioral, emotional, cognitive outcomes, and well-being. The results were congruent with the findings of Lu et al. (2016) related to the positive impact of informational and tangible support for athlete well-being.

In a quantitative study, Appleton et al. (2016) tested a new scale called the empowerment and disempowerment motivational coach-created climate based on coach’s social supportive behaviors. The empowerment coach-created motivational climate behaviors had three dimensions: (a) task-involving climate behaviors, (b) autonomy-supportive climate behaviors, and (c) socially-supportive climate behaviors (Appleton et al., 2016). Appleton et al. reported a positive correlation between socially supportive coaching behaviors and relatedness need satisfaction \( (\beta = 0.52, p < 0.01) \).
Appleton and Duda (2016) also used the empowerment and disempowerment motivational coach-created climate (Appleton et al., 2016) and reported different findings. In a cross-sectional quantitative study, Appleton and Duda found that the sub-dimensions of the empowerment coach-created motivational climate behaviors were positively correlated with enjoyment ($\beta = 0.29, p < 0.001$) and self-esteem ($\beta = 0.20, p < 0.001$). Appleton et al. (2016) suggested that a positive social psychological environment helps to fulfill athletes’ psychological needs. In a quantitative cross-sectional study in soccer sports, Taylor and Bruner (2012) reported that coach’s rapport behaviors were positively associated with coachee psychological need satisfaction ($\beta = 0.44, p < 0.01$). In a conceptual analysis study, Batson and Yoder (2012) proposed that role modeling was the most critical empowering behavior in the coaching relationship, which led to staff growth and increased self-efficacy. Other researchers who studied coaching relationships found some associations between the coaching relationship and other variables (Davidson, 2015; Di Fabio, 2016; Isoard-Gautheur, Triuilloud, Gustafsson, & Guillet-Descas, 2016; Jowett, LaFreniere, & Vallerand, 2012; Rezania & Gurney, 2014).

In a quantitative study, Jowett, LaFreniere, et al. (2012) recruited coach-athlete dyads ($N = 103$) to explore the association between the coaching relationship and coach and an athlete’s passion for developmental activities. Jowett, LaFreniere, et al. reported that an athlete’s passion for developmental activities positively predicted athlete coaching relationship satisfaction ($\beta = 0.50, p < 0.05$). They also found that a coach’s passion for developmental activities positively predicted athlete coaching relationship satisfaction ($\beta = 0.39, p < 0.05$), and an athlete’s passion for developmental activities was unrelated to interpersonal conflict ($\beta = 0.68, p < 0.05$).
Data correlation analysis suggested that mutual harmonious passion for selected developmental activities can enhance the quality of the coaching relationship and promote human functioning and psychological well-being. In a quantitative study, Isoard-Gautheur et al. (2016) surveyed athletes \((N = 360)\) and found that the quality of the coach-athlete coaching relationship was unrelated to emotional and distress and burnout \((\beta = -0.14, p < 0.05)\). In the same line, Rezania and Gurney (2014) suggested that coaches should place more attention on information sharing because it was the most important factor in predicting perceived commitment to the coach in the coaching relationship \((\beta = 0.37, p < 0.05)\). Other factors also predicted perceived commitment to the coach, such as training and development \((\beta = 0.22, p < 0.05)\) and promoting teamwork \((\beta = 0.33, p < 0.05)\).

**Empirical multidisciplinary studies regarding the executive coaching relationship.**

Several researchers explored possible associations between the coaching relationship, trust, and other variables (Cox, 2012; de Haan et al., 2013; Filsinger, 2014; Gan & Chong, 2015; Gormley & van Nieuwerburg, 2014; Krot & Lewicka, 2012; Jowett, Kanakoglou, et al., 2012; Karpenko & Gidycz, 2012; McCarthy & Milner, 2013; O’Connor & Cavanagh, 2013; Parker et al., 2015; Sonesh et al., 2015). In a quantitative cross-sectional study, Gan and Chong (2015) wanted to determine the core elements of the executive coaching relationship in Malaysia. By using multiple regression analysis, the researchers showed that rapport, trust, and commitment were strong predictors of an effective coaching relationship. Rapport behaviors included a strong connection, agreement, mutual understanding, and good task coordination. Results showed that rapport is linked with coaching effectiveness \((\beta = 0.68, p < 0.01)\), effective coaching relationships \((\beta = 0.55, p < 0.01)\), trust \((\beta = 0.84, p < 0.01)\), and commitment \((\beta = 0.74, p < 0.01)\).
Rapport was a core element of the coaching relationship because it was the first step toward building and keeping positive relationships (Gan & Chong, 2015). Gan and Chong found trust behaviors included feeling secure, having confidential coaching discussions, and having open and honest communication. Results showed that trust was a predictor of coaching effectiveness ($\beta = 0.63$, $p < 0.01$), effective coaching relationships ($\beta = 0.45$, $p < 0.01$), and commitment ($\beta = 0.74$, $p < 0.01$). Gormley and van Nieuwerburg (2014) reported that trust was a necessary condition for creating a learning environment. Similarly, Parker et al. (2015) proposed that relational processes in high-quality relationships enhanced levels of trust, support, and openness.

In a phenomenological qualitative study, Cox (2012) found three central themes based on trust: (a) a foundation of trust, (b) a framework of trust, and (c) exercising trust. Using a narrative inquiry research design, Netolicky (2016) found that building a trusting environment and relationship could reinforce coachee openness. Furthermore, Krot and Lewicka (2012) found that trust in the form of benevolence was the key for building trusting relationships.

Finally, Gan and Chong (2015) reported that the third predictor of the coaching relationship was commitment. Commitment entailed a coachee’s (a) willingness to be coached, (b) being fully present in coaching sessions, and (c) being entirely dedicated to coaching tasks and experience. Data showed that the commitment of a coachee positively and significantly predicted coaching effectiveness ($\beta = 0.66$, $p < 0.01$), and effective coaching relationships ($\beta = 0.39$, $p < 0.01$). The authors concluded by suggesting that the coaching relationship significantly predicted coaching effectiveness ($\beta = 0.40$, $p < 0.01$).
Some researchers focused on the predictors of the coaching relationship (de Haan et al., 2013), while others highlighted a coaches’ lack of relational skills to build positive coaching relationships (McCarthy & Milner, 2013). In a quantitative study, de Haan et al. (2013) recruited middle managers (N = 156) and skilled coaches (N = 34) to explore the common factors of the coaching relationship and their impact on coaching outcomes. De Haan et al. found a bi-directional positive association between coaching outcomes and coaching relationships. Data showed that the coaching relationship was a significant predictor of coaching outcomes (β = 0.60, p < 0.01). A second finding suggested that the coaching relationship partially mediated the coach’s techniques and coaching outcomes (β = 0.69, p < 0.01). The authors highlighted the importance of working alliance behaviors to enhance coaching effectiveness.

In a qualitative study, Jowett, Lafreniere, et al. (2012) used content analysis to find that partnership, commitment, and cooperation counted for variances in predicting coaching outcomes. However, McCarthy and Milner, 2013 found that coaches and coaching managers were unable to build positive coaching relationship because of the lack of effective coaching skills. Some researchers recommended further research into the coaching relationship (Jowett, Kanakoglou, et al., 2012; Filsinger, 2014).

**Empirical multidisciplinary research regarding the generic coaching relationship.**

Contemporary researchers interested in the generic coaching relationship concentrated on studying possible links between the coaching relationship and empathy (Jordan, Gessnitzer, & Kauffeld, 2016). Others focused on context for growth (Mosteo et al., 2016), goals and tasks (Gessnitzer & Kauffeld, 2015; Grant, 2014), interaction and communication (Egan & Hamlin, 2014), affiliation (Ianiro, Schermuly, & Kauffeld, 2013), leadership form (Muhlberger & Traut-
Mattaush, 2015), and friendship and partnership (Ciutiene & Petrauskas, 2012). In a quantitative study, Jordan et al. (2016) used coach-client dyads ($N = 19$) in Germany and used Barrett-Lennard’s (1993) studies on the empathy cycle model to explore the association between the coaching relationship and empathy. The authors created a new theoretical framework on empathy.

Jordan et al. (2016) argued that in all working professional relationships feeling understood by clients was a required condition in coaching to achieve anticipated positive outcomes. The authors added one more step in Barrett-Lennard’s (1993) empathy cycle model and concluded that good coaching strongly depended on positive interactions, basic listening skills, and paraphrasing. The results of Jordan et al. matched earlier studies on the importance of empathy (Stowell, 1988) and reciprocal interaction (Alvey & Barclay, 2007) in coaching.

In an exploratory empirical quantitative study, Grant (2014) used coach-coachee dyads ($N = 49$) to explore the impact of goals and autonomy on the effectiveness of coaching. Grant used the goal-focused coaching skills questionnaire (Grant & Cavanagh, 2007) to measure coaching behaviors on goal setting and the perceived autonomy support scale (Deci & Ryan, 1987) to measure coaching behaviors on coachee’s autonomy. Grant found a positive and significant (a) association between a goal-focused coaching relationship and successful coaching engagement ($\beta = 0.43$, $p < 0.05$), (b) correlation between goal-focused relationship and autonomy support ($\beta = 0.61$, $p < 0.01$), and (c) link between coaching success and autonomy support ($\beta = 0.29$, $p < 0.05$). Grant’s results corresponded with the results of Gessnitzer and Kauffeld (2015) who argued that a clear agreement on goals and task between coach and client
were necessary conditions for reaching positive coaching outcomes. Grant recommended future research on the ingredients of the coaching relationship.

In a quantitative study, Ianiro et al. (2013) used coach-coachees dyads \((N = 33)\) in Germany to find core variables that could affect the coaching relationship and the success of the coaching. Ianiro et al. found that interpersonal affiliation behaviors significantly and positively affected the quality of the coaching relationship \((\beta = 0.30, p < 0.01)\). The authors suggested that coaches should create a friendly environment where clients can freely smile and laugh and enjoy of tenderly coaching conversations, which ultimately friendly behaviors can support the formation and maintenance of high-quality relationships. The results of Ianiro et al. were congruent with the results of Ciutiene and Petrauskas (2012) who contended that strong working relationships needed friendship and partnership. However, Muhlberger and Traut-Mattausch (2015) and Mikkelson, York, and Arritola (2015) argued that leader’s relational behaviors solely influenced the coaching relationship. Mikkelson et al. found that leaders can enhance employee outcomes by acting friendly and showing concern for employee well-being. The authors found a positive, significant correlation between leader’s relational behaviors and job satisfaction \((\beta = 0.37, p < 0.05)\), motivation \((\beta = 0.39, p < 0.05)\), and organizational commitment \((\beta = 0.42, p < 0.05)\). One implication for practice was that employees desired good treatment and they wished to build positive working partnerships with their managers.

**Section Summary**

Recent research about employee coaching relationships focused on exploring the association between managerial coaching and job performance (Chiniara & Bentein, 2016). Kim et al. (2013) found that managerial coaching indirectly and significantly impacted employee job
performance ($\beta = 0.24, p < 0.001$), and Utrilla et al. (2015) reported a positive direct association between the managerial coaching process and employee performance ($\beta = 0.11, p < 0.05$). In other studies, the results indicated a positive association between managerial coaching and self-efficacy ($\beta = 0.45, p < 0.01$), and self-efficacy was positively related to behavioral performance ($\beta = 0.51, p < 0.01$) and results performance ($\beta = 0.68, p < 0.01$). Similarly, some researchers found that setting and communicating clear expectations and creating a sense of belonging, significantly affected employee outcomes, which increased performance by 74.32%.

Furthermore, some researchers tailored their examination to the link between managerial coaching trustworthiness and employee in-role performance. Kim (2014) found a positive relationship ($\beta = 0.69, p < 0.01$) between managerial coaching employee role clarity ($\beta = 0.69, p < 0.001$).

In recent research about the employee-coach relationship focused on exploring the relationship between managerial coaching and employee job satisfaction (Appleton et al., 2016). Kim et al. (2013) found an indirect positive and significant association between managerial coaching behaviors and employee job satisfaction ($\beta = 0.17, p < 0.001$). Similarly, Kim (2014) found a direct and positive link between managerial coaching behaviors and employee job satisfaction ($\beta = 0.62, p < 0.001$). Huang and Hsieh (2015) reported that managerial coaching behaviors correlated with psychological empowerment ($\beta = 0.49, p < 0.01$). Chiniara and Bentein (2016) found a positive correlation between servant leadership behaviors and autonomy need satisfaction ($\beta = 0.56, p < 0.001$), competency need satisfaction ($\beta = 0.40, p < 0.001$), and relatedness need satisfaction ($\beta = 0.53, p < 0.001$). Servant leader behaviors were like managerial coaching behaviors regarding empathy (Evered & Selman, 1989; Mahsud et al., 2010), emotional
support (Stowell, 1988). Servant leader behaviors also included offering feedback (Gregory & Levy, 2012), giving resources (Ellinger et al., 1999), empowering (Ellinger et al., 1999), and putting subordinates first (McLean et al., 2005).

Gan and Chong (2015) focused on finding the relationship between managerial coaching and empathy. Gan and Chong reported that rapport was positively linked to coaching effectiveness ($\beta = 0.68, p < 0.01$), effective coaching relationships ($\beta = 0.55, p < 0.01$), trust ($\beta = 0.84, p < 0.01$), and commitment ($\beta = 0.74, p < 0.01$). Similarly, Gessnitzer and Kauffeld (2015) found that paraphrasing, positive interactions, and basic listening skills were antecedents of positive coaching outcomes. Taylor and Bruner (2012) reported that coaching rapport behaviors were positively associated with coachee need satisfaction ($\beta = 0.44, p < 0.01$). Ianiro et al. (2013) showed that interpersonal affiliation behaviors positively and significantly affected the coaching relationship ($\beta = 0.30, p < 0.01$). The next section is a chronological review of the conceptual framework components linked to this current study’s theory and assumptions and the employee coaching relationship. The next section is a synthesis of the research findings.

**Synthesis of the Research Findings**

The researcher offers a chronological synthesis of the research findings in this section. The chronological synthesis includes (a) a seminal review, (b) a contemporary review, and (c) a recent review of the literature. The researcher points out significant chronological findings, issues about the employee coaching relationship, and chronological recommendations for future research.
Seminal Review

The earlier research served as a foundation and a stepping-stone for future research about the employee coaching relationship. Early researchers focused on examining manager traits and manager coaching skills (Buzzota et al., 1977; Frankel & Otazo, 1992) rather than focusing on the coaching relationship (Terry, 1977). Other researchers focused on the relational role of leaders in a business setting (Mace, 1950), the importance of coaching relationships (Axmith, 1982), and employee partnerships and empowerment (Evered & Selman, 1989). Ellinger et al. (1999) was the only study found that used theory and a scale to measure manager coaching skills in business settings. One interesting finding was that coaching relationship factors were similar across the employee coaching literature (Minter & Thomas, 2000), the employee coaching relationship literature (Evered & Selman, 1989; Marsh, 1992; Orth et al., 1987; Stowell, 1988), multidisciplinary studies in sports coaching relationships (Jowett, 2003). They were also similar in the executive coaching literature (Kilburg, 2001). The employee coaching relationship literature lacked empiricism (Ellinger et al., 1999; Graham et al., 1993, 1994).

Unexpectedly, multidisciplinary empirical studies about coaching relationships (Jowett, 2003; Kilburg, 2001; Stinglhamber & Vandenberghe, 2003) offered empirical support for the employee coaching studies (Axmith, 1982; Frankel & Otazo, 1992; Minter & Thomas, 2000) and employee coaching relationship research (Evered & Selman, 1989; Mace, 1950; Marsh, 1992; Orth et al., 1987; Stowell, 1988; Terry, 1977). One researcher named some factors of the coaching relationship in the seminal literature. Researchers found employee partnerships (Evered & Selman, 1989), collaboration (Stowell, 1988), building rapport (Terry, 1977), feedback (Axmith, 1982; Marsh, 1992) and goal setting (Frankel & Otazo, 1992; Minter & Thomas,
2000). Unexpectedly, the factors found in the seminal literature were also in the components of SIT (Deutsch, 1949, 1949a, 1962; Johnson & Johnson, 1989, 2005, 2009; Kelley & Thibaut, 1978).

**Contemporary Review**

Most empirical contemporary research centered on the investigation of the manager’s coaching role and effective coaching behaviors in organizations (Ellinger et al., 2011; Ladyshewsky, 2010). Some research created new scales to measure manager coaching skills (McLean et al., 2005; Park, 2007) and perceived high-quality employee coaching relationships (Gregory & Levy, 2010) as a response to the call for an urgent need to develop self-assessments and perceived assessments in managerial coaching and employee coaching relationships. Clearly, empirical contemporary researchers (Beattie, 2006; Gregory, 2010; Ladyshewsky, 2010; McLean et al., 2005; Wheeler, 2011) built upon seminal reports to create new and original knowledge (Evered & Selman, 1989; Frankel & Otazo, 1992; Mace, 1950; Minter & Thomas, 2000; Stowell, 1988; Terry, 1977).

Multidisciplinary researchers continued to make significant contributions in executive coaching (Alvey & Barclay, 2007; Baron & Morin, 2009; Boyce et al., 2010; Mahsud et al., 2010), and sport coaching (Jowett, 2006, 2009; Olympiou et al., 2008; Philippe & Seiler, 2006; Rhind & Jowett, 2010). There was a lack of empirical research on employee coaching relationships (Gregory, 2010; Gregory & Levy, 2010, 2011). Also, very few researchers used theory in their research (Gregory, 2010).

The researcher found five factors of the employee coaching relationship in the contemporary literature, including (a) valuing people over tasks (McLean et al., 2005), (b) rapport
(Wycherley & Cox, 2008), (c) partnerships (Olympiou et al., 2008), (d) feedback (Jowett, 2006; Rhind & Jowett, 2010), (e) working on goals (Gyllensten & Palmer, 2007), and (f) collaboration (O’Broin & Palmer, 2010). Unexpectedly, the five factors of the employee coaching relationship found in the contemporary literature were similar to the components of SIT (Deutsch, 1949, 1949a, 1962; Johnson & Johnson, 1989, 2005, 2009; Kelley & Thibaut, 1978).

Recommendations included the need for studies about managerial coaching antecedents and outcomes (McLean et al., 2005), and the ingredients of and actual coaching outcomes for the employee coaching relationship in business settings (Gregory & Levy, 2010; Gyllensten & Palmer, 2007). Another recommendation was to look for factors affecting collaborative coaching relationships (Boyce et al., 2010).

**Recent Review**

The researcher found some specific empirical research from the chronological review, such as seminal (Buzzota et al., 1977; Clarke, 1971; Mace, 1950) and more current research (Alvey & Barclay, 2007; Chiniara & Bentein, 2106; Gregory & Levy, 2010, 2011; Kim & Kuo, 2015; McLean et al., 2005; Moll, Rees, & Freeman, 2017; Pousa & Mathieu, 2015). Seminal researchers focused on manager traits and coaching skills (Buzzota et al., 1977; Frankel & Otazo, 1992), but contemporary researchers investigated the manager coaching role, effective coaching behaviors (Ellinger et al., 2011; Ladyshewsky, 2010), and the development of instruments (Gregory & Levy, 2010; McLean et al., 2005; Park, 2007). Recent studies focused on exploring the association among employee coaching (Agwu & Luke, 2015; Kim & Kuo, 2015; Huang & Hsieh, 2015; Utrilla et al., 2015), the employee coaching relationship, and coaching outcomes (Gregory & Levy, 2012).
Most recent studies (Huang & Hsieh, 2015; Kim, 2014; Kim & Kuo, 2015; Kim et al., 2013; Pousa & Mathieu, 2015) employed seminal (Ellinger et al., 2003), contemporary managerial coaching scales (McLean et al., 2005; Park, 2007) and perceived high-quality coaching relationship scale (Gregory & Levy, 2010) to explore the link between employee coaching and employee coaching outcomes. Again, as in seminal and contemporary research, recent studies lacked empirical and theoretical foundation; the researcher found only one empirical research on employee coaching relationship (Gregory & Levy, 2012) and theoretical research (Gabriel et al., 2014).

Most recent multidisciplinary studies about the coaching relationship informed the practice of employee coaching (Appleton & Duda, 2016; Appleton et al., 2016; de Haan et al., 2013; Freeman et al., 2014; Gan & Chong, 2015; Isoard-Gautheur et al., 2016; Lu et al., 2016). Also, employee coaching relationship research (Gabriel et al., 2014) and multidisciplinary studies (i.e., sport coaching) started a new direction of research focus by exploring the association of coaching relationship outcomes and coachee psychological needs (Appleton et al., 2016). Others studied the influence of social support on coaching relationship outcomes (Lu et al., 2016; Moll et al., 2017).

The researcher found some factors of the coaching relationship in the recent literature. For example, the researcher identified the factors of partnership and cooperation (Jowett, Kanakoglou, et al., 2012), rapport and goals (Taylor & Bruner, 2012), and feedback (McCarthy & Milner, 2013). Unexpectedly, the researcher found similarities between factors found in the recent literature were and the components of SIT (Deutsch, 1949a, 1949b, 1962; Johnson & Johnson, 1989, 2005, 2009; Kelley & Thibaut, 1978). The researcher also found
recommendations for future research in the recent literature. Recommendations for future research were congruent with the call for the need of more studies about the coaching relationship (Jowett, Kanakoglou, et al., 2012; Filsinger, 2014), the ingredients of an effective coaching relationship (Beattie et al., 2014; Grant, 2014; Hagen, 2012; Joo et al., 2012; O’Broin, 2016), and the link between humanistic coaching and relatedness-supportive behaviors (Gabriel et al., 2014).

Critique of Previous Research Methods

In this section, the researcher offers a critique of the earlier methodologies used to investigate the phenomena of employee coaching relationships. First, the researcher offers a methodological and chronological review of the topic of interest. Second, the researcher discusses the strengths, weaknesses, and limitations of the quantitative methodology used to investigate coaching relationships. Additionally, the researcher presents the current research methodological choices, justifications, and contributions to the body of knowledge about employee coaching relationships in organizational settings.

Methodological and Chronological Progression

Research methodologies used to study the employee coaching relationship have evolved (Gregory, 2010; Gregory & Levy, 2010, 2011, 2012; Mace, 1950; Mills, 1986; Terry, 1977). While studies conducted between the 1950s and mid 2000s were chiefly theoretical reports that focused on examining manager traits and characteristics of effective coaching (Evered & Selman, 1989; Stowell, 1988), contemporary studies conducted between 2005 and 2011 were mostly empirical and quantitative. The more recent studies centered explored and measured manager coaching skills with the development of instruments (Gregory, 2010; Gregory & Levy,
Recent research methodological approaches are empirical and quantitative (Gregory & Levy, 2012), but research attention switched to explore the active ingredients affecting the quality of employee coaching relationships. Researchers (Gregory, 2010; Gregory & Levy, 2010, 2011, 2012) built original and new knowledge based on earlier studies (Mace, 1950; Marsh, 1992). They made significant contributions by using quantitative research designs and offering empirical support to earlier work (Evered & Selman, 1989; Orth et al., 1987). There was a clear lack of theory (Gabriel et al., 2014) and empirical research (O’Broin, 2016).

**Methodological Strengths of Quantitative Studies**

Contemporary research (Gregory & Levy, 2010) and recent research (Gregory & Levy, 2012) used instruments to measure observable manager’s coaching behaviors in the employee coaching relationship. Quantitative research encompasses numerical data and is best suited to study a measurable phenomenon (Watson, 2015). For instance, Gregory and Levy (2012) used the PQCR scale to examine the relationship between employee orientation feedback and its impact on the quality of the coaching relationship. The PQCR scale has four dimensions (a) genuineness of the relationship, (b) effective communication, (c) comfort with the relationship, and (d) facilitating development and 12 items that were derived from the literature review of executive coaching because of the lack of studies on employee coaching relationship (Gregory & Levy, 2010). The internal consistency of the (PQCR) scale was alpha = (0.96), which indicated strong reliability (Hagen & Peterson, 2014).

Contemporary research (Gregory & Levy, 2011) and recent studies (Gregory & Levy, 2012) in employee coaching relationship used survey research design approaches. An advantage of a survey research design is that surveys can be suited to reach sufficient sample sizes, which is
necessary for generalization and representativeness of the population studied (Laher, 2016). For example, Gregory and Levy (2011) recruited subordinates \((N = 1,291)\) and coaching supervisors \((N = 221)\) to test a model of the predictors to effective employee coaching relationships. Greater samples are crucial in quantitative studies because they allow for understanding of associations between variables (Laher, 2016). Results showed that practicing individual consideration behaviors (i.e., one dimension of transformational leadership style) significantly affected the quality of the employee coaching relationship (Gregory & Levy, 2011). Contemporary (Gregory & Levy, 2011) and recent research (Gregory & Levy, 2012) in employee coaching relationship showed rigor and quality of research design and methods. There were also some limitations.

**Methodological Limitations and Weaknesses of Quantitative Studies**

Review of the literature in employee coaching relationship pointed out some weaknesses and limitations in quantitative studies (Gregory & Levy, 2011, 2012). One flaw in using instruments is participant and observer bias and reactivity to answer questions on a questionnaire (Watson, 2015). For instance, in Gregory and Levy’s (2011) quantitative study, the authors predicted and tested the association between manager emotional intelligence and subordinate perceptions of the quality of the coaching relationship. As the authors reported, the root of the failure could be an issue with measurement of emotional intelligence or bias with self-report measures of coaching managers. The method used to analyze quantitative data was another weakness (Kim et al., 2013).

Some quantitative researchers (Agwu & Luke, 2015; Huang & Hsieh, 2015; Kim, 2014; Kim & Kuo, 2015; Kim et al., 2013) used structural equation modeling to predict the impact of managerial coaching behaviors on employee coaching outcomes. In a quantitative study, Kim et
al. (2013) used structural equation modeling to analyze quantitative data and predict the impact of managerial coaching behaviors on employee satisfaction, performance, and career commitment. Results showed that managerial coaching indirectly and significantly affected job satisfaction (β = 0.17 [0.12, 0.23], p < 0.001), job performance (β = 0.24 [0.16, 0.30], p < 0.001), and career commitment (β = 0.49 [0.39, 0.56], p < 0.001). One unexplored issue was what specific coaching behaviors impacted employee outcomes (Gelling, 2015). The next section has the current study’s methodological choice, justification, and contributions.

**Methodological Choice**

The research about employee coaching relationships showed earlier quantitative researchers (Gregory, 2010; Gregory & Levy, 2010, 2011, 2012) did not fully capture the common factors of effective coaching relationships for successful coaching outcomes. The researcher assessed some qualitative research design approaches to find a research design for the current study. A phenomenological research design was not right because the focus was not on the lived experience of participants. An ethnographic research design was not right because the focus was not social groups or culture. A case study research design was not right because the focus was not an exhaustive examination of a single case. A grounded theory research design was not correct because the focus was not to generate theory (Percy et al., 2015). The researcher chose an exploratory qualitative research design (Costa et al., 2016; Percy et al., 2015) because it matched with the focus of this study and the research question.

**Methodological Justification**

This researcher employed a methodology not previously used to study employee coaching relationships. An exploratory qualitative research design (Costa et al., 2016) was the
proper approach because it allowed an exploration of significant factors that led to successful employee coaching relationships from the employees’ perspectives. The current exploratory research and the data collection and analysis methods aligned. The design allowed for an analysis of in-depth information about employee beliefs about their successful coaching relationship experiences.

**Methodological Contribution**

This current exploratory qualitative study contributed to the body of knowledge of the employee coaching relationship literature by building on earlier research and ideas on this topic. This study employed a new methodological approach and methods (Costa et al., 2016; Percy et al., 2015) to expand earlier quantitative findings and knowledge on this topic (Gregory, 2010; Gregory & Levy 2010, 2011, 2012). There was an urgent need for more studies with a theoretical foundation (Gabriel et al., 2014). The researcher, thus, employed SIT and its tenets (Deutsch, 1949a, 1949b, 1962; Johnson & Johnson, 1989, 2005, 2009; Kelley, 1984; Kelley & Thibaut, 1978) to give new perspective and understanding to the employee coaching relationship

The current study answered earlier calls for more empirical studies on the main ingredients of effective coaching relationships (Filsinger, 2014; Graham et al., 1993; Grant, 2014; Gregory & Levy, 2010, 2012; Joo et al., 2012; Mace, 1950; O’Broin, 2016). The study built new and original knowledge by using and connecting previous findings about factors that led to successful employee coaching relationships, such as partnership (Gregory & Levy 2012; Mace, 1950; Marsh, 1992), feedback (Axmith, 1982; Cox, 2012; Gregory & Levy, 2011; Kilburg, 2001), connection (Appleton & Duda, 2016; Gregory & Levy, 2011; Mace, 1950; McLean et al., 2005), collaboration (Gan & Chong, 2015; Jowett, 2003; Ladyshewsky, 2010;

Summary

In Chapter 2, the researcher discussed the literature review about the employee coaching relationship in organizational settings. First, the researcher presented the methods of searching peer-reviewed articles. Second, the researcher discussed the theoretical orientation for this study. Third, the researcher offered a chronological review of the employee coaching relationship. Fourth, the researcher also offered a synthesis of the research findings. Finally, the researcher gave a critique of earlier research methods used to study employee coaching relationships. Presented next is a summary of the chronological review of the literature in employee coaching relationships and the possible contributions of this qualitative research in the body of knowledge of the employee coaching relationship in organizational settings. Chapter 3 has a detailed explanation of the research design and methods. Chapter 4 contains the study’s results and Chapter 5 includes the discussion, implications, and recommendations for future research.
CHAPTER 3. METHODOLOGY

Introduction

Chapter 3 is a detailed presentation of the research design and methodology used to explore employee perceptions of factors that lead to an effective manager coach-employee relationship. Additionally, this chapter described in-depth the research elements, which included the (a) method of the research, (b) selected population and sample, (c) data collection, (d) procedures for gathering qualitative data, and (e) thematic analysis. Furthermore, the chapter includes ethical considerations for the study.

Purpose of the Study

Previous researchers described how manager-coaches face difficulties forming effective coaching relationships with their employees (Joo et al., 2012; McCarthy & Milner, 2013). Previous quantitative studies about the employee coaching relationship have not fully captured the common factors of effective coaching relationships that contribute to successful coaching outcomes (Grant, 2014; Gregory & Levy, 2010, 2011, 2012; O’Broin, 2016; Spaten et al., 2016). Therefore, the purpose of this exploratory qualitative research was to explore employee beliefs about the factors that lead to an effective manager coach-employee relationship. The researcher answered the research question by finding employee beliefs of factors leading to a successful manager coach-employee coaching relationship. Organizations can use the results of this research to implement effective manager coach-employee coaching relationship programs that
may aid recruitment and retention of top employees. Organizations can use the results to create positive organizational outcomes and support continued organizational growth.

**Research Question**

**Research question.** What are the factors that employees believe lead to an effective manager coach-employee relationship?

**Research Design**

The researcher used an exploratory qualitative research design, methods, and procedures to answer the research question (O’Brien, Harris, Beckman, Reed, & Cook, 2014). An exploratory qualitative research design is a scientific inquiry approach that enables a researcher to explore human experiences in natural social settings; it allows researchers to gather rich information from research participants (Kathlke, 2014). Additionally, an exploratory qualitative research approach can help researchers explore and understand people’s feelings, thoughts, perspectives, subjective beliefs, and how and why people’s actions take place in their natural social settings (Percy et al., 2015). Therefore, an exploratory qualitative research approach was adopted because it allowed the researcher to find unknown employee coaching relationship factors to answer the research question and fill a gap in the literature about employee coaching relationships. The review of the literature showed that earlier quantitative studies about employee coaching relationships have not fully captured the common factors of effective coaching relationships that contribute to successful coaching outcomes (Gregory, 2010; Gregory & Levy, 2010, 2011, 2012).
Research Paradigm

The exploratory research approach emerged from a constructivist-interpretive research paradigm (O’Neil & Koekemoer, 2016). A constructivist-interpretivist research paradigm is a set of interconnected assumptions about a researcher’s view of reality. Those who hold a constructivist-interpretivist view understand that multiple interactions create meaning (da Costa, Hall, & Spear, 2016). A constructivist-interpretivist stance allowed the researcher to access the perceptions, meanings, and value systems of the participants to understand their unique subjective experiences. Therefore, the exploration and identification of research participants’ unique and subjective beliefs of the factors that lead to a successful manager coach-employee coaching relationship offered the foundation for conducting this exploratory qualitative study.

Research Philosophical Assumptions

The researcher’s social standpoint (O’Neil & Koekemoer, 2016) influenced and guided the ontological, epistemological, and axiological assumptions of this exploratory, qualitative research approach. Ontological assumptions offered a guide to access research participants’ multiple realities for how things were about the phenomenon of manager coach-employee coaching relationships in business settings (Jackson, 2016). Epistemological assumptions lead to a collaborative and friendly process between the researcher and the research participants to co-create knowledge and meaning through meaningful interactions (Rudnick, 2014). In data collection, the researcher shared his focus on co-creating meaning and knowledge with research participants using in-depth, open-ended, semistructured telephone interviews (da Cost et al., 2016). Axiological assumptions offered the researcher guidance to explore and identify the researcher and research participants’ value systems that influenced the research context and
process (Drolet, 2014). The researcher showed respect and built positive relationships with research participants during recruitment, selection, telephone interviews, and follow up processes.

**Research Methods and Procedures**

Qualitative research methods and procedures allow researchers to capture research participants’ subjective beliefs and thoughts to answer the research question (Bellamy et al., 2016). Participants included all successfully coached, lower-level employees in the United States. The researcher recruited participants via LinkedIn, which allowed the researcher to post a recruitment ad on his professional page to attract research participants. Bhutta (2012) described how professional social media sites, such as LinkedIn, are well suited for a snowball sampling strategy. One benefit of this recruitment strategy was that it offered access to potential participants who were otherwise difficult to initially contact (Thomson & Ito, 2014).

The researcher used nonrandom, purposive snowball sampling (Woodley & Lockard, 2016) to reach research participants. This sampling strategy was useful because even though the practice of employee coaching has grown, employee-coaching relationships are still not practiced in all organizations and industries in the United States (Kim, 2014). Nonrandom, purposive snowball sampling allowed the researcher to recruit 18 research participants from various sectors. The initial goal was to reach a sample size of up to 30 research participants (Reay, 2014), but data saturation guided the recruitment process (Bellamy et al., 2016). A detailed explanation of data saturation follows later in this chapter.

The primary method of data collection was in-depth, open-ended, semistructured telephone interviews to access research participants’ beliefs, knowledge, and experiences about
their successful employee coaching relationships (Mealer & Jones, 2014). An advantage of telephone interviews is their safety; they allow participants to avoid dangerous locations or settings (Gelling, 2015). To support the data collection strategy, the researcher created an interview protocol (Costa et al., 2016), which included two exploratory qualitative predetermined open-ended questions with multiple probes. The interview protocol guided the interview process, and the researcher sent the guide out to all volunteer participants a week before the telephone interview dates. The data collection strategy allowed the researcher to record the telephone interviews using FreeConferenceCallHD. Also, the researcher converted audio data from the telephone interviews to text by using Temi’s speech recognition software to set the stage for conducting data analysis.

The researcher used qualitative exploratory theoretical thematic analysis developed by Percy et al. (2015) and NVivo 11 software to analyze the raw transcribed date. According to Percy et al., theoretical thematic analysis is first guided by predetermined theory and themes from previous research and theories. Secondly, the researcher stays open-minded to identify new emerging themes (Percy et al., 2015). The researcher found predetermined themes from a review of the literature about coaching relationships and SIT, and the researcher stayed open-minded while finding new emerging themes during data analysis. Therefore, the researcher employed deductive and inductive approaches (Costa et al., 2016) to analyze the data.

**Target Population and Sample**

In this section, the researcher discusses and describes the population and sample for this exploratory qualitative study. First, the researcher defines and describes the population and target population. Also, the researcher explains the link between population, target population, and
sample. The researcher also defines and describes the sample, sampling frame, and sample size. Finally, the researcher discusses the sample inclusion and exclusion criteria to answer the research question.

**Population**

A research population is the universe of potential research participants that have general experiences and characteristics of a given research phenomenon of interest (Asiamah, Mensah, & Oteng-Abayie, 2017). The universe of research participants includes those who met and did not meet the research selection criteria (Van Rijnsoever, 2017). The research population consisted of all successfully coached front-line, lower-level employees in different industries in the United States. Identification and specification of the research population are fundamental for qualitative research because the research population is the primary resource for information that leads and sustains the credibility of the research findings (Asiamah et al., 2017). Van Rijnsoever (2017). The research population contains all units of meaning, patterns, codes, and themes that can be potentially observed during qualitative interviews and extracted during data analysis. Therefore, identification and specification of the research population lead to a target population in qualitative research to safeguard the credibility of the research findings (Van Rijnsoever, 2017).

A target population is a group of individuals who have relevant experiences, knowledge, and characteristics the researcher can use to answer the research question (Asiamah et al., 2017). The research target population for this study included all successfully coached front-line, lower-level employees in various industries in the United States. However, identifying and specifying a target population in qualitative research does not ensure research participant willingness to participate in a study. Asiamah et al. (2017) found that the accessible population includes
participants from the target population who are qualified and willing to take part in the study. The accessible population is often smaller than the research target population because the target population includes participants who are willing and unwilling to take part in a study. In this study, the researcher had several research participants who were qualified and willing to take part, but at the time of data collection, some participants were inaccessible.

**Sample**

Specific sources are the sample from a general population, target population, and the accessible population to help the researcher answer a research question (Asiamah et al., 2017). The actual sample included willing those willing and able to take in data collection through telephone interviews. The research sample for this study included successfully coached, frontline, lower-level employees in different industries in the United States. Participants were difficult to find and difficult to access because of the nature of the phenomenon of the study; not all United States organizations practice employee coaching (Kim, 2014). In fact, organizations sometimes describe employee coaching as mentoring, teaching, performance appraisal, and counseling (Gregory & Levy 2012).

**Sample Frame**

A sample frame is a group of individuals from the target population with specific characteristics related to the phenomenon studied, and those who can help a researcher answer research questions (Asiamah et al., 2017). The sample frame excludes all those who are not in a target population (Hofler & Hoyer, 2014). In this study, the sample frame included all successfully coached, lower-level employees in the US who (a) worked in diverse industries, (b) received coaching by their direct manager-coach in an organizational setting, (c) experienced
successful coaching relationships, and (d) achieved positive coaching outcomes. For instance, research participants in the sample frame could hold lower-level job titles, such as customer service representative, administrative assistant, certified medical assistant, front desk medical personnel, registered nurse, bank loan service specialist, materials coordinator, government information specialist, or HR specialist. In short, participants were those who did not have managerial roles.

Sample Size

Sample sizes in a qualitative design are significantly smaller than sample sizes in quantitative designs (Gentles, Charles, Ploeg, & McKibbon, 2015). While quantitative methodologies concentrate on obtaining representativeness from a population, qualitative methodologies focus on a small number of purposefully selected research participants who are studied and analyzed intensively to seek rich, thick, in-depth data and greater understanding of a studied phenomenon (Cleary, Horsfall, & Hayter, 2014). In a qualitative research, the sample size is not preestablished; the final sample size depends on the principle of data saturation (Bellamy et al., 2016). Data saturation is the point where the researcher is unable to obtain more insight from the data during the data collection process because nothing new from the information given by research participants (van Rijnsoever, 2017).

In this study, the researcher initially set the sample size at 30 interviews (Reay, 2014). However, in a methodological study, Ando, Cousins, and Young (2014) suggested they reached saturation in a qualitative thematic analysis with approximately 12 interviews. Additionally, in a methodological study focused on code saturation and meaning saturation, Hennink, Kaiser, and Marconi (2017) described how researchers normally reach code saturation at between nine and
16 interviews and they reach meaning saturation at between 16-24 interviews. In this study, the researcher stopped conducting telephone interviews when he obtained enough data to account for all aspects of the phenomenon under study (Fusch & Ness, 2015). The researcher selected participants because of their successful experiences with manager coach-employee relationships in organizational settings.

**Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria**

In this study, the researcher used inclusion and exclusion criteria to ensure that the participants had specific knowledge, experiences, and characteristics to address the research question (Head, Dean, Flanigan, Swicegood, & Keating, 2016). The inclusion criteria were non-managerial employees in the US who (a) worked in diverse industries, (b) received coaching by their direct manager-coach in an organizational setting for more than six months, (c) experienced successful coaching relationships, and (d) achieved positive coaching outcomes. Exclusion criteria included (a) lower-level employees who did not receive coaching from their direct manager-coaches, (b) lower-level employees with less than six months established working relationships with their direct manager-coaches, (c) lower-level employees who had not experienced improvements due to coaching, and (d) managers.

**Procedures**

In this section, the researcher gives a systematic detail of the procedures followed to conduct the study. This section begins with the presentation and discussion of the research participants’ selection, recruitment of research participants through LinkedIn, protection of research participants, expert review of the field test for telephone interview questions, data collection via online survey, and telephone interviews. Also, the researcher offers details about
achieving data saturation and data analysis techniques. Finally, the researcher presents details of the procedures used to safeguard the participants and the data.

**Research Participant Selection**

The researcher used a qualitative exploratory research design with nonrandom, purposive snowball sampling (Woodley & Lockkard, 2016). Woodley and Lockkard (2016) defined snowball sampling as a sampling strategy where selected research participants were asked to identified other research participants within their social circles. The goal is to find other, possibly hidden participants and those otherwise difficult to reach. In this study, lower-level, successfully coached employees (a) who had good coaching relationships with their managers and (b) who had experienced positive coaching outcomes in organizational settings were not readily identifiable through other means.

Baltar and Brunet (2012) asserted that a nonrandom, purposive, snowball sampling was suitable and appropriate for exploratory qualitative research designs. In some exploratory qualitative studies, researchers used a nonrandom, purposive snowball sampling method to access and select hidden and difficult to reach research participants (Benoot, Hannes, & Bilsen, 2016; Farahani, Ghaffari, Oskouie, & Tafreshi, 2017). Therefore, the researcher used a purposive snowball sampling method to pinpoint, access, and include hard to reach research participants (Bell, 2014).

**Online Recruitment**

The researcher used an online recruitment method to recruit research participants (King, O’Rourke, & DeLongis, 2014). Rife, Cate, Kosinski, and Stillwell (2016) defined online recruitment as the process of selecting research participants over the Internet as opposed to
traditional recruitment methods. Online recruitment offers several advantages over traditional recruitment methods when the researcher needs to recruit hidden, difficult to reach research participants (Head et al., 2016). For instance, the primary advantage of online recruitment is to gain access to research participants (Mychasiuk & Benzies, 2012). In this study, the researcher used two recruitment strategies to reach research participants. First, the researcher found research participants directly using LinkedIn’s internal, direct messaging platform to invite and recruit research participants. Second, the researcher used a recruitment flyer, which he posted on his professional LinkedIn page. Another advantage of online recruitment is the ability to reach research participants from different demographics and locations (Frandsen, Thow, & Ferguson, 2016). In the current study, the researcher used LinkedIn to successfully recruit participants online.

LinkedIn professional social media website. The researcher found research participants over the Internet using a professional social media website known as LinkedIn. LinkedIn is a social networking site that allows people to build virtual professional profiles of their work experience, skills, qualifications, and career accomplishments, which is more active and dynamic than a normal resume format (Zide, Elman, & Shahani-Denning, 2014). The researcher searched for lower-level employees by their title, by finding information about their tenure in their current positions, and by attaining the names of the organizations. The researcher searched for a variety of lower-level job titles, such as front desk, receptionist, customer service associate, specimen processor, licensed nurse practitioner, medical assistant, certified medical assistant, retail specialist, and HR specialist. The participant’s tenure in their current position initially helped the researcher to find the length of time they worked with a direct manager. With the organization’s
name, the researcher visited the organization websites and contacted the organization’s HR professionals. The researcher asked the HR professionals to confirm the organization practiced employee coaching.

**Reaching and inviting research participants.** Upon identification of the research participants in LinkedIn, the researcher used an internal, direct messaging platform to directly ask potential research participants to take part in the study. The researcher used an online screening tool (Shatz, 2017) to screen potential research participants to ensure they met the inclusion criteria. The Capella University Institutional Review Board (IRB) reviewed and approved the content of the recruitment message to potential research participants. In the recruitment message, the researcher presented himself as a doctoral student, gave the title of the research, and described the purpose of the study. The researcher also gave the inclusion and exclusion criteria of the study.

Equally important, the researcher stressed that participation in this research was voluntary, and research participants had the right to choose not to participate or to withdraw at any time without penalty or consequence. The researcher directed the research participants to contact the researcher via e-mail or mobile number if they were interested in participating. The researcher asked prospective participants to share the study information with others who might have been interested, which was the application of nonrandom, purposive snowball sampling (Woodley & Lockkard, 2016). For confidentiality reasons, the researcher emphasized participants were not to share the contact information of others who might have been interested in participating. Participants who completed the online survey and the telephone interview received a $25.00 gift certificate.
Screening and Organizing Research Participants

The researcher used an online survey service, SurveyMonkey, to screen potential research participants (Pedersen et al., 2015). Some methodological researchers discussed the effectiveness of using SurveyMonkey as an online recruitment tool to screen and select research participants (Brandon, Long, Loraas, Mueller-Phillips, & Vansant, 2014). Therefore, the researcher used an online recruitment tool for inclusion criteria because it allowed participants to answer the online survey at their convenience and because it suited this researcher’s goals and purposes (Pedersen et al., 2015; Shatz, 2017). As previously described, the researcher started the research recruitment process by sending a LinkedIn private message to potential research participants. Once the potential participant contacted the researcher to express interest, the researcher e-mailed the potential participant the link to the consent form that was the first page of the online SurveyMonkey inclusion criteria survey. The invitation to take the online survey named the researcher, described him as a doctoral student, and gave the title and purpose of the study. Also, the researcher gave the potential participant the study’s inclusion and exclusion criteria. The researcher also underlined that participation in this research was voluntary and research participants had the right to choose not to take part or withdraw at any time without penalty or consequence.

Also, the researcher specified that the amount of time to complete the online survey was 15 minutes or less. The researcher told the potential research participants to contact the researcher via e-mail or mobile number if they had further questions about the study. The researcher asked the participants to share the study information with others who might have been interested, which was a nonrandom, purposive snowball sampling strategy (Woodley &
Lockkard, 2016). The researcher presented the consent information at the end of the first page of the online survey, as recommended by Pedersen et al. (2015). Participants accessed the online survey by clicking on the survey link.

The manager coach-employee coaching relationship online survey had 14 questions. The invitation to survey and consent information was on the first page. There were six demographic questions and seven inclusion criteria questions. The final part was a comment box to allow research participants to enter comments if they wished.

The researcher followed the recommendations of Percy et al. (2015) to create the questions for the inclusion criteria; therefore, the researcher used pre-knowledge about the topic of employee coaching relationship to screen research participants. The first question asked of participants in the section inclusion criteria was whether they practiced employee coaching in their organizations. The researcher also gave them a description of employee coaching, as defined by Gregory and Levy (2010), to help potential participants understand the meaning of employee coaching in an organizational setting. Because the researcher in the pre-screening stage of the recruitment process reached out to the organizations’ HR departments to figure out if the organizations practiced employee coaching, the purpose of the first question was to confirm the information obtained from HR.

The next question asked participants about the length of time they worked with their manager. The researcher asked this question to confirm that research participants experienced professional growth or developed new skills at work because of direct manager coaching. The researcher next asked research participants to select one example that best described their professional growth or the development of new skills because of coaching, such as if they had (a)
reached professional goals, (b) developed leadership skills, (c) obtained a job promotion. If none of the new skills applied to them, the researcher asked the potential participant if their coaching experience enhanced their alignment with organizational values and goals.

The next inclusion criteria question asked research participants to rate how successful their coaching experience was with their direct manager. The responses helped the researcher to ensure that potential research participants experienced successful coaching with their direct manager because of coaching. The responses for successful coaching experiences were (a) completely successful, (b) very successful, (c) somewhat successful, (d) slightly successful, and (e) not at all successful.

The next two questions were about the quality of the relationship between manager-coach and employee to find out whether the relationship improved because of coaching. If potential participants said they had good experiences with their coaches before coaching, and if they rated their relationship quality as excellent after coaching, this meant that the quality of the relationship between the manager-coach and the employee had improved because of coaching. In this manner, the researcher found, measured, and selected the participants who had the required knowledge and proper experience for the phenomenon under investigation.

The researcher received notice from SurveyMonkey that the potential participants completed the online surveys. The researcher e-mailed the potential participants with the telephone interview consent information and asked them to respond with a date and time for the telephone interviews. In all cases, the researcher received the consent form before the telephone interviews. Additionally, the researcher obtained verbal consents from all research participants before starting the telephone interviews.
Protection of Participants

The researcher fully obeyed the *Belmont Report* (Unger, 2016) principles about ethical considerations in conducting research. The researcher addressed all ethical concerns about sampling procedures and data collection as recommended by Grady and Fauci (2016). The procedures for data collection did not violate the privacy of the research participants because the researcher used pseudonym codes to protect research participant identifying information (Resnik, 2016). As recommended by Unger (2016), the researcher gave a consent form to all research participants. The telephone interview consent form contained information about the study, its purpose, inclusion and exclusion criteria, rights of research participants, and other related information.

As recommended by Jacob (2012), the researcher followed a strict process to ensure that he collected the consent forms for all research participants before the actual data collection took place. The consent process followed five steps: (a) potential research participants contacted the researcher to express interest in taking part, (b) the researcher e-mailed potential participants the link to the online consent/online survey, (c) the researcher received notice that the surveys has been completed, (d) the researcher e-mailed potential participants the telephone interview consent form that they signed and returned to the researcher, (e) the researcher received the consent forms before the telephone interviews. At the time of the interview, the researcher blocked out 15 extra minutes to go over the consent form with the research participants to ensure they fully understood. The researcher confirmed consent verbally before starting telephone interviews. The researcher will store the qualitative data gathered from the telephone interviews in a locked file cabinet for seven years in compliance with Capella University guidelines for
research. The researcher concluded that there were no substantial ethical issues related to this qualitative study’s data procedures and collection.

**Expert Review**

The researcher conducted a field-test of the interview questions. The researcher asked three subject matter experts with terminal degrees to review the interview questions. One subject matter expert was a researcher with vast knowledge about employee coaching. The researcher reached out to the subject matter experts by using their e-mail addresses and followed through with more e-mails to clarify and explain the research topic and study. The researcher updated the interview questions based on the feedback of three subject matter experts.

The researcher received insights and recommendations to improve the interview questions. One subject matter expert acknowledged that the interview questions were a solid start. The subject matter expert recommended using prompts and probes, however, to invite participants to share real stories and to go deeper into specifics. Also, this subject matter expert suggested holding a brief conference call with every participant to ensure the participants had a complete understanding of the research topic. Additionally, the subject matter expert suggested adding interview questions or prompts about the word *effective* because the researcher used the word in the research question.

The second subject matter expert suggested adding definitions of coaching such as manager-coach and employee coaching relationship to offer clarity and help participants understand the coaching terms used in the interview questions. Based on the subject matter expert’s experience, most people do not know what coaching means. The same subject matter expert asserted that the more specific the question, the more focused the response would be;
therefore, it would be easier to detect themes using questioning to gather data. Also, the subject matter expert foresaw that the researcher would have a great deal of qualitative data to sort through and code. The subject matter expert also asked whether the researcher would do more survey-based data collection in addition to the interview questions.

The third subject matter expert recommended having a script during the interviews. According to the third subject matter expert, a script offers all the information for the participants when the interview starts, which would set the participants at ease. The same subject matter expert noted that the researcher asked the same questions multiple times. This subject matter expert suggested the researcher highlight this statement to help participants improve their focus on the interview questions: “For all questions, I’d like you to think about your relationship with your manager-coach.”

Data Collection

While the primary method for data collection for this exploratory qualitative research was in-depth, open-ended, semistructured telephone interviews, the secondary data collection method was an online survey. The online survey gathered information to find out if participants met the inclusion criteria. The researcher made the online survey available via SurveyMonkey (Pedersen et al., 2015). The researcher, thus, was the central instrument for collecting and analyzing textual data from the transcripts of the telephone interviews (Orange, 2016). The researcher collected, transcribed, and analyzed the data gathered via the phone interviews.

Phase I. Collecting data using SurveyMonkey. Researchers use surveys in qualitative exploratory research to capture research participants’ beliefs and ideas about their existing and external world (Bellamy et al., 2016; Percy et al., 2015). The researcher used online surveys
through SurveyMonkey to screen prospective participants for eligibility and to obtain demographic information.

The data collection procedure started when the researcher used LinkedIn as the social media online site to find research participants. Because the researcher used his professional and personal network in LinkedIn, and per the user’s agreement, the research was not required to obtain permission or approval from LinkedIn to access research participants and conduct data collection, Phase I, through online surveys. The researcher reached and invited participants either by using the LinkedIn messaging platform or by posting an online flyer on his professional profile page. Once potential participants contacted the researcher to express interest, the researcher e-mailed them the link to the online consent information and survey. The online survey gathered demographic information.

**Phase II. Collecting data using telephone interviews.** The primary method for data collection was in-depth, open-ended, semistructured telephone interviews (Gelling, 2015; Mealer & Jones, 2014). The researcher conducted semistructured telephone interviews because researchers had not fully captured the factors that lead to an effective manager coach-employee coaching relationship (Gregory & Levy, 2010, 2011, 2012). It was difficult to find and reach research participants with the required knowledge and expertise in the topic.

In Phase II of data collection, the researcher conducted 18, one-on-one, telephone interviews with lower-level employees. Once the researcher received notice that a potential participant completed the SurveyMonkey survey, the researcher e-mailed participants the telephone interview information and consent form. All participants signed and returned the telephone interview consent form via e-mail. Upon receiving the telephone interview consent
forms signed by the research participants, the researcher began to schedule the telephone interviews. Initially, the telephone interviews were estimated to last 60 minutes.

One week before each telephone interview, the researcher e-mailed the interview protocol to the research participants so they could become familiar with the interview questions. During the telephone interviews, the researcher took his ethical responsibilities seriously. The researcher respected and protected the participants’ autonomy, anonymity, and confidentiality (Grady & Fauci, 2016). The researcher blocked 15 minutes before each telephone interview to go over the signed consent form with the research participant on the phone to ensure they made an informed decision. Additionally, prior the actual interview, the researcher assigned a pseudonym code such as ECR0001 to the research participant to protect the participant’s identity, anonymity, and confidentiality as recommended by Grady and Fauci (2016). The researcher also reminded the participants that he was recording the telephone interviews, and the researcher gave each of the participants a free dial-in number and a participant code for the interviews.

The research participant remotely called in from a quiet place using an assigned participant code, and the researcher welcomed the research participant using their assigned pseudonym code. The researcher only asked two open-ended questions, but also used some probes to guide and ease the process of the interview in a conversational manner, as recommended by Gelling (2015). The interview questions and open-ended questions are in Appendix D. At the end of the interview, the researcher thanked the research participant and reminded the participant that the researcher recorded the interview. The researcher told the participants to expect an e-mail with a transcription of the interview to check for accuracy.
The researcher used member checking (Morse, 2015) after transcribing the telephone interviews. As recommended by Ghafouri and Ofoghi (2016), member checking is a strategy to ensure rigor through credibility in qualitative studies because it allows research participants to agree with the accuracy of the data, correct data, or add data on their transcripts. The researcher e-mailed the telephone interview transcript to each participant to confirm that the transcriptions were correct. All but one participant replied to the researcher’s e-mail with a statement of approval. One participant asked the researcher to correct the gender of his manager-coach on the transcript.

**Data Management, Security, and Destruction**

The data storage, protection, and destruction of the raw data with participant information concerned the researcher, who worked to ensure proper data management. The researcher followed the recommendations of Raman and Pramod (2013) associated with data protection and sanitization. In this qualitative research, the researcher obtained information about the research participants. The researcher securely stored all data, including hard copies of the data and USB drives, in a locked cabinet located in the researcher’s office at home. Only the researcher, the researcher’s supervisor, and dissertation committee members had access to the study data. Additionally, the researcher will ensure that all data and material related to this qualitative research are destroyed after seven years by following the Capella University’s requirements.

The researcher will follow the guidelines for media sanitization (Raman & Pramod, 2013). The researcher will destroy all information and documentation related to this research after seven years to protect research participant’s privacy. As recommended by Raman and Pramod (2013), effective methods for data sanitization are disintegration, incineration,
pulverization, shredding, and melting. Therefore, the researcher will shred all materials and hard copies containing research participant information. Additionally, the researcher will (a) electronically delete participant information in all USB drives and (b) incinerate all USB drives.

**Data Analysis**

The researcher used qualitative textual data to conduct data analysis (Carrera-Fernandez, Guardia-Olmos, & Pero-Cebollero, 2013). The researcher used the definition of textual data provided by Raich, Muller, and Abfalter (2014). Raich et al. (2014) defined textual data as a hybrid because textual data integrates elements of qualitative and quantitative data. A researcher uses textual data to find word counts (Raich et al., 2014). Also, the researcher was aware of analytical methods to analyze textual data. As recommended by Raich et al. (2014), the researcher employed a hybrid method to analyze textual data through deductive and inductive approaches. Therefore, the researcher used theoretical thematic analysis guided by Percy et al. (2015) to conduct a hybrid method of data analysis.

**Preparing and organizing textual data.** The researcher prepared and arranged the raw data before data analysis (Ludlow, Brown, & Schulz, 2016). The researcher audio-recorded all telephone interviews during the process of data collection. All telephone interviews were audio recorded using FreeConferenceCallHD service. The researcher used FreeConferenceCallHD service because it is free conferencing that supports high definition voice quality (FreeConferenceCallHD, 2017). The researcher saved all audio-recorded telephone interviews as individual electronic files on his laptop, which was password protected. Additionally, the researcher used pseudonym codes assigned to all research participants before starting telephone interviews to protect research participant privacy and confidentiality (Grady & Fauci, 2016).
Upon completion of all audio-recorded telephone interviews, the researcher started transcribing all audio-recorded telephone interviews.

The researcher transcribed all audio-recorded telephone interviews upon completion of data collection. The researcher transcribed all audio-recorded telephone interviews using Temi Software. TemiSoftware allowed the researcher to convert all audio recordings from the telephone interviews to textual data for analysis (TemiSoftware, 2017). The researcher downloaded every audio-recorded file into the TemiSoftware for transcription. The TemiSoftware converted all audio-recorded telephone interviews into an electronic Microsoft Word document. The researcher edited all transcriptions by listening and re-listening to all audio-recoding telephone interviews to ensure accuracy of the research participants’ ideas and insights on the transcripts. The researcher kept one master copy and one working copy of every telephone interview and transcribed electronic document.

**Conducting data analysis.** The researcher carried out data analysis using the method of theoretical thematic analysis advocated by Percy et al. (2015). The first phase of the data analysis involved a deductive approach, and the second phase included an inductive approach (Percy et al., 2015). Catacutan and de Guzman (2015), for example, used theoretical thematic analysis, a type of thematic analysis (Clarke & Braun, 2017; Percy et al., 2015) that combines theory-driven and data-driven approaches to identify themes and build a theoretical framework about ethical decision-making. Similarly, Perez, Crick, and Lawrence (2015) used a hybrid approach (Selvam & Collicutt, 2013) to analyze qualitative data on their study about medical consultations. Perez et al., (2015) used a priori, theory-driven, and data-driven approaches to analyze consultation reports and to develop a conceptual framework for medical consultations. Additionally, Costa et
al. (2016) used two phases of data analysis; a deductive approach for a priori themes based on theory, and an inductive approach for emerging themes based on a raw set of data to build a conceptual framework about managers’ perceptions of gender and equality in the tourism industry.

Clarke and Braun (2017) asserted that the strength of thematic analysis is flexibility because it can be a deductive approach, an inductive approach, or a hybrid approach. Another advantage of thematic analysis is that it is a systematic process that allows the research to find, describe, and interrelate the research participants’ implicit and explicit ideas and insights (Alhojailan, 2012). As asserted by Alhojailan (2012), thematic analysis is a good method for data analysis when the researcher seeks to capture and interpret research participants’ explicit and implicit ideas. It is also a good method to use when the researcher needs to analyze the frequency of themes in the dataset to answer the research question.

**Phase I. Deductive approach.** Percy et al. (2015) said that a deductive approach is theory-driven. Clarke and Braun (2017) defined the deductive approach as a top-down method to analyze qualitative data. The researcher used existing theoretical concepts to offer a theoretical foundation and interpretation as a starting point in the analysis (Clarke & Braun, 2017). In this study, the researcher identified predetermined theoretical concepts from existing literature about SIT (Deutsch, 1949a; Johnson & Johnson, 2009) as suggested by Percy et al. (2015) to initially structure the analysis of the dataset (Catacutan & de Guzman, 2015). Also, the researcher used a template matrix, or codebook (Ando et al., 2014), to list all the predetermined theoretical concepts before conducting data analysis. As recommended by Ando et al. (2015) and Nowell, Norris, White, and Moules (2017), a template matrix or codebook is a useful strategy because its
use allows the researcher to keep track of the predetermined theoretical concepts to achieve code and meaning saturation (Hennink et al., 2017).

The researcher began the deductive data analysis approach by using a template matrix (Nowell et al., 2017). The template served as a theoretical lens and audit trail in the analysis of the dataset. The first step was to become familiar with the textual dataset (Percy et al., 2015). The researcher individually analyzed all transcripts by reading and re-reading textual data line-by-line and highlighting paragraphs, sentences, phrases, and pieces of information related to the identified pre-existing theoretical concepts from the template matrix. The researcher also stayed open to new emerging themes in the data set.

The second step was deciding what highlighted information to keep and use for further analysis. The researcher reviewed the data and highlighted predetermined theoretical concepts to decide whether to keep the highlighted information in the analytical process. The third step was removing highlighted data that did not pertain to predetermined theoretical concepts and did not help to answer the research question. At this step, the researcher created a separate file with all nonrelated data about predetermined theoretical concepts and data not helping to answer the research question to reevaluate the data when conducting the inductive analysis.

The fourth step was code and category identification based on the predetermined theoretical concepts. The researcher began coding and categorizing highlighted data from participant responses to the open-ended questions. As the researcher coded and created categories, the researcher also assigned descriptive labels to understand what was in each code and category. The researcher continued this analytical process for all transcripts. Additionally, at this step, the researcher achieved code saturation for all predetermined theoretical concepts. As
stressed by Hennink et al. (2017), code saturation is the point where no additional information is collected from research participants because code saturation is sufficient to identify and understand all the components of the phenomenon under investigation.

The fifth step was developing patterns in the data set. The researcher started clustering identified codes and categories to develop patterns based on the predetermined theoretical concepts by identifying connections, similarities, and differences, and by referring to the template matrix. Step 6 was interrelating and connecting patterns related to preexisting theoretical concepts. The researcher arranged and rearranged patterns corresponding to predetermined theoretical concepts along with direct quotes taking from the dataset to bring live and illuminate the patterns. Step 7 was removing any not related pattern of preexisting theoretical concepts from the analysis and keep a separate file for when the researcher conducted the inductive analysis. The researcher repeated Step 1 through Step 7 for all transcripts. Step 8 was searching for themes and subthemes. The researcher combined and clustered all selected and arranged patterns to identify emerging themes and subthemes. At this stage, the researcher managed to ensure that the clustered and emerged themes and subthemes were a clear and close representation of the initial predetermined theoretical concepts from the theory.

Step 9 was ensuring that the themes and subthemes that emerged corresponded with their supporting patterns. The researcher explored the relationship between themes and subthemes to find out how themes and subthemes could be integrated into the overall story of the manager coach-employee coaching relationship in organizational settings. Additionally, at this step, the researcher achieved meaning saturation of the predetermined theoretical concepts (Hennink et al., 2017). As stressed by Hennink et al. (2017), meaning saturation is exhaustive, and a
researcher reaches saturation when he or she can fully understand the phenomenon under investigation (i.e., understand it all). In other words, saturation is when the researcher reaches the point when he or she cannot find new knowledge in the data (Hennink et al., 2017).

Step 10 was revisiting the patterns that did not fit the preexisting theoretical concepts from the theory to get ready for Phase II, the inductive approach. During this step, the researcher stayed open to finding new codes, new patterns, and new categories to show new emerging themes and subthemes. Step 11 was writing a definition and a detailed description of the scope for each emerging theme. Step 12 was ensuring description of each pattern of emerging themes with supporting quotes to illuminate the meaning of patterns within the dataset. Step 13 was synthesizing all the themes and all subthemes from the preexisting theoretical concepts to form a comprehensive synthesis of the topic under investigation.

**Phase II. Inductive approach.** Percy et al. (2015) posited that an inductive approach is data-driven. Clarke and Braun (2017) defined an inductive approach as a bottom-up method to analyze qualitative data. The researcher used the content of the data collected from research participants as the starting point to develop codes, patterns, categories, themes, and subthemes within the dataset (Clarke & Braun, 2017). In contrast to Phase I, in Phase II, the researcher is deeply immersed in the data and remains open to exploring the meaning of the data to capture the significant aspects of the central phenomenon under investigation (Eisenhardt, Graebner, & Sonenshein, 2016). Also, the researcher used a codebook (Ando et al., 2014) to track the development of all emerging codes, patterns, categories, themes, and subthemes during data analysis. As recommended by Ando et al. (2015) and Nowell et al. (2017), a codebook is a useful
strategy because its use allows the researcher to keep track of emerging codes and themes to achieve code saturation (Hennink et al., 2017) and meaning saturation.

The researcher started the inductive approach of data analysis by using a codebook (Nowell et al., 2017). The codebook served as an audit trail in the analysis of the dataset. The first step was getting to know the textual dataset (Percy et al., 2015). The researcher ensured he understood the dataset and the information related to the data set. The researcher individually analyzed all transcripts by reading and re-reading textual data line-by-line and highlighting paragraphs, sentences, phrases, and pieces of information to make sense of the content. The researcher stayed immersed in this analytical process while staying open to finding emerging items of potential interest in the data set.

The second step was deciding what highlighted information to keep and use for further analysis. The researcher reviewed the highlighted data and used the research question to decide whether to keep the highlighted information from the first analytical process. At this step, the researcher’s thinking process was active, analytical, and critical. The third step was dropping highlighted data that did not help to answer the research question. At this step, the researcher created a separate file and stored all unrelated data.

The fourth step was identifying codes and categories. The researcher started coding or categorizing highlighted data from the responses to the open-ended questions. As the researcher coded and created categories, the researcher also assigned descriptive labels to understand what was and what was not in the code or category. The researcher continued this analytical process for all transcripts. Additionally, at this step, the researcher achieved code saturation (Hennink et al., 2017) for all emerging codes. As stressed by Hennink et al., (2017) code saturation is defined
as the point where no other information is collected from research participants because code saturation is sufficient to identify and understand all the components of the phenomenon under investigation.

The fifth step was developing patterns in the data set. The researcher started clustering emerging codes or categories to develop patterns by identifying connections, similarities, and differences, and by referring to the template matrix of emerging codes. The sixth step was finding interrelating patterns linked to emerging themes. The researcher arranged and rearranged patterns corresponding to emerging themes along with direct quotes taken from the dataset to bring alive and illuminate the patterns. Step 7 was removing any unrelated patterns of emerging themes from the analysis. The researcher also kept a separate file with all unrelated patterns about answering the research question. The researcher repeated steps one through seven for all the transcripts. Step 8 was searching for emerging themes. The researcher organized and reorganized all arranged patterns into all identified emerging themes. The researcher combined and clustered the selected and arranged patterns to develop emerging themes.

Step 9 was ensuring that the emergent themes and subthemes corresponded with their supporting patterns. The researcher was careful to explore the relationships between themes and subthemes to find out how to integrate the themes and subthemes into the overall story of the manager coach-employee coaching relationship in organizational settings. Additionally, the researcher achieved meaning saturation of emerging themes. As stressed by Hennink et al. (2017), meaning saturation is exhaustive; a researcher achieves saturation when he or she can fully understand the phenomenon under investigation and when more knowledge about the topic cannot be found in the data (Hennink et al., 2017).
Step 10 was integrating emerging themes and subthemes of Phase II with the themes and subthemes from Phase I. At this stage, the researcher simply integrated themes and subthemes from both phases. Step 11 was writing a detailed definition and description of the scope of each emerging theme and subtheme corresponding to Phase II. Step 12 was ensuring to describe each emerging pattern with supporting quotes to ensure to illuminate the meaning of patterns within the dataset. Step 13 was synthesizing all the themes and subthemes together from Phase I and Phase II to form a comprehensive synthesis of the story of the topic under investigation.

**Entering Transcripts into NVivo Software**

The researcher used NVivo software (Houghton et al., 2016) to support and enhance the theoretical thematic analysis conducted in Phase I (deductive method) and in Phase II (inductive method). The NVivo software is qualitative data analysis software that can help researchers with coding and analyzing textual data from open-ended, in-depth interviews (White, Judd, & Poliandri, 2012). Some researchers used qualitative analysis software, such as NVivo version 11, to enhance and synthesize their study results (Grohmann, Espin, & Gucciardi, 2017; Houghton et al., 2016). In the current study, the researcher input all transcript information into NVivo 11 to support the theoretical thematic analysis and create a conceptual framework.

**Achieving Trustworthiness**

The researcher’s central goal was to ensure internal validity, external validity, and reliability conducting data collection, data analysis, and data interpretation (Koelsch, 2013; Morse, 2015). Morse (2015) defined internal validity as a researcher’s correct interpretation of data extracted from research participants. Additionally, Morse defined reliability as consistent and dependable data collection, data analysis, and data interpretation to make research replicable.
External validity is the application and transferability of the research results and conclusions to other people with characteristics like the research participants in this study (Colorafi & Evans, 2016; Morse, 2015). Therefore, the researcher tried to achieve trustworthiness in this exploratory qualitative, theoretical, thematic study by following qualitative strategies for ensuring credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability as proposed by Lincoln and Guba (1985).

**Strategy for ensuring credibility.** The researcher ensured that the transcriptions of the telephone interviews were exact by employing member-checking (Morse, 2015). As recommended by Morse (2015), member-checking enhances the reliability of a study. As asserted by Morse, a researcher must ensure that he or she clearly and correctly records the interview data to achieve qualitative rigor. In this study, all research participants received a copy of their transcribed telephone interviews via e-mail, and the researcher asked them if the transcribed information accurately represented what they said. In a generic qualitative study, Bell (2014) employed member checks with the participants to ensure trustworthiness and credibility.

The researcher also used a prolonged involvement method to stay engaged with all research participants to enhance credibility and validity of the research findings. Ghafouri and Ofoghi (2016) and Morse (2015) recommended confirming the research findings with the research participants to ensure the credibility of the study. In this study, the researcher and research participants built a professional relational partnership and worked collaboratively (Asiamah et al., 2017) to co-construct meaning and knowledge (O’Neil & Koekemoer, 2016). Also, they worked to create a conceptualized novel whole (Sandelowski & Leeman, 2012) of the manager coach-employee coaching relationship in organizational settings. In this study, the researcher will give a summary report of the research findings to all research participants to
achieve authenticity and accuracy. The researcher expects to receive positive comments from all the researcher participants.

The researcher employed an audit trail to heighten the credibility and validity of the study. Malagon-Maldonado (2014) recommended using an audit trail technique for enhancing credibility in qualitative research. An audit trail entails recording the steps of the research from the start to the end (Malagon-Maldonado, 2014). For example, Bellamy et al. (2016) used an audit trail in generic qualitative research to track and show the researchers’ thought processes, decisions, and justifications to ensure rigor and credibility of the study. In this study, the researched developed a coding system (Morse, 2015) by using a codebook template to record the decisions made during thematic analysis. The researcher in this study recorded a clear trail of the inclusion and exclusion of predetermined and emerging themes to reach data saturation.

**Strategy for ensuring dependability.** The researcher used a triangulation method to increase dependability and validity (Bellamy et al., 2016). As recommended by Bellamy et al. (2016), triangulation entails using different data sources to ensure rich and robust findings. In this study, the researcher employed theory triangulation (Ghafouri & Ofoghi, 2016) by using various methods of data collection, such as online surveys for criteria selection of research participants and telephone interviews. Raich, Muller, and Abfalter (2014) also recommended using triangulation when the researcher analyzes hybrid methods for data collection to overcome biases of using a single data source. Thus, the researcher used online surveys to screen and select research participants and telephone interviews to study the phenomenon of the manager coach-employee relationship in organizational settings.
The first data collection method was an online survey. In an online SurveyMonkey survey, the researcher asked two questions about the quality of the potential participants’ relationships with their manager-coaches before coaching and after coaching to find out if there were relationship improvements because of coaching. The research participants could meet the inclusion criteria only if they showed some degree of relationship improvement with their manager-coach. For instance, if the research participant would rate his relationship with his manager-coach as good before coaching, and then excellent after coaching, the research participant would have met the inclusion criteria. The second method of data collection added more detailed information and meaning about the two probing questions mentioned previously pertaining the potential participants relationships with their manager-coaches before and after coaching (Bellamy et al., 2016).

The second method of data collection was telephone interviews (Gelling, 2015). In conducting telephones interviews, the researcher used two probing questions in the second question during the process of conducting the telephone interviews. The first probing question asked the participant to describe the quality of their relationship with the manager-coach before they entered a coaching relationship. The second probing question asked the research participants to describe the quality of their relationships with manager-coaches after experiencing coaching. In all cases, research participants gave similar answers to the information they gave in the online surveys and they added thick and rich descriptions of their relationship with their manager-coach. Therefore, the researcher illustrated dependability and consistency with data collection in this study by using two methods of data collection that showed overlapping information (Colorafi & Evans, 2016).
**Strategy for ensuring transferability.** Transferability is vital in qualitative research to achieve external validity (Malagon-Maldonado, 2014; Morse, 2015). The researcher used thick descriptions to enhance transferability as recommended by Morse (2015). As asserted by Malagon-Maldonado (2014), the researcher must have a greater understanding of the research participants’ contextual experiences to capture thick and rich descriptions from the data set. In this study, the researcher extracted thick and rich descriptions from the research participants during the telephone interviews. The researcher’s constructivist-interpretivist research paradigm view allowed him to use quotes (Fujiura, 2015) to illuminate the words, ideas, and meaning of the research participants pertaining their experiences in the manager coach-employee coaching relationship. Additionally, Morse recommended proving the appropriateness of the sample size to reach thick and rich data from research participants. In this study, the sample size (18) was appropriate because the researcher achieved code and meaning saturation (Hennink et al., 2017).

**Strategy for ensuring confirmability.** The researcher managed to avoid personal and professional bias during the research process as recommended by Chan, Fung, and Chien (2013) and Malagon-Maldonado (2014). The researcher employed bracketing (Chan et al., 2013), and reflexivity (Malagon-Maldonado, 2014) to ensure confirmability and achieve validity. The researcher managed to suspend his judgments and all prior knowledge of the topic under investigation during the data collection and interpretation of the textual data. Also, as recommended by Morse (2015), the researcher maintained a neutral orientation during the entire process even before starting the literature review (Chan et al., 2013). Chan et al. (2013) said that a researcher’s personal and professional experiences should not influence the investigation results.
The researcher also used reflexivity as a second strategy to achieve confirmability (Malagon-Maldonado, 2014). Malagon-Maldonado (2014) defined reflexivity as the researcher’s state of mind where the researcher engages in critical reflection of his or her thinking and actions toward their position in the research project. Also, Orange (2016) recommended using reflexive research journals during the research process to avoid bias. In this study, the researcher used a reflexive journal to document anything related to the research project and to be able to reflect on the research process. In the reflexive research journal, for example, the researcher tracked conference calls with his mentor, appointments and follow-ups with research participants, and drew diagrams to build the theoretical framework of this study. Additionally, the researcher used his reflexive research journal to document emerging ideas, interconnected concepts, definitions, descriptions, and his thinking process as a starting point prior and during the data interpretation.

**Instruments**

In this section, the researcher explains and discusses the role of the researcher as the chief instrument in this exploratory qualitative research design. The researcher was responsible for the whole research process from start to end. Also, the researcher explains how he managed the subjectivity dimension to avoid personal and professional bias. The researcher also discusses the guiding interview questions in this study. Mainly, the researcher used two open-ended questions and several probing questions to help the telephone interview process. Finally, the researcher presented a comprehensive discussion of how the researcher protected and safeguarded participants.
The Role of the Researcher

The research’s role included the responsibility for managing the entire research process (Orange, 2016), the research’s subjective dimension (Cruz, 2015), and the research findings (El Hussein, Kennedy, & Oliver, 2017). The researcher began managing the research process by finding the gap in the literature review (Orange, 2016) pertaining employee coaching relationships in organizational settings (Gregory & Levy, 2010, 2011, 2012), identifying the research problem (Gelling, 2015), and articulating the research question (Cruz, 2015). Also, the researcher managed the research design, methodology, methods, procedures, and findings of this qualitative exploratory study (Pezalla, Pettigrew, & Miller-Day, 2012). The researcher used in-depth, open-ended, semistructured telephone interviews as the primary method for data collection; therefore, the researcher was the central instrument for gathering and analyzing textual data from the transcripts of the telephone interviews.

A researcher influences their research explicitly and implicitly (Orange, 2016). The researcher’s explicit subjectivity included the researcher’s ontological and epistemological views. Also, the researcher’s explicit subjectivity involved decisions made about the theoretical framework, research design, and methodology (Cruz, 2015). In this study, the researcher used SIT (Deutsch, 1949a; Johnson & Johnson, 1989) to create the study’s theoretical framework believing that SIT was entirely appropriate to describe, understand, and likely explain the quality of the coaching relationship between manager-coaches and employees. The researcher based his theoretical position on the tenets of SIT, which provided the structure and the predetermined themes to conduct theory-driven and data-driven theoretical thematic analysis (Bellamy et al., 2016).
Implicit subjectivity refers to a researcher’s role in data collection. The researcher, as a human being and as the central instrument for data collection (Pezalla et al., 2012), could face difficulties related to personal biases, personal experiences, assumptions, presuppositions, and subjectivity about the topic (El Hussein, Kennedy, & Oliver, 2017). As described by Gelling (2015), researchers and research participants co-construct meaning during interviews to understand how the research topic relates to the research participants’ everyday experiences and their own lives. In this study, employees everyday coaching experiences were the focus. Therefore, the researcher ensured a transparent and clear telephone interview process by assessing implicit subjectivity.

The researcher worked to put aside past knowledge and experiences of the phenomenon under investigation as recommended by El Hussein et al. (2017). First, the researcher displayed ethical research behaviors, such as compassion, trustworthiness, conscientiousness, and intellectual honesty to accurately understand the specifics of the participants’ social context (Grady & Fauci, 2016). Additionally, the researcher stayed reflective when he conducted telephones interviews and when he co-created meaning with the research participants (Chan et al., 2013). El Hussein et al. said that reflexivity is the researcher’s awareness of controlling his desires to force collected data to fit into concepts and continues to monitor his preconceptions and biases related to the research topic. Also, the researcher used bracketing (Chan et al., 2013) and self-monitoring (Hjeltnes, Binder, Moltu, & Dundas, 2015), which are similar methods to reflexivity to manage bias and preconceptions. As described by Chan et al. (2013), bracketing makes a researcher aware of when he or she may be forcing his or her ideas on the results based on preconceived ideas about the topic of interest (Hjeltnes et al., 2015).
Active empathetic listening skills were critical to obtain rich and detailed qualitative information from the interviews. The researcher combined active listening and empathy to enhance his understanding of the participants’ perspectives (Malagon-Maldonado, 2014). Malagon-Maldonado (2014) emphasized that active listening also entails specific probing, paraphrasing, summarizing, evaluating, and responding to questions for effective communication. Similarly, Pryor, Malshe, and Paradise (2013) reported a link between listening and empathy. Therefore, as the primary instrument, the researcher ethical and skillfully managed the telephone interview process to adequately uncover the participants’ perspectives.

**Guiding Interview Questions**

The researcher conducted 18 in-depth, open-ended, semistructured telephone interviews. The researcher presented the telephone interview questions to the mentor and committee members for review, feedback, and approval. The purpose of the interview questions was to capture participants’ experiences about their coaching relationships with their manager-coaches. In this study, the researcher developed two open-ended interview questions and several probing questions. Therefore, the researcher developed in-depth, open-ended, semistructured questions to drive the data collection for the study (Mealer & Jones, 2014; See Interview Questions and Protocol in Appendix D).

**Ethical Considerations**

The researcher strictly obeyed and followed the *Belmont Report*’s (U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, 2017) principles (Unger, 2016) about a researcher’s ethical obligations to protect research participants from harm and coercion. Particularly, the researcher safeguarded participants’ (a) anonymity, (b) confidentiality, and (c) privacy (Bristol & Hicks,
2014). The researcher obtained IRB approval on October 25, 2016. The IRB reviewed all research recruitment materials and the language the researcher used to communicate with research participants, such as the LinkedIn user’s agreement, the research flyer, LinkedIn direct messaging, the online consent form, the telephone interview consent form, the sampling method, and the language used to employ nonrandom, purposive snowball sampling to safeguard research participants.

First, the researcher obtained the LinkedIn’s user agreement to ensure that site permission was not necessary to recruit potential research participants because the researcher used his professional LinkedIn network. The researcher did not recruit research participants from a vulnerable population or collect sensitive data from participants. The researcher did not recruit participants with whom he was personally or professionally familiar (Resnik, 2016). The researcher also fully informed the participants about the research, and he obtained written permissions.

As recommended by other researchers (Pedersen et al., 2015), the researcher recruited potential participants using a flyer posted on his professional and personal LinkedIn pages. The researcher invited potential participants using the LinkedIn direct messaging platform by using ethical language as suggested by Capella University’s IRB. The research flyer and LinkedIn direct message presented the researcher as a doctoral student, gave the research title, and included the purpose of the study. Additionally, the recruitment materials discussed the inclusion and exclusion criteria. Most importantly, the researcher informed prospective participants that he safeguarded their anonymity and confidentiality (Bristol & Hicks, 2014).
The researcher used nonrandom, purposive snowball sampling. The researcher did not ask research participants to share the contact information of other people in their network. Instead, the researcher asked those he contacted to send the invite to people within their networks. Additionally, the researcher directed potential participants to contact the researcher directly and privately via his e-mail address and mobile number.

The researcher used a consent form to ensure research participants made an informed decision to respect their right of autonomy and free choice while ensuring research participants understood what entailed to participate in this research (Bristol & Hicks, 2014). The researcher employed consent forms when he needed to screen potential research participants using online surveys through SurveyMonkey. The researcher used a strict and straightforward process to receive the consent forms from all research participants.

To obtain consents, (a) potential participants contacted the researcher to express interest in taking part in the research; (b) the researcher e-mailed them the link to the inclusion criteria survey. The consent form was the first page of the online survey on SurveyMonkey. The researcher received notice when a participant completed an online survey. The researcher e-mailed prospective participants the telephone interview consent form, and those who chose to take part signed, scanned, and returned the consent form to the researcher via e-mail. The researcher began to schedule the telephone interviews, and he obtained consent verbally before starting a telephone interview. Additionally, the researcher blocked out 15 minutes prior the telephone interview to go over the consent form with the participants to ensure they fully understood the document (Bristol & Hicks, 2014).
Summary

Chapter 3 offered a detailed review and discussion of the design and methodology for this qualitative exploratory study. The researcher ensured that the methodology, methods, and procedures were in alignment with the research paradigm and philosophical assumptions. The constructivism-interpretivist paradigm served as the foundation for this study’s non-random, purposive, snowball sampling strategy, data collection method via telephone interviews, and thematic analysis procedures (da Costa et al., 2016). Additionally, the researcher gave a full description of the process of recruiting, screening, and selecting participants for data collection. The researcher also explained his central instrumental role in the research process. Finally, the researcher discussed and described the ethical principles applied in this research to protect research participants. Chapter 4 presents the results of the data analysis.
CHAPTER 4. PRESENTATION OF THE DATA

Introduction

The purpose of this exploratory qualitative research was to explore employee beliefs about the factors leading to an effective manager coach-employee relationship. The researcher answered the question by finding employee beliefs about the factors leading to an effective manager coach-employee coaching relationship. Organizations can use the results of this research to implement effective manager coach-employee coaching relationship programs that may aid recruitment and retention of top employees.

Chapter 1 presented the research introduction, and Chapter 2 presented the research literature review and theoretical orientation. Chapter 3 presented the research design and methodology, and Chapter 4 presents the research results. Also, this chapter describes the main sections of this chapter, which include (a) the study and the researcher, (b) a description of the sample (participants), (c) the research methodology applied to the data analysis, and (d) data results and analysis from the telephone interview.

The Study and the Researcher

The researcher has a strong passion and interested in personal and professional development through coaching. The researcher is a certified professional coach and has been supporting people to reach their personal and professional goals by practicing life and career coaching. Particularly, the researcher was interested in practicing managerial coaching to serve
his team members. Additionally, the researcher is a strong believer in the power of positive relationships, mutuality, working in partnerships, and friendliness in the workplace. The researcher has also been an advocate for his team members.

The researcher and his mentor had a common interest and passion for developmental coaching. Initially, the researcher wanted to create an instrument to assess the coaching skills of managers as coaches in the workplace. Because of structural and curricular changes on Capella University’s doctoral program in 2013, the researcher, with support of his mentor, transitioned from a quantitative researcher to a qualitative researcher. Because of the support of his mentor, the researcher redirected his attention toward the phenomenon of employee coaching relationships in organizational settings. The topic was fascinating to the researcher because he observed managers coaching team members in the workplace. Specifically, the researcher saw difficult relationships between managers and employees, a lack of managerial coaching, difficulties with employee development, employee engagement issues, and problems with productivity.

The researcher brought some experience and training to this dissertation. The researcher has more than six years of experience practicing managerial coaching in the workplace. This experience allowed the researcher to find the most proper theory to apply for the current study. The researcher’s understanding of the phenomenon allowed him to find preexisting concepts from SIT (Deutsch, 1949a; Johnson & Johnson, 2009; Kelly & Thibaut, 1978) used in Phase I of data analysis (theory-driven approach). Additionally, the researcher had more than six years of experience conducting job interviews, either face-to-face or by telephone. These interviewing skills helped the researcher to carry out the telephone interviews during the data collection phase.
Training in online surveys. The researcher had some knowledge and experience using online surveys through SurveyMonkey. The researcher took a survey research methodology course as a part of his training in quantitative research methods. The researcher learned to conduct demographic surveys and use a leadership scale to assess managers’ leadership skills during the survey research course. The training allowed the researcher to successfully screen and select the research participants. The researcher used SurveyMonkey to assess the eligibility of the research participants.

Learning qualitative data analysis skills. The researcher has been reading peer-reviewed articles (Braun & Clarke, 2017; Costa et al., 2016; Terry, Hayfield, Clarke, & Braun, 2017) about conducting a thematic analysis. The researcher read about the application of theoretical thematic analysis in qualitative exploratory research designs (Catacutan & de Guzman, 2015; Fereday & Muir-Cochrane, 2006; Perez et al., 2015; Percy et al., 2015; Selvam & Collicutt, 2013). The researcher has also learned to use and apply different qualitative research terminology by reading and studying qualitative research seminal and classic books on data analysis (Bernard & Ryan, 2010; Merriam, 2009; Miles & Huberman, 1994; Patton, 2002; Saldana, 2009).

The researcher received training in NVivo 11. A research assistant trained the researcher to use NVivo 11 to support the findings from the theoretical thematic analysis. The researcher used NVivo to enter the data from the deductive and inductive analyses. The researcher learned how to make nodes in NVivo and use the software to code and create categories, subcategories, and word frequencies used in Chapter 4. Additionally, the researcher also learned to organize the data from the telephone interviews by using NVivo 11.
The researcher used a bracketing technique (Morse, 2015) to check for possible biases. The researcher employed bracketing to remain open to new and emerging ideas during the thematic data analysis. As a result, the researcher found predetermined concepts from SIT (Deutsch, 1949a, Johnson & Johnson, 2009) during Phase I, the deductive approach. Additionally, the bracketing technique allowed the researcher to discover emerging and new categories and subcategories from the Phase II, which was the inductive approach (Percy et al., 2015).

**Description of the Sample**

The sample for this qualitative exploratory research included 18 research participants. The researcher employed nonrandom purposive snowball sampling (Woodley & Lockkard, 2016) to recruit the research participants (King et al., 2014) through LinkedIn (Zilde et al., 2014). All 18 research participants met the inclusion criteria because they were lower-level employees who had successfully received coaching from their direct manager-coaches for longer than six months. Also, the participants experienced improvements because of coaching.

All 18 research participants who signed the informed consent form before the telephone interviews eventually took part in this study. Additionally, the researcher ensured the protection of their identities by using pseudonym codes. For example, Participant 1 had labeled a pseudonym code as **ECR0001** during coding. None of the participants expressed concern about the time invested in the telephone interviews. All participants also agreed to be contacted via e-mail to follow up on the accuracy of their transcripts.

**Presenting research participant profiles.** The following section introduces the research participant profiles. The researcher offers a brief description of the participants’ demographic
information, and the inclusion criteria questions and answers. The demographic information included gender, age group, role, and industry. The inclusion criteria included questions about (a) the practice of employee developmental coaching in their organizations, and (b) employee developmental coaching relationships.

**Participant 1.** Participant 1 was female, and she reported that she was between the ages of between 41 and 50. She was a nurse who worked in the healthcare industry. She said that she experienced a successful employee coaching relationship with her direct manager-coach. She also reported she was working with her manager-coach for between two and five years. Because of employee coaching, Participant 1 reported enhanced understanding of the alignment between the organization’s values and goals. She rated her developmental experience as *somewhat successful*. Additionally, Participant 1 experienced improvements in the quality of her coaching relationship with her manager-coach. She ranked her relationship with her manager-coach before coaching as *good*, and she rated her relationship with her direct manager-coach after coaching as *excellent*.

**Participant 2.** Participant 2 was female and belonged to the between 31 and 40 age group. She was a nurse who worked in the healthcare industry. She said that her manager practiced employee coaching with her for between six months and two years. Because of employee coaching, Participant 2 reported enhanced self-efficacy skills. She rated her developmental experience as *very successful*. Additionally, Participant 2 said she experienced improvements in the quality of the coaching relationship with her manager-coach. She rated her relationship with her manager-coach before coaching as *good*, and she rated her relationship with her direct manager-coach after coaching as *excellent*.
Participant 3. Participant 3 was female who belonged to the between 31 and 40 age group. She worked in customer service in the retail industry. She said that her direct manager coached her. She also said that she had been working with her manager-coach for between five and 10 years. Because of employee coaching, Participant 3 said she developed leadership skills. She rated her developmental experience as completely successful. Additionally, Participant 3 experienced improvements in the quality of the coaching relationship with her manager-coach. She rated her relationship with her manager-coach before coaching as good, and she rated her relationship with her direct manager-coach after coaching as excellent.

Participant 4. Participant 4 was female, and she said that she was between the ages of 31 and 40. She was a safety specialist, and she worked in the government. She said that her direct manager coached her. She also said that she had been working with her manager-coach for five to 10 years. Because of employee coaching, Participant 4 incorporated new skills on her job. She rated her developmental experience as completely successful. Additionally, Participant 4 experienced improvements in the quality of the coaching relationship with her manager-coach. She rated her relationship with her manager-coach before coaching as excellent, and she rated her relationship with her direct manager-coach after coaching as a high-quality relationship.

Participant 5. Participant 5 was male, and he said that he was between the ages of 31 and 40. He was a security specialist, and he worked in the government. He said that his direct manager coached him. He also said that he had been working with his manager-coach for between five and 10 years. Because of employee coaching, Participant 5 said he improved his autonomy at work. He rated his developmental experience as very successful. Additionally, Participant 5 experienced improvements in the quality of the coaching relationship with his
manager-coach. He rated his relationship with his manager-coach before coaching as excellent, and he rated her relationship with his direct manager-coach after coaching as a high-quality relationship.

**Participant 6.** Participant 6 was female and was between the ages of 31 and 40. She was a specimen processor, and she worked in the healthcare industry. She said that her direct manager coached her. She also said that she had been working with her manager-coach for between two and five years. Because of employee coaching, Participant 6 incorporated new skills on her job. She rated her developmental experience as completely successful. Additionally, Participant 6 experienced improvements in the quality of the coaching relationship with her manager-coach. She rated her relationship with her manager-coach before coaching as excellent, and she rated her relationship with her direct manager-coach after coaching as a high-quality relationship.

**Participant 7.** Participant 7 was female, and she said that she was between the ages of (41-50). She worked as a medical front desk person in the healthcare industry. She said that her direct manager coached her. She also said that she had been working with her manager-coach for over 10 years. Because of employee coaching, Participant 7 incorporated new skills in her job. She rated her developmental experience as somewhat successful. Additionally, Participant 7 experienced improvements in the quality of the coaching relationship with her manager-coach. She rated her relationship with her manager-coach before coaching as excellent, and she rated her relationship with her direct manager-coach after coaching as a high-quality relationship.

**Participant 8.** Participant 8 was female, and she said that she was between the ages of 31 and 40. She was a loan specialist, and she worked in the financial services industry. She said that
Participant 8. Participant 8 was female, and she said that she had been working with her manager-coach for more than 10 years. Because of employee coaching, Participant 8 enhanced her understanding of the alignment between her organization’s values and goals. She rated her developmental experience as *completely successful*. Additionally, Participant 8 experienced improvements in the quality of the coaching relationship with her manager-coach. She rated her relationship with her manager-coach before coaching as *good*, and she rated her relationship with her direct manager-coach after coaching as a *high-quality relationship*.

Participant 9. Participant 9 was female, and she said that she was between the ages of 31 and 40. She worked in customer service in the retail industry. She said her direct manager coached her. She also said that she had been working with her manager-coach for between five and 10 years. Participant 9 developed leadership skills because of employee coaching. She rated her developmental experience as *completely successful*. Additionally, Participant 9 experienced improvements in the quality of the coaching relationship with her manager-coach. She rated her relationship with her manager-coach before coaching as *good*, and she rated her relationship with her direct manager-coach after coaching as *excellent*.

Participant 10. Participant 10 was female, and she said that she was between the ages of 21 and 30. She worked as a medical front desk person in the healthcare industry. She said that her direct manager coached her. She also said that she had been working with her manager-coach for between six months and two years. Because of employee coaching, Participant 10 incorporated new skills on the job. She rated her developmental experience as *very successful*. Additionally, Participant 10 experienced improvements in the quality of the coaching relationship with her manager-coach. She rated her relationship with her manager-coach before coaching as *good*, and she rated her relationship with her direct manager-coach after coaching as *excellent*. 
coaching as *fair*, and she rated her relationship with her direct manager-coach after coaching as *excellent*.

**Participant 11.** Participant 11 was male, and he said that he was between the ages of 31 and 40. He was a dental hygienist in the healthcare industry. He said that his direct manager coached him. He also said that he had been working with his manager-coach for between six months and two years. Because of employee coaching, Participant 11 improved his self-efficacy. He rated his developmental experience as *very successful*. Additionally, Participant 11 experienced improvements in the quality of the coaching relationship with his manager-coach. He rated his relationship with his manager-coach before coaching as *good*, and he rated his relationship with his direct manager-coach after coaching as a *high-quality relationship*.

**Participant 12.** Participant 12 was male, and he said that he was between the ages of 31 and 40. He was an information specialist, and he worked in the government. He said that his direct manager coached him. He also said that he had been working with his manager-coach for between six months and two years. Because of employee coaching, Participant 12 increased his job satisfaction. He rated his developmental experience as *completely successful*. Additionally, Participant 12 experienced improvements in the quality of the coaching relationship with his manager-coach. He rated his relationship with his manager-coach before coaching as *good*, and he rated his relationship with his direct manager-coach after coaching as *excellent*.

**Participant 13.** Participant 13 was male, and he said that he was between the ages of 21 and 30. He was as an IT specialist, and he worked in the government. He said that his direct manager coached him. He also said that he had been working with his manager-coach for between six months and two years. Because of employee coaching, Participant 13 incorporated
new skills on the job. He rated his developmental experience as completely successful. Additionally, Participant 13 experienced improvements in the quality of the coaching relationship with his manager-coach. He rated his relationship with his manager-coach before coaching as excellent, and he rated her relationship with his direct manager-coach after coaching as a high-quality relationship.

Participant 14. Participant 14 was female, and she said that she was between the ages of 21 and 30. She was a relationship banker, and she worked in the financial services industry. She said that her direct manager coached her. She also said that she had been working with her manager-coach for between two and five years. Because of employee coaching, Participant 14 incorporated new skills on the job. She rated her developmental experience as very successful. Additionally, Participant 14 experienced improvements in the quality of the coaching relationship with her manager-coach. She rated her relationship with her manager-coach before coaching as good, and she rated her relationship with her direct manager-coach after coaching as excellent.

Participant 15. Participant 15 was male, and he said that he was between the ages of 31 and 40. He was as an HR specialist, and he worked in the manufacturing industry. He said that his direct manager coached him. He also said that he had been working with his manager-coach for between six months and two years. Because of employee coaching, Participant 15 developed leadership skills on the job. He rated his developmental experience as somewhat successful. Additionally, Participant 15 experienced improvements in the quality of the coaching relationship with his manager-coach. He rated his relationship with his manager-coach before
coaching as good, and he rated his relationship with his direct manager-coach after coaching as excellent.

**Participant 16.** Participant 16 was male, and he said that he was between the ages of 31 and 40. He was a material’s coordinator who worked in the healthcare industry. He said that his direct manager coached him. He also said that he had been working with his manager-coach for between two and five years. Because of employee coaching, Participant 16 increased his job satisfaction. He rated his developmental experience as very successful. Additionally, Participant 16 experienced improvements in the quality of the coaching relationship with his manager-coach. He rated his relationship with his manager-coach before coaching as fair, and he rated his relationship with his direct manager-coach after coaching as a high-quality relationship.

**Participant 17.** Participant 17 was female, and she said that she was between the ages of 31 and 40. She was a human resources generalist in the healthcare industry. She said that her direct manager coached her. She also said that she had been working with her manager-coach for between six months and two years. Because of employee coaching, Participant 17 incorporated new skills on the job. She rated her developmental experience as very successful. Additionally, Participant 17 experienced improvements in the quality of the coaching relationship with her manager-coach. She rated her relationship with her manager-coach before coaching as excellent, and she rated her relationship with her direct manager-coach after coaching as a high-quality relationship.

**Participant 18.** Participant 18 was male, and he said that he was between the ages of 31 and 40. He was an HR professional who worked in the government. He said that his direct manager coached him. He also said that he had been working with his manager-coach for
between five and 10 years. Because of employee coaching, Participant 18 incorporated new skills on the job. He rated his developmental experience as very successful. Additionally, Participant 18 experienced improvements in the quality of the coaching relationship with his manager-coach. He rated his relationship with his manager-coach before coaching as excellent, and he rated her relationship with his direct manager-coach after coaching as a high-quality relationship. Table 5 presents a summary of the sample demographics.

Table 5. Participant Demographics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Age group</th>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Industry</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>(41-50)</td>
<td>Nurse</td>
<td>Healthcare</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>31 and 40</td>
<td>Nurse</td>
<td>Healthcare</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>31 and 40</td>
<td>Customer service</td>
<td>Retail</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>31 and 40</td>
<td>Safety specialist</td>
<td>Government</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>31 and 40</td>
<td>Security specialist</td>
<td>Government</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>31 and 40</td>
<td>Specimen processor</td>
<td>Healthcare</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>(41-50)</td>
<td>Medical front desk</td>
<td>Healthcare</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>31 and 40</td>
<td>Loan specialist</td>
<td>Financial services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>31 and 40</td>
<td>Costumer service</td>
<td>Retail</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>(21-30)</td>
<td>Medical front desk</td>
<td>Healthcare</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>31 and 40</td>
<td>Dental hygienist</td>
<td>Healthcare</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>31 and 40</td>
<td>Information specialist</td>
<td>Government</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>(21-30)</td>
<td>IT specialist</td>
<td>Government</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>31 and 40</td>
<td>Relationship banker</td>
<td>Financial services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>31 and 40</td>
<td>HR specialist</td>
<td>Manufacturing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>31 and 40</td>
<td>Materials coordinator</td>
<td>Healthcare</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>31 and 40</td>
<td>HR generalist</td>
<td>Healthcare</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>31 and 40</td>
<td>HR professional</td>
<td>Government</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Research Methodology Applied to the Data Analysis

The researcher used a theoretical thematic analysis method (Percy et al., 2015) to conduct data analysis. In this study, performing the data analysis involved two phases: a deductive phase,
which was a theory-driven approach, and an inductive phase, which was a data-driven approach.

What follows next is a description of the deductive approach.

**Phase I. Deductive Approach (Theory-Driven)**

The researcher created a template code (Ando et al., 2014) a priori from theory (Feraday & Muir-Cochrane, 2006) related to the phenomenon under investigation before conducting the theoretical thematic analysis. In this study, the researcher identified and listed 20 predetermined theoretical concepts from the existing literature on SIT (Deutsch, 1949a; Johnson & Johnson, 2009) to initially organize the analysis of the raw dataset (Feraday & Muir-Cochrane, 2006). The template code, with the 20 predetermined thematic codes, allowed the researcher to have a clear structure to organize the raw dataset and ensure he examined the aspects of the employee coaching relationship. Table 6 offers the predetermined thematic codes from SIT.
Table 6. *Initial Predetermined Thematic Codes From SIT*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Thematic Code Number</th>
<th>Label</th>
<th>Source(s)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Behavior interdependence</td>
<td>Courtright et al., 2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Cognitive interdependence</td>
<td>Agnew et al., 1998</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Cooperation</td>
<td>Johnson &amp; Johnson, 2005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Effective interdependence</td>
<td>Johnson, 2014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Goal interdependence</td>
<td>Johnson &amp; Johnson, 1974</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Group processing skills</td>
<td>Johnson, 2009</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Interdependence situation</td>
<td>Kelley &amp; Thibaut, 1978</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Interdependent individual</td>
<td>Eberly &amp; Fong, 2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Interdependent partner</td>
<td>Weigel &amp; Ballard-Reisch, 2014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Joint interdependence</td>
<td>Balliet et al., 2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Outcome interdependence</td>
<td>Halevy &amp; Katz, 2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Positive social interdependence</td>
<td>Deutsch, 1949a, 1962</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Process interdependence</td>
<td>Courtright et al., 2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Promotive interaction</td>
<td>Appleton et al., 2016; Deutsch, 1949a, 1949b; Johnson, 2014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Cathexis</td>
<td>Deutsch, 1949b</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Inducibility</td>
<td>Deutsch, 1949b</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Substitutability</td>
<td>Deutsch, 1949b</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Social interaction</td>
<td>Johnson &amp; Johnson, 2005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Social skills</td>
<td>Johnson, 2009</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Task interdependence</td>
<td>Biron &amp; Boon, 2013; Lui et al., 2017</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The researcher also used a template code recommended by Ando et al. (2014) to add the definition and a brief description of the 20 predetermined thematic codes. Feraday and Muir-Cochrane (2006) recommended using a thematic code definition and description because they allowed the researcher to recognize what a thematic code does, and how to know when the thematic code is applicable during the data analysis. Table 7 offers two examples of the definition and description of thematic codes from SIT.
Table 7. Predetermined Thematic Codes’ Definition and Description From SIT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Thematic Code Number</th>
<th>Label</th>
<th>Definition</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Behavior interdependence</td>
<td>Courtright et al. (2015) defined behavior interdependence as a team-like behavior. It is the level of interaction between two partners while doing task work.</td>
<td>Behavior interdependence involves interactions directed toward planning task work, defining team’s strategy, monitoring progress, tracking resources, and coordinating efforts (Courtright et al., 2015).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Cognitive interdependence</td>
<td>Agnew et al. (1998) defined cognitive interdependence as partner-oriented thinking. Cognitive interdependence supports pro-relationships behaviors and motivation toward the partner to sustain the relationship.</td>
<td>Partner-oriented thoughts and behaviors are characteristics of close and committed partnerships. Another characteristic is a tendency to describe the relationship as a central component of self.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The researcher started data analysis by using two developed template codes. The developed template codes served as a theoretical lens and audit trail in the analysis of the raw dataset (Ando et al., 2014). The researcher used the templates codes and applied the 20 predetermined thematic codes (Feraday & Muir-Cochrane, 2006) while following the Percy et al. (2015) method for theoretical thematic analysis, which included 13 steps.

**Data saturation.** The researcher used code saturation and meaning saturation to achieve data saturation during Phase I (Hennink et al., 2017). According to Hennink et al. (2017), a researcher normally reaches code saturation at between nine and 16 interviews. In this study,
code saturation did not agree with the code saturation range of nine and 16 interviews, as proposed by Hennink et al. (2017). Instead, the researcher reached code saturation at 80% in Interview 1, at 90% in Interview 2, and at 100% in Interview 3. In Interview 1, the researcher found and applied most the predetermined thematic codes from the theory. The researcher found 16 out of 20 predetermined thematic codes. In Interview 2, the researcher found and applied 18 out of 20 predetermined thematic codes. Finally, in Interview 3, the researcher found and applied 20 out of 20 predetermined thematic codes.

The researcher reached meaning saturation at Interview 15. In this study, the researcher reached meaning saturation at 75% in Interview 8, at 85% in Interview 11, and at 100% in Interview 15. Meaning saturation did not agree with the meaning saturation range of 16 to 24 interviews, as proposed by Hennink et al. (2017); however, data saturation agreed with the 12-interview recommendation made by Ando et al. (2014). Ando et al. (2014) said they achieved thematic data analysis saturation at Interview 12 (92.2%). In this study, the researcher achieved meaning saturation at Interview 12 (92%).

**Phase II. Inductive Approach (Data-Driven)**

The researcher used an inductive approach to data analysis (Percy et al., 2015). The researcher stayed open to exploring the raw data in the dataset. The researcher also focused on analyzing the un-coded raw data during Phase I (deductive approach) to conduct the inductive data analysis. Additionally, the researcher used a codebook (Ando et al., 2014) to track the development of emerging codes, patterns, and themes. The researcher also used the codebook to achieve code and meaning saturation as recommended by (Ando et al., 2014). The researcher started the process of data analysis by having a codebook to track emerging codes, patterns, and
themes while he followed the 13 steps of data analysis recommended by Percy et al. (2015). Figure 8 presents a summary of Phase II.

Figure 8. Phase II. Inductive analysis (data-driven).

**Data saturation.** The researcher used code saturation and meaning saturation to achieve data saturation during Phase II (Hennink et al., 2017). According to Hennink et al. (2017), the normal point at which a researcher finds code saturation is between nine and 16 interviews. In
this study, code saturation did not concur with the code saturation range of nine to 16 interviews proposed by Hennink et al. (2017). Instead, the researcher reached code saturation at 88% in Interview 1, and at 100% in Interview 2. In Interview 1, the researcher found most of the emerging themes and subthemes. In Interview 1, the researcher found seven of eight emerging themes. In Interview 2, the researcher found the remaining themes and subthemes; the researcher found eight out of eight emerging themes. The researcher found meaning saturation at interview 18. In this study, the researcher achieved meaning saturation at 75% during interview 13, at 85% during interview 15, and at 100% during interview 18. Meaning saturation agreed with the meaning saturation range of 16 to 24 interviews, as proposed by Hennink et al. (2017).

**NVivo 11 Data Analysis**

The researcher used NVivo 11 software (Houghton et al., 2016) to support the theoretical thematic analysis conducted in Phase I and Phase II. The researcher input all 18 transcribed color-coded text interviews into NVivo 11 and coded the research participant responses. The researcher used the data analysis results from Phase I and Phase II to proceed with the coding process in NVivo. The researcher organized the dataset by using parent nodes (themes) and nodes (subthemes) as recommended by Houghton et al. (2016). Initially, in Phase I (deductive approach), the researcher coded 20 nodes (themes) and 121 nodes (subthemes). In Phase II (inductive approach), the researcher followed steps similar to the steps used in Phase I and coded two parent nodes (themes) and 57 nodes (subthemes).

**Presentation of Data and Results of the Analysis**

As described previously in the participant profile section, the researcher conducted 18 telephone interviews to collect qualitative, textual data used to answer the research question. The
semistructured interview protocol allowed the researcher to collect rich information by using two open-ended probing questions. The researcher employed theoretical thematic analysis (Percy et al., 2015) to analyze the dataset. The theoretical thematic analysis method included two phases of analysis. Phase I was a deductive approach (theory-driven), while Phase II was an inductive approach (data-driven). The results of the analyses conducted in Phase I and Phase II allowed the researcher to answer the research question.

The researcher found a total of eight themes and 22 subthemes during data analyses. During Phase I, the researcher found six themes corresponded to the deductive analysis (theory-driven). On the other hand, in Phase II, the researcher found two themes corresponded to inductive analysis (data-driven). The results delivered a comprehensive description of the participants’ beliefs that led to effective manager coach-employee relationships in organizational settings. Figure 9 depicts a summary of the six themes found during Phase I, and the two themes found during Phase II. Additionally, Tables 8 and 9 present the definitions of all the themes found in this study.
Figure 9. Themes found in Phase I and Phase II.

Table 8. Definition of Interdependent Developmental Coaching Relationship Themes in Phase I

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Manager-coach and employee positive interdependence</td>
<td>A positive interrelationship factor displayed by the manager-coach and employee based on cooperation and positive interaction.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manager-coach person-set</td>
<td>A set of positive interrelated employee-oriented factors of the manager-coach used to interact with the employee.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manager-coach and employee partnership</td>
<td>A set of positive interrelated partnership factors of the manager-coach and employee used in their interaction toward their relationship.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manager-coach role set</td>
<td>A set of positive interrelated behavioral factors of the manager-coach to support and advocate employee’s development and well-being.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manager-coach and employee psychological processes</td>
<td>The manager-coach and employee display a set of positive interrelated behavioral factors that integrates positive energy, positive feelings and positive attitude.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employee coaching outcomes</td>
<td>Represents the positive professional and personal growth of the employee.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 9. Definition of Interdependent Developmental Coaching Relationship Themes in Phase II

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Manager-coach and employee relationship</td>
<td>A set of positive interrelated professional and friendly relationship factors showed by the manager-coach and employee.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employee coaching growth</td>
<td>A set of positive interrelated employee developmental factors used by the manager coach to facilitate employee growth.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Phase I. Deductive Approach to Data Analysis**

As mentioned previously, the researcher found six themes during Phase I data analysis. These six themes were manager-coach and employee interdependence, manager-coach person set, manager-coach and employee partnership, manager-coach role set, manager-coach and employee psychological processes, and employee coaching outcomes. In this section, the researcher presents the results of the analyses. The researcher also gives exemplary illustrations from the interviews of the themes and subthemes. This section also presents the definitions for all the subthemes, their frequencies, and percentages based on the data collected during the 18 interviews.

**Manager-Coach and Employee Positive Interdependence**

The researcher found manager-coach and employee positive interdependence was a major theme during deductive analysis in Phase I. This major theme had a significant content value rather than a prevalence value in the data analysis (Hennink et al., 2017). Participants acknowledged having a positive interdependent relationship with their manager-coach. The participants also offered statements that exemplified the meaning behind this theme. Participant 8 mentioned, for example, “She guides me to reach my goals more efficiently. I do not see
anything negative about having a manager-coach and employee relationship.” Participant 12 described positive interdependence as,

> We are still in touch in a weekly basis because the success of our operation depends on each other and the bonds that we have built. My manager-coach made me a strong information specialist and my success is her success too, and vice versa.

Participant 15 understood positive interdependence as, “If you have a successful employee, you have a successful manager-coach. So, it works both ways, it has to be mutual or reciprocal to work.” The research broke this major theme down into three subthemes: cooperation, positive interaction, and positive social interdependence. The researcher also found the three subthemes based on their content values rather than their prevalence values in the data set. Table 10 presents the definitions for these themes, and Table 11 shows the subtheme frequencies and percentages.

### Table 10. Definition of Subthemes for Theme 1. Manager-Coach and Employee Interdependence

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subtheme</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cooperation</td>
<td>Manager-coach and employee work together as they hold a similar developmental interest.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive interaction</td>
<td>A sociable positive interrelation of reciprocal actions, effects, and influence between manager-coach and employee.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive social interdependence</td>
<td>A positive interrelation of committed actions between manager-coach and employee to foster mutual goals.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 11. Frequency of Subthemes for Theme 1. Manager-Coach and Employee Positive Interdependence

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subtheme</th>
<th>Number of Interviews (n = 18)</th>
<th>Percent of 18 Interviews</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Positive social interdependence</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cooperation</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive interaction</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Positive social interdependence.** Positive social interdependence was the most frequent subtheme mentioned for the major theme of manager-coach and employee positive interdependence. Four (22%) of the 18 participants mentioned this subtheme. This subtheme emerged from the code *work both ways* and the pattern *fostering common goals*. The participants also gave statements that exemplified the meaning of this subtheme. Participant 4 said,

> He likes me to better myself and to better manage the business. So, it is training and self-development. I feel good when he does that. It is like a team effort because both him and me want to succeed to get the business going and expand.

Similarly, Participant 1 noted,

> I learned from her how to be and remain positive and talk to people, how to encourage people, how to give constructive feedback, how to get somebody to succeed and grow through support and giving them what they need so that they do not feel unsupported. You know, you need to create a positive environment to people in order for them to growth.

In a final example of this subtheme, Participant 3 said,

> Having a manager-coach relationship with my boss is very valuable because has helped me to grow and achieve my optimal performance at work. It is very valuable and worth it.

**Cooperation.** *Cooperation* was the second most often mentioned subtheme for the major theme *manager-coach and employee positive interdependence*. Three (17%) of the 18 participants mentioned this subtheme. This subtheme emerged from the codes *sharing simultaneous task completion* and *maximizing mutual goals*, and the pattern *partners work together*.

The participants offered statements that exemplified the meaning of this subtheme. Participant 1 said, “Potentially, I could harm a patient and we both did not want that. So, she has to have interest in me to be succeeded.” Participant 2 perceived cooperation as, “We complemented our task by helping each other like sharing the task to ensure simultaneous
completion.” In a final example, Participant 4 said, “We collaborate and cooperate to get things done in a timely manner.”

**Positive interaction.** Positive interaction was the third most frequent subtheme mentioned for the major theme manager-coach and employee positive interdependence. Two (11%) of the 18 participants mentioned this subtheme. This subtheme emerged from the codes mutual verbal praise, giving positive feedback, and receiving positive feedback. This subtheme emerged from the pattern concurrent actions impact outcomes.

The participants gave statements that exemplified the meaning of this subtheme. Participant 2 described positive interaction as, “Being sociable I think is also very important because good interaction needs to be in a positive manner in a daily basis in order to be successful for both the supervisor and me as a new employee.” Also, Participant 2 also said, “I think that having a positive interaction helped to build a positive friendship with my supervisor.” In a final example of this subtheme, Participant 2 said, “An example of positive interaction would be a verbal praise, and a positive feedback.”

**Manager-Coach Person-Set**

The researcher identified manager-coach person-set as a major theme in conducting a deductive analysis in Phase I. The researcher classified this major theme into three subthemes: (a) interdependent individual, (b) behavior interdependence, and (c) cognitive interdependence. Table 12 and Table 13 show definitions of these three subthemes, the subtheme frequencies and percentages based on the number of 18 telephone interviews.
Table 12. Definition of Subthemes for Theme 2. Manager-Coach Person-Set

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subtheme</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Interdependent individual</td>
<td>The manager-coach is employee-oriented, tends to socially and professionally stay connected to the employee, and is attentive to the employee’s feelings, thoughts, and needs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Behavior interdependence</td>
<td>The manager-coach displays team-like behaviors when interacting with the employee.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cognitive interdependence</td>
<td>The manager-coach displays partner-oriented thinking. Manager-coach is engaged in the partnership with the employee.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 13. Frequency of Subthemes for Theme 2. Manager-Coach Person-Set

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subtheme</th>
<th>Number of Interviews (n = 18)</th>
<th>Percent of 18 Interviews</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Interdependent individual</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Behavior interdependence</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cognitive interdependence</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Interdependent individual.** *Interdependent individual* was the most frequent subtheme mentioned for the major theme *manager-coach person-set*. Sixteen (89%) of the 18 participants mentioned this subtheme. This subtheme emerged from five codes: (a) expending time together, (b) active listening, attentive to other’s feelings, (c) thoughts and needs, (d) connected to the other, and (e) feeling empathy. Also, this subtheme emerged from the pattern *other-focused*.

The participants offered statements that exemplified the meaning of this subtheme.

Participant 12 described how the manager-coach and employees stay connected to each other as,

> When we work together, we communicate through a phone call or text. We just like to text to each other to find out how we are doing. For example, my manager-coach likes to text me to see how I am doing, and I like to text her too to see how she is doing.

Participant 10 described how the manager-coach was attentive to the employee’s feelings: “She seeks to understand me first and asks questions to help me think hard to find my
own answers. I appreciate her frequent and actionable feedback.” In a final example, Participant 8 described how her manager-coach was attentive to the employee’s feelings, thoughts and needs. Participant 8 said,

At the end of the day, she understands me, trusts me, and we get into mutual agreement. She allows me to tell her how I feel. If I make a mistake, it is okay because she wants me to learn from my mistake. She is not judgmental.

**Behavior interdependence.** *Behavior interdependence* was the second most frequent subtheme mentioned for the major theme *manager-coach person-set*. Sixteen (89%) of the 18 participants mentioned this subtheme. This subtheme emerged from five codes: (a) team encouragement, (b) coordinating efforts, (c) team strategy, (d) planning task work, and (e) monitoring progress. Also, this subtheme emerged from the pattern, *team-like behavior*.

Participants gave statements that exemplified the meaning of this subtheme. Participant 2 described how the manager-coach and employee coordinate efforts as, “We teamed up. If we had downtime, we would go over policies and procedures to review them.” Similarly, Participant 17 said, “I co-participate and co-create my own goals.” Participants also described how the manager-coach monitors progress. Participant 2 said, “She always ensured that I complete and follow through on my assigned task.” Similarly, Participant 10 noted, “A few days later, my manager-coach observed my interaction with a patient at the check-in process.”

Other participants explained how the manager-coach and employee plan their task work. Participant 13 said, “When we started to work together, he asked me what my interests are and helped me to develop an action plan to reach my goals.” Finally, Participant 9 described how the manager-coach and employee were working on a team strategy:

We knew that we needed to get ready when our vice president and general manager started asking questions to us during an executive visit. For example, they would ask,
“Why don’t you carry this item?” We need also to have documentation that we are working on certain items and a good explanation.

**Cognitive interdependence.** Cognitive interdependence was the third most frequent subtheme mentioned for the major theme *manager-coach person-set*. Five (28%) of the participants mentioned this subtheme. This subtheme emerged from two codes: (a) *relationship as a central part of the partnership* and (b) *a close and committed partnership*. Additionally, this subtheme emerged from the pattern, *partner-oriented thinking*.

The participants gave statements that exemplified the meaning of this subtheme. Participant 9 described how the relationship between the manager-coach and employee was a central component of the partnership as “We work like partners. We work very well together; it is a short of interdependence. We complement each other.” Similarly, Participant 13 said, “The relationship with my manager-coach is working very well because we see each other daily.” Finally, Participant 4 described a close and committed partnership between the manager-coach and employee: “Because I know I can share things with him anytime, and I know that he can share things with me anytime too.”

**Manager-Coach and Employee Partnership**

The researcher found *manager-coach and employee partnership* as a major theme during the deductive analysis in Phase I. This major theme fell into five subthemes: (a) *interdependent partner*, (b) *group processing skills*, (c) *joint control interdependence*, (d) *outcome interdependence*, and (e) *social skills*. Table 14 presents the definitions of these five subthemes, and Table 15 shows the subtheme frequencies and percentages from the 18 telephone interviews.
Table 14. Definition of Subthemes for Theme 3. Manager-Coach and Employee Partnership

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subtheme</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Interdependent partner</td>
<td>The manager-coach and employee are aware of their existing relationship.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group processing skills</td>
<td>They are effective and positive skills displayed by the manager-coach and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>employee such as mutual respect and mutual reflection toward mutual goals.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joint control interdependence</td>
<td>Manager-coach and employee shared equally complete control of the</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>partnership by making mutual adjustments on their behaviors.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outcome interdependence</td>
<td>Manager-coach and employee hold similar perceptions of the goal that</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>needs to be achieved.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social skills</td>
<td>They are positive and effective skills displayed by the manager coach</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>and employee to get to know each other by using self-disclosure and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>openness.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 15. Frequency of Subthemes for Theme 3. Manager-Coach Employee Partnership

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subtheme</th>
<th>Number of Interviews ($n = 18$)</th>
<th>Percent of 18 Interviews</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Interdependent partner</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group processing skills</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outcome interdependence</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social skills</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joint interdependence</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Interdependent partner. Interdependent partner was the most frequent subtheme mentioned for the major theme manager-coach and employee partnership. All 18 (100%) of the participants mentioned this subtheme. This subtheme emerged from six codes: showing integrity, common courtesy, discussing problems, keeping promises, working together toward the future, and regular communication. Additionally, this subtheme emerged from the pattern, perceiving an existing relationship.
The participants gave statements to exemplify the meaning of this subtheme. Participant 14 perceived the existing relationship with the manager-coach as, “I see my manager-coach as a part of my family. We see each other four to five days a week for eight hours each day. Coaching helps to build this type of relationship outside work and to become friends.” Similarly, Participant 15 noted the existing relationship with the manager-coach and said,

That is what successful working relationships are. If you want to be successful, you have to have a greater level of openness and intimacy. Obviously, this type of working relationship does not entail a romantic relationship point of view. But you are asking both parties in the relationship to be more vulnerable.

Participants also gave descriptions of their understanding about discussing problems with a manager-coach. Participant 3 said,

So, I guess, sometimes we deal with misunderstandings in the office. I learned from my manager-coach that the first thing to do to avoid a misunderstanding is to listen and sit down with the person and put our differences aside and focus on similarities. To put aside any personal issues and do our job first. Try to work it out after work.

Participant 9 shared a view of how problems were addressed with the manager-coach as, “You know sometimes you have personal issues and need to speak with someone who you can trust, and my manager-coach is there for me.” Some participants described how the manager-coach and employee did activities together. Participant 5 said, “Typically, we also go to lunch together every day. It may sound strange, but this is the type of relationship that I have with my manager-coach.”

Participants described how their manager-coaches tried to regularly communicate with them. Participant 3 said, “He communicates verbally and by e-mails. He always has consistent communication. This is important because one small miscommunication can affect our workflow.” Similar, Participant 6 said, “She calls, e-mails, or texts me if she needs to get in
touch with me or to update me with anything in the company.” In the final example, Participant 17 said,

She brings to the conversation something new every time. She shares a new piece of data from our industry. She shares something with me about the company. Or she tells me something meaningful to our profession or our organization. Sometimes she has particular announcements, like new training.

**Group processing skills.** *Group processing skills* was the second most frequent subtheme mentioned for the major theme *manager-coach and employee partnership*. Eleven (61%) of the participants mentioned this subtheme. This subtheme emerged from two codes: *mutual respect* and *mutual reflection toward mutual goals*. Also, this subtheme emerged from the pattern, *effective positive skills*.

Participants gave statements that explained the meaning of this subtheme. Participant 2 expressed what mutual respect meant, and said,

My supervisor also always treated me with respect, and I think that it was very important for both parties--mutual respect validates you as a person and as a professional and allows you to devote your energy better at work.

Participant 13 said, “He is always very respectful with my time. He knew that I was taking six courses at school, and he always approved my time off from work so that I have time to study.”

In a final example, Participant 12 said, “My manager-coach treats me with respect. We have mutual respect for each other. I have a respect for her and her ability to be a good manager as she has respect for me as well.”

Other participants reported how they and their manager-coaches reflected on their progress toward mutual goals. Participant 4 said, “He likes to ask me questions rather than tell me the answers to make me find my own answers. That way, he encourages me to reflect and develop my critical thinking.” Similarly, Participant 12 said, “She asked me the right questions
to help me to figure out my own answers to my problems.” Also, Participant 14 described that as, “My manager-coach asked me what could I do differently to ensure I understand the customer’s needs. I have told her that I need to learn how to listen with care to my customers.” In a final example, Participant 17 said, “She asks, what is happening here? How can we switch the outcome here? What actions we need to take to have a better outcome? She uses her coach hat.”

**Outcome interdependence.** Outcome interdependence was the third most frequent subtheme mentioned for the major theme manager-coach and employee partnership. Eleven (61%) of the participants mentioned this subtheme. This subtheme emerged from two codes: *task measurement, reward, communication, and collective output,* and *similar perception of what needs to be done.* Additionally, this subtheme emerged from the pattern, *mutual task to be completed.*

Participants provided statements that exemplified the meaning of this subtheme. Participants commented on their understanding about having similar perceptions of what needed to be done when they work with their manager-coaches. Participant 2 said, “The first thing we did was to set goals, identify strengths and weaknesses, and how to work throughout a specify timeframe.” Similarly, Participant 3 said, “We believe in good teamwork and good communication. If you do not have these things, you will not have a smooth workflow in a day.” Participant 4 also said, “We work together on setting goals to align my job with the organization’s mission and vision.”

Also, Participant 5 said,

We like to maintain our relationship very positive. My manager-coach and I worked together on quite few projects. These were individual projects that I put together and my manager-coach reviewed it. We are always on the same page, share similar understanding on what needs to be done.
Some participants shared their perceptions about how task work was measured, communicated, and rewarded by their manager-coaches. Participant 3 said, “When we achieve our goals, we receive positive praises from our boss. We do get like gift cards. I think that this is a way to motivate us to do a good job.” Similarly, Participant 10 said, “My goals are clear, meaningful, and challenging.” In a final example, Participant 16 said, “I think that the expectation of this goal was clear, attainable, realistic, and challenging. I was able to accomplish this goal.”

**Social skills.** Social skills were the fourth most frequent subtheme mentioned for the major theme manager-coach and employee partnership. Eleven (61%) participants mentioned this subtheme. This subtheme emerged from two codes: self-disclosure and openness. Also, this subtheme emerged from the pattern, getting to know each other.

Participants shared statements that exemplified the meaning of this subtheme. Participants provided their insights on how the manager-coach and employee get to know each other. Participant 11 said, “We get to know each other from day in and day out.” Participant 12 said,

> We started to know each other by hanging out eight hours a day for the following three months. You get to know your manager-coach intimately because we spend eight plus hours a day working together to ensure I learn the required skills for my job.

Similarly, Participant 13 said, “My manager-coach and I get to know each other on a personal basis each day and sometimes on the weekends.” In a final example, Participant 16 said, “We got to know each other when we conducted individualized employee meetings to talk about my career in the organization and my goals.”

**Joint control interdependence.** Joint control interdependence was the fifth most frequent subtheme mentioned for the major theme manager-coach and employee partnership.
Nine (50%) participants mentioned this subtheme. This subtheme emerged from the code *mutual adjustment to reach mutual outcomes*. Also, this subtheme was also derived from the pattern, *sharing combined control*.

Participants provided statements that exemplified the meaning of this subtheme. Participants commented on how the manager-coach and the employee make adjustments to determine each other outcomes. Participant 8 said, “We agree to disagree when we have conversations to get the job done.” Participant 17 said, “She made adjustments in the process in 24 hours. She and I made adjustments in the process. It was like mutual adjustment.” Participant 9 said, 

He calls me if there is a customer complaint that he cannot handle that needs a manager’s attention. I call him when I need help, so we work like partners. One time, we had a customer very upset and my manager-coach asked me to help him by taking care of the complaint for him. It is funny because stuff like that he prefers me to handle it. The working relationship with him is very nice because we know each other’s strengths and weaknesses, and we complement each other.

Participants also commented on the manager-coach and the employee shared combined control. Participant 3 said, “It is like a team effort because both him and me want to succeed to get the business going and expand.” In a final example, Participant 4 highlighted, “I think that we have built a mutual connection and kind of working and friendly partnership.”

**Manager-Coach Role-Set**

The researcher identified *manager-coach and role-set* as a major theme in conducting the deductive analysis in Phase I. This major theme was further organized into two subthemes: *interdependence situation* and *promotive interaction*. Table 16 and Table 17 present the definitions for these two subthemes, and the tables also show the subthemes frequencies and percentages.
Table 16. Definition of Subthemes for Theme 4. Manager-Coach Role-Set

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subtheme</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Interdependence situation</td>
<td>The manager-coach assesses and addresses employee’s needs. The manager-coach also displays positive pro-social behaviors when interacts with the employee.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promotive interaction</td>
<td>The manager-coach displays supportive behaviors when interacts with the employee. Manager-coach and employee display mutual trust and influence.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 17. Frequency of Subthemes for Theme 4. Manager-Coach Role-Set

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subtheme</th>
<th>Number of Interviews ($n = 18$)</th>
<th>Percent of 18 Interviews</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Interdependence situation</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promotive interaction</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Interdependence situation.** *Interdependence situation* was the first most frequent subtheme mentioned for the major theme *manager-coach role set*. All 18 (100%) of the participants mentioned this subtheme. This subtheme emerged from two patterns: *assessing and addressing employee’s needs* and *showing pro-social behaviors*. The first pattern, *assessing and addressing employee’s needs*, emerged from three codes: belonging needs, esteem needs, and self-actualization needs. The second pattern, *showing pro-social behaviors*, emerged from four codes: *going beyond job responsibilities, showing compassion and tolerance, treating employee as equals*, and *treating employees as friends*.

Participants gave statements that exemplified the meaning of this subtheme. Some participants mentioned how the manager-coach assessed their needs daily. Participant 5 said, “She was asking me how I want my nametag and how I prefer the layout of my office. She also asked me if I have special requirements and necessities like that.” Participant 16 said, “When he
does rounding in the unit, he stops by and has a little chat with everyone to ensure all of us have the things we need to do our job.” Participant 17 said, “When she checks in, she says is there anything you need?”

Some participants commented on how their manager-coach addressed their belonging needs at work. Participant 3 said, “I feel that I am part of the team, and I am part of growing this business.” Participant 6 said, “She accepts me for who I am, and I feel understood by her as well.” Participant 8 said, “She respect me and treats me fairly. It is important when my manager-coach explains things to me. She tells me the ‘why’ of things. This is the way I feel respected and treated fairly.” Participant 14 also said, “I think that the most important quality is acceptance. My manager-coach accepts me for who I am; my manager believes that there is always a room for improvement.” Similarly, Participant 17 said, “She is open-minded and respects one’s experience and background. She respects me for who I am, and she behaves in a way that shows her interest in diversity and inclusion.”

Some participants commented on how their manager-coach addressed their esteem needs by working on challenging task at work. Participant 3 said, “We set challenging goals together and encouraged me to practice self-learning.” Participant 5 said,

Just recently, over the course of three to four months, she requested me to put some kind of training together with a policy at work. So, I developed a series of power point slides with the information of policies I created and send it out once a week for 16 weeks. They are sort of short training guides.

Participant 13 said,

My manager-coach has challenged me in many different ways. Not only he challenges me as being his coachee but also by giving challenging assignments and encouragement to do my best each and every single time. When my manager-coach got accustom to my work ethic, he started giving me more challenging assignments and eventually he just keeps challenging me. He knows my abilities and strengths and likes to utilize my
abilities. My manager-coach delegates challenging assignments to me. They are important assignments needed to be done and required by senior management.

Other participants mentioned how their manager-coach recognized their accomplishments.

Participant 4 said,

He supports me in many different ways. For example, he supports me emotionally by recognizing when I do a great job--he cheers me! He likes to recognize the team for a good job. At Christmas time, he gave a single thank you card to everyone in the team.

Participant 6 said, “She always cheers for me for doing a good job and gives me a great evaluation.” Similarly, Participant 9 said,

My manager-coach was telling the vice-president of the company about how great I am--my boss was cheering for me! My boss said to the vice-president that I do a great job by keeping our inventory low. My boss took the opportunity to say great things about me to cheer me on when he was talking with the CEO.

Some participants commented on how their manager-coaches addressed their self-actualization needs. Participant 1 said,

She always cares about my professional needs. She had a self-assessment check list to measure my clinical skills. There was stuff that I needed to learn and grow on, and she helped me with it. I experienced positive feelings because I was learning a lot and becoming a better clinical person. Also, I developed a class to teach, and she guided me through that by reviewing my outlines.

Participant 4 said, “My manager knows my strengths and helps me to keep building on my strengths to get even better and reach my peak performance at work.” Similarly, Participant 6 said, “I work by myself without her supervision. She trusts me, and she likes that I can work positively independent with minimal supervision. The independence and freedom that I have at work to do my job motivate me.” Participant 12 highlighted, “From Day 1 to now, my manager-coach taught me typing skills and interviewing skills that were paramount for my job.”

Participant 9 said,
He is always looking at me to keep learning—self-actualization is very important for him. He wants all team members to keep learning new things. He gives me a high degree of freedom and autonomy at my job while he is always there to help me with unusual or difficult situations. He is also always looking for me to attend training to update my skills at work so that I can be more efficient with my job.

Some participants commented on how their manager-coach used pro-social behavior to treat them as friends. Participant 5 said, “We are friends. She actually shares both personal information and professional information. I feel good about it. I feel good that we can share personal information, and I considered her as a good friend.” Participant 6 described, “It is not like because she is the boss, I am below her.” Participant 7 said, “I feel comfortable around my manager-coach because I feel that she is very friendly. She does not look like the high-up rank. She is very friendly and humble I guess.” Participant 9 said,

You know, like having a conversation with a friend, I feel that I can open up and express my ideas within a safe environment without judgment. I guess, friendship with him. We have built a strong friendship. He is always friendly and caring.

Participant 5 said,

I think that the most valuable thing of being in a manager-coach employee relationship is to have someone at work who is more than just your boss. It is to have someone who not only is your manager, but also a trusted friend at the same time who genuinely cares about you as a whole person—meaning professionally and personally.

Participant 11 said, “He was always very friendly from the very beginning. I think that I got to learn a lot of new skills because of the friendship.” Participant 12 said, “We actually become kind of friends. My manager was able to step outside the employer and employee relationship and step in into the friend zone to help me out. We become very good friends.” Participant 13 said, “He likes to socialize at work and outside work.” Participant 9 said, “My manager-coach and I sometimes hang out outside work and I feel that this is a way to build our relationship and friendship.” Similarly, Participant 10 said, “She is very communicative, she is
very friendly and amicably and a good person in general.” In last but, not least, Participant 18 said, “I always tended to believe that we were good friends.”

Some participants commented on how their manager-coach used pro-social behavior to treat them as equals. Participant 5 said, “We have free and open communication like we are talking to coworker to coworker, which is really the best benefit.” Participant 6 said, “It is not like because she is the boss I am below her. She makes me feel like we are equals. Everything is equal when it comes to work.” Participant 7 said, “She is not condescending, she is not bossy I guess. When my manager-coach approaches to me and other employees, she looks like one of us. She treats everyone equal.” In a final statement, Participant 8 said, “She always treats me equally and she treats equally to everyone as well. She is very loyal, good listener, you do not feel like she is your boss because she treats you equally.”

**Promotive interaction.** Promotive interaction was also the first most frequent subtheme mentioned for the major theme manager-coach role set. All 18 (100%) of the 18 participants mentioned this subtheme. This subtheme emerged from three patterns: supportive behaviors, mutual trust, and mutual influence. The first pattern, supportive behaviors, came from three codes: showing care, showing comfort behaviors, and personal involvement. The second pattern, mutual trust, emerged from four codes: confidentiality, mutual appreciation, trusting bonds, and mutual trust in general. The third pattern, mutual influence, emerged from five codes: motivation for mutual interest, agreement on expectations, learning from each other, challenging each other, and role modeling.

Participants gave statements that exemplified the meaning of this subtheme. Some participants commented on how the manager-coach and employee were motivated because of the mutual benefits of the relationship. Participant 12 said, “This is like a mutual check in, like a
reciprocal interest in how we are doing at work.” Participant 15 said, “It goes both ways. A good relationship works both ways. It has mutual benefits.”

One participant described the importance of agreement on expectations between the manager-coach and employee. Participant 10 said, “She is also concerned about reaching mutual agreement on expectations.” Some participants saw how the manager-coach and employee displayed mutual influenced by learning from each other. Participant 3 said, “He listens my ideas and I learn from him. It is both ways. We learn from each other.” Participant 5 said, “It is a mutual learning for both of us.” Participant 8 said, “It is a mutual learning experience. She gives me feedback and I give her my feedback as well.” Participant 18 described it as, “It is like two-way learning. It is mutual.”

Some participants mentioned how manager-coach and employee experienced trust and confidentiality. Participant 12 said,

My manager-coach has told me that this conversation will be kept between her and me. She will keep it confidential and it will not go any further. I had the confidence on her that she will help me out to get through the issue.

Participant 14 said,

My manager keeps the conversations about development in a confidential manner, she does not tell anyone about my challenges and development. I feel that she respects me because she keeps confidential our developmental conversations at work.

Participant 4 said, “He trusts me as I trust him too. It is like mutual trust.” Similarly, Participant 6 said, “She is very professional, and we trust each other. I trust her and she trusts me.”

Other participants mentioned how their manager-coaches provided support to employees. Participant 12 said,

I think that the most valuable in my friendship in my relationship with my manager-coach is the support that I get from her. No matter what I get into at work, I can always reach out my manager-coach for help.
Participant 8 said, “My manager supports me and shows me emotional support.” Participant 16 said,

You know there is always a lot of pressure at work, but he is always in a calm manner when he interacts with you. It is impressed the level of comfort that he has in his job. He stays calm in every circumstance.

Some participants commented about their experiences with how their manager-coaches showed them they cared. Participant 1 said, “Yes, she did by taking time out of her day. We worked night shift, so this happened before we started without night shit. When she showed me this type of care, I feel good.” Participant 7 said, “I learned that he cares for everyone and me. He is not selfish.” Participant 6 said, “I feel lucky because I have someone who cares about me at work.” Similarly, Participant 9 stressed, “He cares about me bottom line.”

**Manager-Coach and Employee Psychological Processes**

The researcher identified *manager-coach and employee psychological processes* as a major theme in the deductive analysis during Phase I. This major theme fell into three subthemes: *cathexis, inducibility, and substitutability*. Table 18 presents the definitions of these three subthemes and Table 19 shows the subtheme frequencies and percentages.

Table 18. *Definition of Subthemes for Theme 5. Manager-Coach and Employee Psychological Processes*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subtheme</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cathexis</td>
<td>The manager-coach and employee display and experience relational positive energy. They also show a positive attitude toward their relationship.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inducibility</td>
<td>The manager-coach and employee show openness to influence each other to set the basis for cooperation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Substitutability</td>
<td>The manager-coach and employee show responsibility and accountability positive behaviors toward their common goals.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 19. Frequency of Subthemes for Theme 5. Manager-Coach and Employee Psychological Processes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subtheme</th>
<th>Number of Interviews $(n = 18)$</th>
<th>Percent of 18 Interviews</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cathexis</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inducibility</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Substitutability</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Cathexis.** Cathexis was the first, most frequent subtheme mentioned for the major theme manager-coach and employee psychological processes. Thirteen (72%) participants mentioned this subtheme. This subtheme emerged from two patterns: attitude formation, and relational energy. The first pattern, attitude formation, emerged from one code: enhancing partner’s well-being. The second pattern, relational energy, emerged from four codes: motivated by manager-coach’s positive affect, cognitive stimulation by useful feedback, motivated by a positive atmosphere, and enhanced motivation to do work.

Participants gave statements used as examples of the subtheme’s meaning. Some participants mentioned how the positive attitude of a manager-coach affected employee well-being. Participant 8 said, “Being respected by my manager-coach makes me feel a sense of fulfillment. That shows you that you are important and not only an employee with a number.” Participant 9 also said, “He makes me feel like my actual job has a purpose in the organization. I mean you know it is very meaningful. It’s a great feeling.”

Other participants expressed their perceptions about experiencing relational positive energy, which they said manager-coach displayed. Participant 3 said, “He inspired me by being focused and by setting high standards for me.” Participant 11 said,

I remembered that he was always very happy with my procedures even though I thought I was not doing that great. I admired him for how he did his procedures. He was the
department head and he treats you with so much respect and trust and that really inspire me. He was very humble. That was how he conducted himself to lead by example. Someone who can lead without hitting you on the head made you to want to be like him. I learned a lot from him that way he inspires you to do things rather than forcing you to do thing.

Participant 13 said, “His personality sparks energy and makes work fun and creates a positive environment. He likes to make jokes and he is very charismatic. My manager-coach inspires me just by being a great role model.” Participant 18 said, “My manager-coach inspired me by being a role model and a good example. He likes to do the right thing and expects all his subordinates to do the same. He is a little bit strict in this regard.”

Some participants received cognitive stimulation from the manager-coach’s relational energy and useful feedback. Participant 3 said, “Because my manager-coach is an expert in the field, when he gives me feedback, he is very concise and positive.” Participant 4 said, “He provides me with a constructive feedback to ensure I do even better my job.” Participant 6 said, “When I receive feedback from my manager-coach, I have positive emotions because I get to learn her perspective because she has 10 more years of experience ahead of me.” Participant 9 said, “He likes to give me a positive feedback and that shows how much he cares about me, my progress and my mistakes – he has a genuine heart. He is effective in what he does.”

Other participants experienced the benefit of working in a positive work environment created by their manager-coach. Participant 3 said, “I feel that the environment where we work is very friendly.” Participant 4 said, “He creates a positive environment.” Participant 6 said “Having a happy, positive and nice environment is also very important to me in the workplace because it is always good and fun to be in a good environment.” In a final example, Participant 9 said,
He is very positive and creates a safe environment where I feel supported and no fears. You feel energized because the place that you work with has a positive environment. Having a positive environment at work is very important to me.

**Inducibility.** Inducibility was the second most frequent subtheme mentioned for the major theme *manager-coach and employee psychological processes*. Twelve (67%) participants mentioned this subtheme. This subtheme emerged from one pattern: *setting the basis for cooperation*. Additionally, the pattern, *setting the basis for cooperation*, emerged from one code: *partners’ willingness to show openness*.

Participants offered statements that exemplified the meaning of this subtheme. Some participants mentioned how the manager-coach opened to share personal things with employees, and vice-versa. Participant 2 said,

> If I recall correctly, my manager-coach liked to go over what she did on the weekend with her family and I feel that it was important because it was something of her personal aspect that was going on in her life.

Participant 6 said, “She also likes to talk about personal things like her son traveling to my country. She asked me for advice about what places her son should visited in my country.” Similarly, Participant 8 said, “She talks to me about personal things like family things. She opens up to me and I open up to her. It is like mutual exchange of personal things.” Participant 10 said, “We like to talk to about my performance, strengths, weaknesses, productivity, goals, projects, and special assignments.” Participant 13 explained that,

> He checks on me by asking me questions, such as how have you been? How is your family? I actually learned very much from my manager-coach’s mistakes without experiencing it. My manager-coach likes to take us storytelling to facilitate learning. He likes to tell us stories where he made mistakes so that we can prevent it, so that it will not happen it to me.

**Substitutability.** Substitutability was the third most frequent subtheme mentioned for the major theme *manager-coach and employee psychological processes*. Five (28%) of the 18
participants mentioned this subtheme. This subtheme emerged from two patterns: *accountability* and *responsibility*. The first pattern, *accountability*, emerged from one code: *ownership*. The second pattern, *responsibility*, emerged from two codes: *ability to self-regulate actions*, and *higher level of autonomy*.

Participants gave statements that exemplified the meaning of this subtheme. Some participants reported their experience with accountability. Participant 1 said, “We come early to work and that was how she showed her support.” Participant 9 said, “This is very important for him because if there is an emergency and he is absented from work, we know what to do–ensure that we can function without him being autonomous.” Participant 10 said, “We create a personal action plan to reach my goals where I am accountable for it.”

Other participants experienced a sense of ownership. Participant 17 said, “She supports me on my goal setting by guiding me with small steps and I know that I have to own it.” Participant 4 said, “He wants me to be independent on my task. I feel also more independent to make decisions at work.” In a final example, Participant 10 said, “My manager-coach did not tell me the answers, but rather she asked me questions to reflect and find my own answers – she likes me to be more autonomous thinker and independent.”

**Employee Coaching Outcomes**

The researcher found *employee coaching outcomes* as the last major theme in conducting deductive analysis in Phase I. Some examples that exemplified this major theme were employee increased morale, satisfaction, motivation, and productivity. This major theme contained into one subtheme: *effective interdependence*. Table 20 offers the definitions of this subtheme, and Table 21 shows the subtheme frequencies and percentages.
Table 20. Definition of Subthemes for Theme 8. Employee Coaching Outcomes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subtheme</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Effective interdependence</td>
<td>Effective interdependence is the result of the positive relationship between the manager-coach and employee. The relationship between the manager-coach and employee has grown more positive.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 21. Frequency of Subthemes for Theme 8. Employee Coaching Outcomes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subtheme</th>
<th>Number of Interviews (n = 18)</th>
<th>Percent of 18 Interviews</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Effective interdependence</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>94</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Effective interdependence.** Effective interdependence was the most frequent subtheme mentioned for the major theme employee coaching outcomes. Seventeen (94%) of the 18 participants mentioned this subtheme. This subtheme emerged from one pattern: relationship developed more positive. Additionally, this pattern emerged from eight codes: increased motivation, increased satisfaction, increased morale, increased engagement toward manager and organization, responsibility to attain goals, productivity, willingness to listen and be influenced, and committed to mutual professional development.

Participants gave statements that exemplified the meaning of this subtheme. Some participants mentioned how their relationship with their manager-coach turned to be more positive. Participant 2 said, “She always kept it positive even though I could be wrong. For me, that was reinforcement about feeling free to give my ideas.” Participant 3 said, “You know, all the positive exchange between you and your manager-coach it really helps. You know positive interaction is very important.” Participant 7 said,

I think that having positive interactions is the most valuable in a coaching relationship. You accomplish this by making every interaction between my manager-coach positive.
and myself and by doing the right thing, what we supposed to do. Being in a positive relationship with my manager-coach feels good. Feels good that I am doing my work well.

Also, Participant 12 said, “I feel always comfortable talking to her about anything. I have never had any negative interaction with my manager-coach.” Participant 17 said, “She is positive on her interaction with me. She is like saying, I am going to support you in this invitation for your personal development.”

Some participants commented on their positive experiences pertaining increased morale in the workplace. Participant 10 said, “She is always present and gives me her full attention and that makes me feel important, understood, and valued.” Participant 15 said, “It is not just about being an expert subject matter but also the message of support and encouragement. That makes a huge difference and goes above and beyond the ordinary.” Participant 16 said, “He listens my ideas and inputs and that makes me feel valuable and important at work.”

Some participant expressed their feelings about their increased job satisfaction in the workplace. Participant 9 said,

He always makes sure that morale is high within the team. My boss comments made me feel great and valued- my boss is very supportive and very positive. It feels great to experience that you know because he is positive during our interaction and he is not judgmental. I will never get the special award without the support and help of my manager-coach.

Participant 11 said,

As you get to know more about someone, the respect increases and also the friendship increase. All my interactions with him seemed to be on the positive side. All of these made me feel good because I had respect and admiration for him.

Participant 13 said,

He encouraged me to talk more regardless if I was uncomfortable or not. When he said these things to me I felt great because I always look for things to better myself and for him to be a positive and a critical manager-coach to guide me was very pleasing.
Participant 14 said, “When she said I felt good because she has told me that there were opportunities in the bank for career growth. I appreciate my manager-coach feedback because she cares about my professional development.” Participant 16 expressed that, “All these things make me feel energetic and positive at work. I feel that I belong to the team and it feels pretty good.” Participant 18 said, “We shared mutual good feelings of what we do in our daily routines. It is a sense of fulfillment in the relationship.”

In another exemplified statement, one participant felt more engaged with the manager-coach and organization. Participant 10 said,

I feel more engaged with her and the organization when she shows interest in my career goals and future. When she provides me with tools and other resources to do better my job I feel valued and appreciated at work.

**Phase II. Inductive Approach to Data Analysis**

In Phase II, as mentioned previously, the researcher found two themes. These two themes were *manager-coach and employee relationship process* and *employee coaching growth*. This section presents the findings of the analysis in Phase II, and the section also includes exemplary illustrations from the telephone interviews of the themes and subthemes. This section also presents the definition of all identified subthemes and their frequencies and percentages based on the 18 telephone interviews conducted during data collection.

**Manager-Coach and Employee Relationship**

The researcher found *manager-coach and employee coaching* as a major theme when conducting the inductive analysis in Phase II. This major theme held one subtheme: *relationship between manager-coach and employee relationship process*. Table 22 presents the definitions of this subtheme, and Table 23 shows the subtheme frequencies and percentages.
Table 22. Definition of Subthemes for Theme 1. Manager-Coach and Employee Relationship

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subtheme</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Relationship between manager-coach and employee process</td>
<td>The manager-coach and employee experience a positive professional and personal relationship. Their relationship is built within a relational process of five steps (a) initial relationship, (b) meeting for the first time, (c) quality of the relationship pre-coaching, (d) quality of the relationship post-coaching, and (e) nurture of the relationship.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 23. Frequency of Subthemes for Theme 1. Manager-Coach and Employee Relationship

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subtheme</th>
<th>Number of Interviews</th>
<th>Percent of 18 Interviews</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Relationship between manager-coach and employee process</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Relationship between manager-coach and employee process. Relationship between manager-coach and employee process was the most frequent subtheme mentioned for the major theme manager-coach and employee relationship. All 18 (100%) of the 18 participants mentioned this subtheme. This subtheme emerged from five patterns: initial relationship, meeting for the first time, quality of the relationship pre-coaching, quality of the relationship post-coaching, and nurture of the relationship. The first pattern, initial relationship, emerged from three codes: good relationship, business relationship, and friendly relationship. The second pattern, meeting for the first time, emerged from three codes: transferred, got a promotion, and hired by manager-coach.

The third pattern, quality of the relationship pre-coaching, emerged from three codes: decent relationship, uncertain, but positive relationship, somewhat guarded, and friendly and civil relationship. The fourth pattern, quality of the relationship post-coaching, emerged from
three codes: relationship become great, become friends and closer due to our relationship, and sharing a rewarding relationship. The fifth pattern, nurture of the relationship, emerged from five codes: communication, staying connected, partnership, manager-coach’s positivity, and practicing open policy.

Participants provided statements that exemplified the meaning of this subtheme. Some participants described their initial relationship with the manager-coach. Participant 1 said,

Initially, the relationship was like employer and employee since she was my charge nurse. She makes the task assignments and I take direction from her. In the beginning, we did not have a personal relationship, but a business relationship instead.

Participant 2 said, “Initially, our relationship was okay, and I would describe it as guarded because it was a new relationship and a new setting, and she was kind of supervising me to ensure I do things correctly.” Participant 11 said,

Initially, my relationship with him was very friendly. He was very approachable. I felt a little intimidated with his knowledge because he had 15+ years more experience than I. Overall, I feel comfortable around him. The relationship with him was very good even though from the beginning.

Participant 14 said, “When we met for the first time, I would say that our relationship was at ease like co-workers or equals.” Participant 3 said,

The quality of the relationship initially was good. We started treating each other with respect and fairness from day one. He is a good boss. When we just met, he was very focused, honest, engaging, very respectful, and he listens my opinions.

Participant 10 said,

Initially, when we met at work, I felt like we clicked because she showed concern and interest about my career goals, she wanted to know all about to help me to remove any barriers to reach my career goals with more clarity and confidence.

Participant 12 said,

All starts at the senior leadership. First, you need to know your employees in order to build a positive manager-coach employee relationship. The whole process starts from
senior leadership by knowing their employees and people in order to build successful relationships. It is important to build a manager-coach employee relationship from the very beginning so that employees can have support from day one and not wait for the employee to make mistakes to start coaching to improve performance. By doing this, organizations will have more confident and autonomous employees.

Participant 15 said,

Well, this person is my boss and we had a very good relationship. He was very experienced in human resources. I was able to really learn a lot from him. He was very eager and willing to help me with my professional development.

Participant 16 explained,

Initially, the relationship with my supervisor was pretty good, and got even better after a few months of working together. I think that the most important thing in this relationship was getting to know each other, mutual trust, and rapport.

Participant 8 said,

I have been working with my manager-coach for 12 years. We work in the financial services. Initially, the relationship was kind of serious, but later the relationship changed and become friendly and I started liking my manager-coach. In the beginning of the relationship I did not know her and she did not know me.

Some participants described their experiences when they met their manager-coaches for the first time. Participant 1 said, “She was my charge nurse when I worked in the ER night shift. We met when I was transferred to work in the ER and she was the manager for the ER night shift.” Participant 3 said,

I am his right hand. I take care of everything he assigns me to do. It is more that type of relationship. We have been working together for 10 to 12 years. The relationship with my manager-coach started when he hired me.

Participant 6 said, “The relationship began when she actually interviewed me and hired me for an open position in the laboratory.” Participant 10 said, “The relationship with my manager-coach is fantastic. We are very close to each other. It is friendly and pleasant. My manager- and I met two years ago when she hired me as a front desk.”
Some participants reflected on their relationships with their manager-coaches before they experienced coaching. Participant 1 said, “The relationship was good. I was very respectful to her because she was my boss, and she was respectful to me as well.” Participant 2 said, “taking in consideration that I was a new clinical professional I was somehow guarded initially, but my supervisor was very friendly and civil.” Participant 3 said, “The relationship is always being good. I have learned a lot from him because of his vast experience in the field.” Participant 4 said, “The relationship was okay in the beginning. We needed to develop trust at first. The relationship developed well overtime.” Also, Participant 5 said, “I have always had a very good relationship with my manager-coach. So, mutual respect for each other is very important in the relationship.” Participant 6 said, “The first time I met her I had the feeling that she would be a great boss. We have a good relationship quality.” Participant 10 said,

The relationship with her started developing when we got to know each other at work and outside work. She likes to promote camaraderie and bonding, and having positive interaction, which I think it was very important because I feel engaged to her and the organization.

Participant 16 said, “It was good and we both could work together from the beginning.”

Participant 17 said, “It is good and only gets stronger. I think our relationship feels pretty good.’

Participant 14 said, “At first, I think that our relationship was just ordinary because I did not know her and she did not know me either. In the beginning of the relationship we did not have closeness.” Participant 15 said,

The relationship has been always very professional. In the beginning, I did not know my manager-coach. But, when I recognized that my manager-coach genuinely care about my professional development and my growth, then I think that it creates trust and it creates loyalty and most importantly it makes you to reciprocate.

Some participants reflected on their relationships with their manager-coaches after they experienced coaching. Participant 2 said,
The relationship got much better as we were progressing with my development. So getting to know my supervisor and by my supervisor getting to know me our relationship got better. Getting to know each other was very important in building our relationship. My supervisor was a very trusted person.

Participant 3 said, “After I experienced coaching, the relationship become excellent.” Participant 5 said, “We get along very well together, so it is a happy feeling.” Participant 7 expressed, “After I experienced the positive results of coaching, we had more interaction daily and become more friends. Also, I felt more connected with her and closer.”

Also, Participant 14 said, “After coaching, we started talking and talking more often. My relationship with my manager-coach actually improved after coaching.” Participant 15 said, “After I experienced coaching, the relationship was very good. It went from being a boss-manager relationship to more even a friendship.” Participant 16 said, “Our relationship become awesome. We got closer and actually have an excellent relationship. I completely trust him and the other way around--he also trusts me--mutual trust and friendship.”

Some participants mentioned their experiences with nurturing the coaching relationship with their manager-coaches. Participant 2 said,

My supervisor cultivated our relationship by being there for me at every shift that I worked, and she also had me to work every shift she worked. We used to come to work early to talk about personal things and build rapport between each other. Then, we focused on the work aspect until the end of the shift.

Participant 3 said,

The relationship is cultivated and maintained through an open-policy. We feel very proud that when anyone in the office has a problem, anyone can openly talk to our manager-coach. I feel good about it because you feel welcomed by your manager-coach. It feels positive that you can talk to about any challenges in the office while in other companies you cannot do that.
Participant 5 said,

We cultivate our relationship by having mutual communication. Every morning we meet and have kind of round table discussion where other coworkers and people are presented to have a little discussion about a previous workday, occurrences overnight, or things you know we need to do today. It is a very positive type of communication that set the tone for the day.

Participant 6 said, “The relationship with my manager-coach is good. We have good communication.” Participant 7 said,

The manager-coach needs to be very positive. The manager-coach needs to create a positive and safe environment where employees can speak up without fear and judgment. The manager-coach needs to be respectful and work in partnership with employees.

Participant 12 said, “My manager-coach develops our relationship by being approachable. I feel that I can call her at any time during the day.” Participant 13 said, “Our relationship is cultivated by just talking every day. Daily interaction is fundamental to build successful relationships. Getting to know each other at the personal level and professional level is also very important.” In a final example, Participant 16 said,

The relationship is cultivated by receiving continued support from supervisor. I think that social support is very important – I mean having someone there for you, someone who you can always talk openly and share personal things.

**Employee Coaching Growth**

The researcher identified *employee coaching growth* as the second and last major theme when conducting an inductive analysis in Phase II. This major theme contained four subthemes: *employee development, process interdependence, goal interdependence, and task interdependence*. Further, the subtheme *employee development* emerged from the inductive data analysis (Phase II). The other subthemes *goal interdependence, process interdependence*, and *task interdependence* were identified within the deductive analysis (Phase I) and added into the major theme *employee coaching growth*. The subthemes from Phase I helped the researcher to
expand the second and emerging major theme in the inductive analysis (Phase II) as recommended by Feraday and Muir-Cochrane (2006). The definition of this subtheme is presented in Table 24, and Table 25 shows the subtheme frequencies and percentages from the 18 telephone interviews.

Table 24. Definition of Subthemes for Theme 2. Employee Coaching Growth

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subtheme</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Employee development</td>
<td>The manager-coach and employee hold positive formal and informal coaching conversations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Phase II. data-driven)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goal interdependence</td>
<td>The manager-coach and employee share mutual agency and workload to achieve their common goal.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Phase I. theory-driven)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Process interdependence</td>
<td>The manager-coach and employee coordinate their efforts by interconnecting their roles and skills.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Phase I. theory-driven)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Task interdependence</td>
<td>Provides a structure for mutual task reciprocation between the manager-coach and employee. The manager-coach uses task interdependence to assess employee’s strengths.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Phase I. theory-driven)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 25. Frequency of Subthemes for Theme 7. Employee Coaching Growth

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subtheme</th>
<th>Number of Interviews (n = 18)</th>
<th>Percent of 18 Interviews</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Employee development</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Process interdependence</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goal interdependence</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Task interdependence</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Employee Development.** *Employee development* was the most frequent subtheme mentioned for the major theme *employee coaching growth*. Sixteen (89%) of the 18 participants mentioned this subtheme. This subtheme emerged from one pattern: *coaching conversations*. Additionally, this pattern emerged from five codes: *role transition, training, career development, performance*, and *professional certification*. 

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Participants gave statements that exemplified the meaning of this subtheme. Some participant reflected on the coaching conversation held with their manager-coaches. Participant 4 said, “There was a time when we had a conversation to be certified safety professional. I had to take about 30 courses. He gave me all the motivation needed to finish this certification.”

Participant 7 said,

My manager-coach taught me how to interact with customers. She said having a good interaction with the customer is based on just being very positive. Basically, it is important to give compliments to customers. My manager-coach always showed care about my development. She likes to praise me or gives me compliments when I do a good job. We also had one-on-one meetings to talk about my development.

Participant 14 said,

My manager-coach has been always supported to me. Yes, I have an example. I had communication struggle at work. When I talk to customers seems like I do not let the customers to finish talking, which creates misunderstandings. My manager-coach observed this bad habit that I had and gave me a constructive feedback.

In a final example, Participant 17 said,

We had a conversation about my performance. My manager-coach one time she said to me hey we need to talk. This is not a successful pattern. It is her responsibility to call it out, and it is my responsibility to fix it.

**Process interdependence.** Process interdependence was the second most frequent subtheme mentioned for the major theme employee coaching growth. Six (33%) of the 18 participants mentioned this subtheme. This subtheme emerged from one pattern: interconnection of partners’ roles and skills. Additionally, this pattern emerged from two codes: access to resources, and information to accomplish tasks.

Participants provided statements that exemplified the meaning of this subtheme. Participants shared their experiences about having access to resources to do their job. Participant 3 said, “He showed care for my professional development by sending me for training to develop
my skills.” Participant 4 said, “He supports me by giving me the resources and things that I need to do my job.” Participant 10 said, “She facilitates my development by giving me resources and doing weekly check-ups on my progress. Outside work, she likes to treat each team member for lunch.”

Some participants commented on how manager-coaches and employees complemented each other’s roles and skills. Participant 8 said, “It is very important that the manager-coach has the expertise of my job and has experienced my job so that understand the process.” Participant 18 said,

For what my manager-coach does at work requires different skills in comparison with what I do at work, but we are able to complement each other. It is like we are ham and eggs, or peanut and butter and jelly. One without the other is incomplete. This is the nature of the relationship. What I bring to the table, he may be a little weaken person on that, which is normal because no every person knows everything. That being said, I bring the cheeseburger and he brings the French fries. We are complementary.

**Goal interdependence.** *Goal interdependence* was the third most frequent subtheme mentioned for the major theme *employee coaching growth*. Four (22%) of the 18 participants mentioned this subtheme. This subtheme emerged from one pattern: mutual causation of outcomes. Additionally, this pattern emerged from one code: *shared workload*.

Participants provided statements that exemplified the meaning of this subtheme. Participants mentioned their experiences about sharing the workload with the manager-coach. Participant 2 said, “We shared the load of patients and started our shift making rounds to patients.” Participant 4 said, “We work well together by having mutual understanding of what needs to be done.” In a final example, Participant 5 shared that, “It is all about being mutual”.

**Task interdependence.** *Task interdependence* was the fourth most frequent subtheme mentioned for the major theme *employee coaching growth*. Four (22%) of the 18 participants
mentioned this subtheme. This subtheme emerged from two patterns: structural factor and developmental tool. Additionally, the first pattern emerged from one code: reciprocation between manager-coach and employee. The second pattern emerged from one code: finding employee’s strengths.

Participants provided statements that exemplified the meaning of this subtheme. Some participants observed behavioral reciprocation when they worked with the manager-coach. Participant 5 said, “I think that the most important on working together with my manager-coach is to experience a sense of collaboration, cooperation and coordination.” Participant 8 said, “We work together very well.” Participant 9 said, “We work really well together.”

One participant shared how task interdependence was a tool to find her strengths. Participant 8 said, “Sometimes the control department makes mistakes on their reports and I am the one who find those mistakes. My manager-coach trusts me and stands by my side when I found these mistakes from the quality control department.”

Summary

Chapter 4 offered a detailed presentation of the qualitative data and results of theoretical thematic analysis. This exploratory qualitative study identified the factors that led to successful manager-coach employee relationships in organizational settings by using the employee beliefs. Chapter 4 summarized the study findings collected from 18 telephone interviews and derived from textual data.

To answer the research question, the researcher identified a total of eight themes. In Phase I, the researcher used deductive analysis to identify six themes: (a) manager-coach and employee interdependence; (b) manager-coach person-set, (c) manager-coach and employee partnership, (d) manager-coach role, (e) manager-coach and employee psychological processes,
and (f) employee coaching outcomes. In Phase II, the researcher used inductive analysis to identify two themes: (a) manager-coach and employee relationship process and (b) employee coaching growth. Chapter 5 includes a summary of the results from Chapter 4, a discussion of the results, conclusions based on the results, a comparison of findings with the theoretical framework and previous literature, limitations of the study, implications for practice, recommendations for future research, and a final conclusion.
CHAPTER 5. DISCUSSION, IMPLICATIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS

Chapter 5 presents the overall evaluation and interpretation of the study results. The purpose of this exploratory qualitative research was to explore employee beliefs about the factors that lead to an effective manager coach-employee relationship. The researcher answered the research question by identifying employee beliefs of factors leading to an effective manager coach-employee coaching relationship. Organizations can use the results of this research to implement effective manager coach-employee coaching relationship programs that may aid recruitment and retention of top employees to create positive organizational outcomes and support continued growth. The purpose of Chapter 5 is to evaluate and discuss the results and offer recommendations for future research. This chapter includes (a) a summary of the results, (b) a discussion of the results, (c) the conclusions based on the results, (d) limitations, (e) implications of the study, (f) recommendations for future research, and (g) a conclusion.

Summary of the Results

McCarthy and Milner (2013) found that manager-coaches face difficulties building positive relationships with their direct reports. The authors reported that manager-coaches lack the knowledge and the ability to behave appropriately to construct positive coaching relationships with their employees. A review of the literature indicated that, in previous quantitative studies, researchers have not been able to fully capture the factors associated with effective coaching relationships that contribute to successful coaching outcomes. Also, some
researchers have called for research to find the critical components of effective coaching relationships (Grant, 2014; Gregory & Levy, 2010, 2012, Joo et al., 2012; O’Broin, 2016; Spaten et al., 2016). Therefore, the purpose of this exploratory qualitative research was to explore employee beliefs about the factors that lead to an effective manager coach-employee relationship.

This study was significant to the employee coaching relationship phenomenon for two reasons. First, the literature review indicated there was a lack of peer-reviewed articles associated with factors associated with effective employee coaching relationships. In fact, in a review of the literature on the employee coaching relationship, the researcher only found three articles related to this topic (Gregory & Levy, 2010, 2011, 2012). Second, the phenomenon of employee coaching relationships lacked a theoretical foundation (Gabriel et al., 2014). Therefore, the researcher sought to provide greater understanding about the phenomenon of employee coaching relationships by using the lens of SIT (Deutsch, 1949a; Johnson & Johnson, 2009; Kelley & Thibaut, 1978).

The most recent literature on employee coaching relationships (O’Broin, 2016; Spaten et al., 2016) and multidisciplinary studies on coaching (de Haan, Grant, Burger, & Eriksson, 2016; Grant, 2016) highlighted the need for more empirical studies and a theoretical foundation for understanding the coaching relationship phenomenon. The results of the literature review about employee coaching relationships, presented in Chapter 2, concurred with the most recent research interest on the topic. Therefore, there exists a clear consensus between the review of the literature conducted in Chapter 2 and the most recent research interest in addressing the need for finding what constitutes an effective coaching relationship (O’Broin, 2016).
The researcher used a qualitative exploratory research design. The researcher conducted a theoretical thematic analysis to answer the research question, which the researcher posed to determine the factors that employees believe lead to an effective manager-coach employee relationship. The researcher recruited 18 research participants through LinkedIn and collected data via telephone interviews. Theoretical thematic analysis (Percy et al., 2015) allowed the researcher to interpret the phenomenon of employee coaching relationships in organizational settings. As a result, the researcher identified a total of eight themes that allowed the researcher to answer the research question. The researcher identified six themes through deductive analysis (Phase I), and two themes emerged during inductive analysis (Phase II).

**Discussion of the Results**

This section presents the interpretation and discussion of the study results. The interpretation of the results was based on the unique participant responses. Participant beliefs about their coaching relationship experiences with their manager-coaches were the main sources for data interpretation. Additionally, the researcher used SIT (Deutsch, 1949a; Johnson & Johnson, 2009; Kelley & Thibaut, 1978) to create the conceptual framework that the researcher employed to offer a theoretical foundation for data interpretation. The researcher’s knowledge and professional experience also influenced the interpretation of the results. Direct quotes support the analysis of the results.

The researcher answered the research question by identifying eight interdependent developmental coaching relationship process themes. The eight themes were (a) manager-coach employee positive interdependence, (b) manager-coach person-set, (c) manager-coach role-set, (d) manager-coach and employee partnership, (e) manager-coach and employee psychological processes, (f) manager-coach and employee relationship process, (g) employee coaching growth,
and (h) employee coaching outcomes. Figure 10 shows the interdependent developmental coaching relationship process.

![Interdependent developmental coaching relationship process](image)

**Figure 10.** Interdependent developmental coaching relationship process.

**Theme 1. Manager-Coach and Employee Positive Interdependence**

Theme 1 in this study was a positive reciprocal relationship between the manager-coach and the employee based on positive interdependence, cooperation, and positive interactions. Data analysis indicated positive interdependence was an antecedent for establishing an effective manager-coach and employee relationship. The participants in the current study believed that the manager-coach and the employee were positive and interdependent individuals; therefore, the two antecedents for an effective manager-coach and employee relationship were (a) the manager-coach, and (b) the employee. Similarly, Fausing et al. (2015) found that interdependence was a predictor of effective shared leadership in business settings. Fausing et al. found that interdependence related positively to leader and employee performance.
Positive interdependence was perceived as the foundation of the relationship. Participants reported the positive interdependence experience between a manager-coach and an employee was the foundation of their relationships because it occurred during every stage of the relationships. All 18 participants experienced and established positive interdependent relationships with their manager-coaches in organizational settings. Participant 8 mentioned, “She guides me to reach my goals more efficiently. I do not see anything negative about having a manager-coach and employee relationship.” Participant 2 said, “I experienced positive feelings because I was learning a lot and becoming a better clinical person. She was naturally positive and very friendly person who you can talk to. My experience was definitely positive.” The researcher derived this major theme from three subthemes: positive social interdependence, cooperation, and positive interaction.

**Positive social interdependence.** This subtheme captured the positive and committed interdependent actions displayed by the manager-coaches and employees as they fostered mutual goals. Four (22%) of the 18 participants reported positive interdependent experiences when they worked to achieve their goals. The manager-coaches and the employees were committed to interdependent success. Both the manager-coaches and employees practiced positive interdependent actions to ensure achievement of common goals. This positive interdependent experience also occurred during every stage of the relationships. Participant 6 said,

He likes me to better myself and to better manage the business. So it is training and self-development. I feel good when he does that. It is like a team effort because both him and me want to succeed to get the business going and expand.

**Cooperation.** This subtheme captured the positive interdependent experiences of the manager-coaches and employees as they worked together because they held similar developmental interests to reach common goals. Cooperation was likely the foundation for
establishing a positive, interdependent relationship between the manager-coaches and employees. Three (17%) of the 18 participants understood that cooperation was a necessary condition for an effective and positive interdependent relationship. For example, Participant 2 said:

> I definitely think that it has to be a sort of a program where the manager or supervisor is interested in to coach his or her employees and also find employees who are interested in being coached because I think that mutual interest is very important for a successful coaching relationship.

**Positive interaction.** This subtheme captured the positive interdependent experience of the manager-coach and employee about sociable interactions at work. Two (11%) of the 18 participants reported that the manager-coaches and employees positively influenced each other by displaying interdependent sociable behaviors in their interactions. As reported by the participants, the manager-coaches and the employees practiced sociable and positive patterns of interactions during the development of the relationship. For example, Participant 2 said, “Being sociable I think is also very important because good interaction needs to be in a positive manner on a daily basis in order to be successful for both the supervisor and me as a new employee.”

**Theme 2. Manager-Coach Person-Set**

In the current study, the researcher defined the manager-coach person-set theme as the manager-coach’s personal characteristics. The participants reported their manager-coaches seemed like a positive and mutually dependent individual with the employees. Also, as described by the participants, the manager-coaches’ personal characteristics positively influenced interaction with the employees. This meant that the manager-coach had unique and personal characteristics that allowed them to build positive and effective relationships with the employees. Additionally, the manager-coach person-set theme was based on three subthemes:
interdependent individual, behavior interdependence, and cognitive interdependence. Finally, as reported by the participants, Theme 2 positively influenced the development of an effective manager-coach employee relationship. All 18 participants described their manager-coaches as positive and interdependent people. For example, Participant 22 said,

My manager is very supportive. She is very communicative, she is very friendly and amicable and a good person in general. She is very caring with me and other employees. She listens very well and she is interested in my ideas on how to make improvements. She respects diversity and is inclusive. She always seeks common interest when we interact with each other. She is open-minded and respects one’s experience and background. She respects me for who I am and she behaves in a way that shows her interest in diversity and inclusion. She believes in the power of diversity and inclusion because she says it creates a healthier work environment because team members feel accepted and valued.

**Interdependent individual.** This subtheme captured the manager-coaches’ positive experiences as they relied on and stayed connected with the employee to accomplish mutual goals. The participants described how their manager-coaches were employee-interdependent oriented; manager-coaches connected both socially and professionally with their employees. The manager-coaches were also attentive to employees’ feelings, thoughts, and needs. 16 participants out of 18 reported they stayed connected with their manager-coaches daily. Participant 12 said,

When we work together, we communicate through a phone call or text. We just like to text to each other to find out how we are doing. For example, my manager-coach likes to text me to see how I am doing and I like to text her too to see how she is doing.

These results were consistent with previous research related to manager-coach attitudes toward employees. Gabriel at al. (2014) and Gregory (2010) reported manager-coaches showed empathy when they interacted with employees. Other researchers found that the manager-coach was employee-oriented and had concern for employee needs, feelings, and thoughts (Axmith, 1982; Chiniara & Bentein, 2016; Gabriel et al., 2014; Gregory, 2010; Jordan et al., 2016; Jowett, 2003; Kilburg, 2001; Mahsud et al., 2010; Stowell, 1988).
**Behavior interdependence.** As reported by the participants, the behavior interdependence subtheme captured the manager-coaches’ positive experiences using team behaviors when interacted with the employees. Thirteen (72%) of the 18 participants reported they experienced positive interdependent team-behaviors when they interacted with their manager-coaches. For example, Participant 2 said, “We teamed-up. If we had downtime, we would go over policies and procedures to review them.” The manager-coaches, thus, had a team approach when they worked together with the employee to reach mutual goals. Additionally, as mentioned by the participants, the manager-coach was a positive and mutually dependent person who practiced behavior interdependence and had interdependent thinking.

**Cognitive interdependence.** This subtheme captured the manager-coach’s partner-oriented positive thinking. Five (27%) of the 18 participants reported that their manager-coaches’ ways of thinking focused positively on their relationships as close interdependent partnerships. This type of interdependent positive thinking was a pattern of interaction displayed by the manager-coaches daily. For example, Participant 9 said, “We work like partners. We work very well together; it is a sort of interdependence. We complement each other.” Similarly, Participant 4 described a close and committed partnership between the manager-coach and the employee: “Because I know I can share things with him anytime, and I know that he can share things with me anytime, too.”

**Theme 3. Manager-Coach Role-Set**

The researcher defined the manager-coach role-set theme as positive actions taken by the manager-coach to support and advocate for employee development and well-being. Participants explained how the manager-coach role-set positively influenced the development of an effective manager-coach employee relationship. Theme 3 captured the set of positive interdependent
characteristics of the manager-coach as an interdependent positive relational leader. An effective manager-coach acts as an interdependent, positive relational leader to support and advocate for an employee’s development and well-being in the organization. The manager-coach role-set was based on two subthemes: *interdependent situation* and *promotive interaction*. All 18 participants described how their manager-coaches advocated for and supported employee well-being. For example, Participant 22 said,

She lets you know what she expects and give you feedback. You will never feel like a personal attack. We maintain the relationship by being transparent to each other. She does not pretend things, she does not minimize things, and she is honest instead. We really both value honesty and integrity. Authenticity is very important even though you have to deliver bad news. She is receptive to feedback too. She says okay. Oh wow! I did not realize that. We have two ways and honest communication. Mutual respect, I am respected as a person. I respect her and she respects me. I feel supported because I know she is there for me. I check with her every Thursday every other week. If I need something, I just reach out to her. It is like you have a partner.

**Interdependent situation.** Interdependent situation emerged as a subtheme as part of the major theme of manager-coach role-set. Participants described how positive, interdependent experiences led to manager-coach acts of assessing and addressing the employee’s needs. Participants described how manager-coaches also displayed positive pro-social behaviors to address employee needs when they interacted with employees. This subtheme was a core factor in manager-coach employee relationships because interdependent situations functioned as the backbone for building and rebuilding coaching relationships.

The positive outcome of the interdependent situations between manager-coaches and employees led to effective and interdependent relationships. All 18 participants reported they experienced positive outcomes from interdependent situations with their manager-coaches. Also, the participants reported they experienced positive, pro-social behaviors, which were exhibited by their manager-coaches. Participant 6 said, “She was asking me how I want my nametag and
how I prefer the layout of my office. She also asked me if I have special requirements and necessities like that.” Participant 1 commented on how their manager-coach addressed self-actualization needs. Participant 1 said,

She always showed care about my professional needs. She had a self-assessment checklist to measure my clinical skills. There was stuff that I needed to learn and grow on it, and she helped me with it. I experienced positive feelings because I was learning a lot and becoming a better clinical person. Also, I developed a class to teach and she guided me through that by reviewing my outlines.

**Promotive interaction.** This subtheme captured the positive interdependent experiences of the employees when their manager-coaches acted in ways that supported employees at work. Participants described how positive interdependent experiences between employees and manager-coaches developed mutual trust and mutual influencing behaviors. This subtheme was a core factor in the relationships because it functioned as a second backbone for building and rebuilding the manager-coach employee relationships.

The positive outcome of promotive interactions between manager-coaches and employees also led to effective interdependent relationships. All 18 participants reported they experienced positive outcomes through promotive interactions with their manager-coaches. Participant 12 said, “This is like a mutual check in, like a reciprocal interest in how we are doing at work.” Participant 15 said, “It goes both ways. A good relationship works both ways. It has mutual benefits.”

Previous researchers found similar results. For example, as pointed out by several researchers, effective manager-coaches practiced supportive behaviors toward employees (Baron & Morin, 2009; Chiniara & Bentein, 2016; Gabriel et al., 2014; Jowett, 2003; Ladyshewsky, 2010; Marsh, 1992; Orth et al., 1987; Minter & Thomas, 2000). Additionally, Mace (1950) found that manager-coaches practiced pro-social behaviors toward employees. In a sports coaching
relationship study, Freeman et al. (2014) found that coaches addressed self-esteem needs of athletes. Similarly, the results of this study found that effective manager-coaches addressed self-esteem needs, belonging needs, and self-actualization needs of employees.

**Theme 4. Manager-Coach and Employee Partnership**

Participants described how the manager-coach employee partnership positively affected the development of effective manager-coach employee relationships. Theme 4 captured the set of positive interdependent partnership behaviors manager-coaches and employees used to enhance their relationships. Participants reported how manager-coaches and employees built their relationships based on positive, interdependent partnerships. Participants described how each day their manager-coaches helped create interdependent positive partnership behaviors. Theme 4 was based on five subthemes: *interdependent partners, group processing skills, joint control interdependence, outcome interdependence, and social skills*. All 18 participants reported they experienced positive interdependent partnership behaviors with their manager-coaches.

Participant 2 said,

> I feel great that I could have a personal and professional one-on-one relationship with my supervisor. It was a totally new experience. It was something that I would not experience in my normal life. I feel so good that I could have an experienced supervisor who works with me and cares about my development.

**Interdependent partner.** The participants reported that they felt they were interdependent partners with their manager-coaches. Some behavioral examples were regular communication, working together toward the future, keeping promises, discussing problems, common courtesy, and showing integrity. Participant 9 shared how they addressed problems with the manager-coach as, “You know sometimes you have personal issues and need to speak with someone who you can trust, and my manager-coach is there for me.”

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Group processing skills. This subtheme captured the positive interdependent experience of the employee and manager-coach when they displayed mutual respect and when they reflected together toward how they could work on shared goals. Eleven (61%) of the 18 participants reported that receiving respect from their manager-coach was important because it made them feel valued. Participants also reported that mutual reflection behaviors, such as asking questions to stimulate employee critical thinking, were important because they enhanced their autonomy for decision-making and problem-solving at work. Participant 2 said,

My supervisor also always treated me with respect, and I think that it was very important for both parties; mutual respect validates you as a person and as a professional and allows you to devote your energy better at work.

Joint control interdependence. This subtheme captured the positive interdependent experiences of the employees with their manager-coaches when they shared equal and complete control of their partnership by making mutual behavioral adjustments. This subtheme was important because it showed how power was equally distributed manager-coach and employee partnerships. Furthermore, 9 (50%) of the 18 participants reported how their manager-coach made behavioral adjustments to reach common ground on goal decisions. Participant 8 said, “We agree to disagree when we have conversations to get the job done.” Participant 17 said, “She made adjustments in the process in 24 hours. She and I made adjustments in the process. It was like mutual adjustment.”

Outcome interdependence. Participants described how their managers achieved outcome interdependence. Outcome interdependence occurred when the manager-coach and the employee held similar perceptions about what needed to be done to achieve mutual goals. This subtheme was important because it showed how the manager-coaches and employees approached mutual tasks. Eleven (61%) of the 18 participants reported how their managers
communicated, rewarded, and measured mutual tasks toward a common goal. For example, Participant 5 said,

> We maintain our relationship very positive. My manager-coach and I worked together with quite few projects. These are individual projects that I put together and then my manager-coach reviews it. We are always on the same page; share similar understanding on what needs to be done.

**Social skills.** Participants described how their manager coaches’ social skills added to positive outcomes. This subtheme captured the positive interdependent experiences of the employees and manager-coaches, especially when they were getting to know each other by self-disclosing and being open. This subtheme was important because it showed how manager-coaches and employees sustained their relationships by getting to know each other. Eleven (61%) of the 18 participants reported their manager-coaches shared personal and professional information via formal and informal coaching conversations. Also, some participants reported their manager-coaches got to know them to assess their strengths and weaknesses. For example, Participant 8 said,

> We are friends. She actually shares both personal information and professional information. We actually mutually respect our working relationship. I feel good about it. I feel good that we can share personal information and I considered her as a good friend. We get along very well together, so it is a happy feeling. Mutual respect between each other is a good feeling.

Similarly, some researchers reported partnerships between manager-coaches and employees (Evered & Selman, 1989; Fernandez et al., 2010; Jowett, Kanakoglou, et al., 2012; Kowalski & Casper, 2007). In a study on executive coaching relationships, for example, Jowett, Kanakoglou, et al. (2012) reported that coaches and athletes developed close partnerships. The results of the current study, thus, concurred with the development of partnerships.
Theme 5. Manager-Coach and Employee Psychological Processes

Participants described situations where manager-coach and employee psychological processes aided the development of effective manager-coach employee relationships. Theme 5 captured the set of positive interdependent behaviors manager-coaches and employees used to show positive energy, positive feelings, and positive attitudes to enhance their relationships. This major theme captured the positive energy, feelings, and attitudes of manager-coaches toward employees, and vice-versa. This theme was important because the mutual positive influence displayed by manager-coaches and employees enhanced their partnerships and, ultimately, developed positive relationships. The researcher based the theme on three subthemes: *cathexis*, *inducibility*, and *substitutability*. Ten (56%) of the 18 participants experienced psychological processes with their manager-coach. Participant 8 said,

> I do not see anything negative about having a coach-manager and employee relationship. My manager-coach and I challenge each other. She challenges me and I challenge her with the mistakes made by the quality control department. I think that challenging each other is positive because we learn from each other. It is a mutual learning experience. She gives me feedback and I give her my feedback, as well. This is a good thing because it is fun at work. I think that the most valuable thing is respect for each other. Being respected by my manager-coach makes me feel a sense of fulfillment. That shows you that you are important and not only an employee with a number. She is always there for me to help me to reach my goals.

**Cathexis.** Participant responses indicated cathexis positively influenced the relationship with their manager-coach. Cathexis was defined as the positive relational energy manager-coaches and employees showed when they interacted with each other. This subtheme was important because it captured how manager-coaches built positive atmospheres at work, so employees felt comfortable at work, enjoyed their jobs, and were willing to develop and grow. Thirteen (72%) of the 18 participants believed they experienced cathexis at work. Participant 13 said, “His personality sparks energy and makes work fun and creates a positive environment. He
likes to make jokes and he is very charismatic. My manager-coach inspires me just by being a
great role model.”

**Inducibility.** This subtheme captured the positive interdependent experiences of the employees and their manager-coaches when they showed openness to influence each other to set the basis for cooperation. As reported by the participants, this subtheme was important because the manager-coach and employee took some risks to show vulnerability to build trust and, consequently, sustain the development of their relationship. By showing vulnerability, the manager-coaches and employees shared their mutual interests and set the basis for cooperation. Twelve (67%) of the 18 participants believed they experienced inducibility with their manager-coaches. For example, Participant 15 noted:

> You cannot be a good coach if you cannot listen. Listening skills is just a given. If you do not take risk getting closer in the relationship, the dead of the relationship only go so far. So taking risks to build connection and rapport with your manager was important to build the relationship and make it works. If we have never done it this way, the relationship will not flourish. The relationship grows within risk; you need to ask yourself why this relationship exists? Just because I care about you as a person, just because I care about you as a professional, I care about your growth, and you ask people to interact in a more intimate way. That is what successful working relationships are. If you want to be successful you have to have a greater level of openness and intimacy. Obviously, this type of working relationship does not entail a romantic relationship point of view. But you are asking both parties in the relationship to be more vulnerable. Overall, good working relationships are good things in organizations. You just need to make sure that people are doing the right thing and focus on how to make the person very successful.

**Substitutability.** This subtheme captured the positive interdependent experiences of the employees and manager-coaches when they (a) showed responsibility and accountability behaviors in their relationships and (b) shared common goals. This subtheme was important because the positive interdependent behaviors of responsibility and accountability enhanced the development of the relationships between the manager-coaches and employees. Five (28%) of the 18 participants believed they experienced substitutability with their manager-coaches. For
example, Participant 10 said, “We create a personal action plan to reach my goals where I am accountable for it.” Similarly, Participant 17 said, “She supports me on my goal setting by guiding me with small steps, and I know that I have to own it.”

Similarly, some researchers reported the positive influence of relational positive energy in coaching (Cremona, 2010; Jordan et al., 2016; Utrilla et al., 2015; Stinglhamber & Vandenberghe, 2003). The results of the current study concurred with the findings of earlier research on the influence of positive energy in coaching. In a coaching relationship study, for example, Cremona (2010) found positive emotions, enjoyable work experiences, and having fun at work positively impacted the coaching relationship. The results of the current study, thus, mirrored that the manager-coach’s relational energy positively impacted the coaching relationships with employees.

**Theme 6. Manager-Coach and Employee Relationship**

Theme 6 was likely the core theme of this study. The researcher defined the manager-coach and employee relationship theme as a positive, professional, and personal relationship between the manager-coach and employee developed in organizational settings. This core theme also captured how the manager-coach and employee relationship developed over time. Development of the manager-coach and employee relationships occurred because of positive influence. Positive influence emerged from five other themes discussed previously, which were (a) manager-coach and employee positive interdependence, (b) manager-coach person-set, (c) manager-coach role-set, (d) manager-coach and employee partnership, and (f) manager-coach and employee psychological processes. Figure 10 depicts the positive and interdependent influences of the five factors on the core theme *manager-coach and employee relationship.*
This researcher based the core theme *manager-coach and employee relationships* on a subtheme, *the manager-coach and employee relationship process*. All 18 participants believed they experienced positive interdependent developmental coaching relationships with their manager-coaches. For example, Participant 9 said,

> Well, it feels great to have a manager-coach that you can open up and share your ideas and feelings. Someone who can work with you, and coaches you it is for sure a positive feeling. You know, I had a previous manager and she was something. She did not know what she was doing. But with my new manager, everybody in the team likes him. Sometimes you can see that he could get upset, but he controls his feelings. He is able to manage his own feelings. For example, when we had customers that complaint, he could get upset, but he is able to control his emotions. One time, we had a customer very upset and my manager-coach asked me to help him by taking care of the complaint for him. It is funny because stuff like that he prefers me to handle it. The working relationship with him is very nice because we know each other’s strengths and weaknesses and we complement each other.

**The manager-coach and employee relationship process.** This subtheme captured the positive interdependent developmental coaching relationship process experienced by the manager-coaches and employees over time. This subtheme was important because the participants described the developmental progression of the coaching relationship between manager-coaches and employees. As reported by all participants, the development of the employee coaching relationship took time, and there were some situational, relational stages. This subtheme involved five positive interdependent relational stages. The five stages were (a) meeting for the first time, (b) the initial relationship, (c) the quality of the relationship before coaching, (d) the quality of the relationship after coaching, and (e) nurturance of the coaching relationship. All participants experienced the five-positive interdependent relational stages with their manager-coaches. Participant 3 said,

> The manager-coach working relationship is with my boss. I am his right hand. I take care of everything he assigns me to do. It is more that type of relationship. We have been working for 10 to 12 years. The relationship with my manager-coach started when he
hired me. As the working relationship with my boss evolved, we become friends. The quality of the relationship initially was good. We started treating each other with respect and fairness from day one. He is a good boss. When we just met, he was very focused, honest and engaging, and very respectful and he listens to my opinions.

Meeting for the first time. A pattern emerged from the data showing the importance of the meeting between the employees and their manager-coaches for the first time. As described by the participants, the patterns that emerged for meeting for the first time captured an employee’s first impressions of a potentially mutually dependent relationship with the manager-coach. Based on the data set, 14 (78%) of the 18 participants met their manager-coach for the first time under different working circumstances. Some examples were (a) a transfer from one department to another within the same organization, (b) a promotion, and (c) having been hired by the manager-coach. The 14 participants reported they did not have negative feelings when they met with their manager-coaches for the first time. Participant 1 said, “She was my charge nurse when I worked in the ER night shift. We met when I was transferred to work in the ER and she was the manager for the ER night shift.” Participant 6 said, “The relationship began when she actually interviewed me and hired me for an open position in the laboratory.” Participant 10 said, “The relationship with my manager-coach is fantastic. We are very close to each other. It is friendly and pleasant. My manager and I met two years ago when she hired me as a front desk.”

Initial relationship. This pattern emerged when participants described how they began their relationships with their manager-coaches. As reported by the participants, the initial relationship pattern was important because it captured the positive quality of the initial relationship between the manager-coaches and the employees. Seventeen (94%) of the 18 participants experienced a positive relationship when they started their relationship with their manager-coaches. Participant 1 said,
Initially, the relationship was like employer and employee since she was my charge nurse. She makes the task assignments and I take direction from her. In the beginning, we did not have a personal relationship, but a business relationship instead.

Participant 11 said,

Initially, my relationship with him was very friendly. He was very approachable. I felt a little intimidated with his knowledge because he had 15 plus years more experience than I. Overall, I feel comfortable around him. The relationship with him was very good even from the beginning.

**The quality of the relationship before coaching.** This pattern emerged from participant responses about how their manager-coaches started practicing coaching with the employee. This pattern was important because it captured the quality of the relationship between the manager-coaches and employees before the actual coaching took place. All 18 participants said they experienced positive relationships with their manager-coaches before coaching began.

The degree of relational positivity experienced by all 18 participants varied. Participant 2 said, “Taking into consideration that I was a new clinical professional, I was somewhat guarded initially, but my supervisor was very friendly and civil.” Participant 3 said, “The relationship has always been good. I have learned a lot from him because of his vast experience in the field.”

**The quality of the relationship after coaching.** This pattern emerged as the participants described their experiences after their manager-coaches began coaching with the employees. The quality of the relationship after coaching began pattern was important because it captured the positive quality of the relationship between the manager-coaches and employees. Most importantly, this pattern highlighted an increment of positivity on the relationship between the manager-coach and the employee. Seventeen (94%) of the 18 participants felt their relationships with their manager-coaches significantly improved after coaching began.
Increments of positivity in the manager-coach employee relationships varied by participant. Seventeen (94%) of the 18 participants said they experienced an improvement in their relationships with their manager-coaches after coaching began. Participant 2 said,

The relationship got much better as we were progressing with my development. So, getting to know my supervisor and by my supervisor getting to know me, our relationship got better. Getting to know each other was very important in building our relationship. My supervisor was a very trusted person.

*Nurturing the relationship.* This pattern emerged when the participants described their experiences building and maintaining established positive and interdependent relationships. As reported by the participants, the pattern of *nurturing the relationship* described how the manager-coaches and the employees needed to continue to be positive and mutually dependent to keep building and maintaining their relationship for the future. Sixteen (89%) of the 18 participants reported positive and interdependent behaviors used by the manager-coaches and employees: (a) communication, (b) connection, (c) partnership, (d) positive behaviors, and (e) practicing an open policy strategy. Participant 5 said,

We cultivate our relationship by having mutual communication. Every morning we meet and have kind of roundtable discussion where other coworkers and people are presented to have a little discussion about a previous workday, occurrences overnight, or things you know we need to do today. It is a very positive type of communication that sets the tone for the day.

Participant 7 said,

[To nurture the relationship] the manager-coach needs to be very positive. The manager-coach needs to create a positive and safe environment where employees can speak up without fear and judgment. The manager-coach needs to be respectful and work in partnership with employees.

Similarly, Medvene and Coleman (2012) applied interdependence theory to the relationship between certified nurse assistants and residents in hospital settings. Medvene and
Coleman found that certified nurse assistants and residents had interdependent relationships. The results in the current study, thus, were like the results realized by Medvene and Coleman.

**Theme 7. Employee Coaching Growth**

The researcher defined Theme 7 as a set of positive and interdependent developmental factors used by manager-coaches to facilitate employee growth. Sixteen (89%) of the 18 participants experienced positive professional and personal growth when they had coaching sessions with their manager-coaches. As reported by the participants, the quality of the established relationship between a manager-coach and employee before and after coaching began positively influenced employee growth. As discussed previously, the participants reported they had high-quality relationships with their manager-coaches. Additionally, the participants reported that the quality of their relationships after coaching began was even more positive. Therefore, the employee coaching growth theme was likely enhanced by the positive influence of quality of the relationship before and after coaching began. Additionally, as described by the participants, employee coaching growth could positively influence the manager-coach and employee relationship quality.

Sixteen (89%) of the 18 participants reported that their relationships with their manager-coaches became stronger because of the participants’ positive progress and development. For example, Participant 2 said, “The relationship got much better as we were progressing with my development.” The researcher based Theme 7 on four subthemes: (a) *employee development*, (b) *process interdependence*, (c) *goal interdependence*, and (d) *task interdependence*. All participants reported they experienced professional and personal growth due to working together with their manager-coaches toward their goals. Participant 3 said, “Having a manager-coach and
Employee relationship with my boss is very valuable because it helped me to grow and achieve my optimal performance at work. It is very valuable and worth it.”

**Employee development.** This subtheme emerged when the participants described their positive interdependent experiences when they held developmental coaching conversations. The participants met informally and formally with their manager-coaches to have coaching conversations about the participants’ personal and professional goals. This subtheme was important because it captured the mutual interest of manager-coach and employee on finding out the employee’s strengths and weaknesses to create developmental goals and action plans to help the employee develop. Sixteen (89%) of the 18 participants believed they had coaching conversations with their manager-coaches. Participant 17 said,

> We had a conversation about my performance. My manager-coach one time she said to me hey we need to talk. This is not a successful pattern. It is her responsibility to call it out, and it is my responsibility to fix it.

**Process interdependence.** This subtheme captured the positive interdependent experience of the employee and manager-coach when they coordinated their efforts by interconnecting their roles and skills. This theme was important because it captured how the manager-coach and employees complemented each other. This theme also captured the positive and interdependent experiences of the participants when they had access to resources they needed to do the tasks assigned by their manager-coaches. Six (33%) of the 18 participants reported they experienced process interdependence with their manager-coaches. Participant 18 said,

> For what my manager-coach does at work requires different skills in comparison with what I do at work, but we are able to complement each other. It is like we are ham and eggs, or peanut butter and jelly. One without the other is incomplete. This is the nature of the relationship. What I bring to the table, he may be a little weaken person on that,
which is normal because no every person knows everything. That being said, I bring the cheeseburger, and he brings the French fries. We are complementary.

**Goal interdependence.** This subtheme emerged from the participant descriptions of the positive interdependent experiences with their manager-coaches when they shared agency and workloads to achieve common goals. This subtheme also captured the positive impacts that occur when a manager-coach and employee equally manage the volume of work to complete a task on time. This subtheme was important because it pointed out that the manager-coaches and employees were not only positive, and interdependent relationship oriented, but also goal oriented. Four (22%) of the 18 participants described goal interdependence with their manager-coaches. Participant 2 said, “We shared the load of patients and started our shift by making rounds to see patients.” Participant 4 said, “We work well together by having mutual understanding of what needs to be done.” In a final example, Participant 5 shared that, “It is all about being mutual.”

**Task interdependence.** This subtheme emerged when the participants described how their manager-coaches used developmental assessments and assigned specific developmental tasks to find out the employee’s strengths and weaknesses. This subtheme was important because it captured how the manager-coach used task interdependent behaviors as developmental tools to help the participants create and accomplish developmental goals. Four (22%) of the 18 participants believed they experienced task interdependence with their manager-coaches. Participant 8 said, “Sometimes, the control department makes mistakes on their reports and I am the one who finds those mistakes. My manager-coach trusts me and stands by my side when I find these mistakes from the quality control department.”
Similarly, other researchers reported the importance of the coach’s development in the coaching relationship (Baron & Morin, 2009; Gabriel et al., 2014; Gregory, 2010; Jowett, Kanakoglou, et al., 2012; Rezania & Gurney, 2014; Stinglhamber & Vandenberghe, 2003). In a quantitative study about sport coaching relationships, Jowett, Kanakoglou, et al. (2012) found a positive association between coachee development and coaching relationships. The results of the current study corresponded with the finding of a positive association between employee development and the employee coaching relationship.

**Theme 8. Employee Coaching Outcomes**

Theme 8 was defined as the positive and effective consequences of employee coaching growth. As described by the participants, this theme was important because it captured the experiences of how the participants grew professionally and personally as a result of establishing positive and interdependent coaching relationships with their manager-coaches. Additionally, as reported by the participants, employee coaching outcomes could positively influence employee coaching growth and manager-coach and employee relationships.

Based on the data set, participants experienced an increased level of positivity and effectiveness in their relationships. There was a bidirectional positive impact within the manager-coach and employee relationships, employee coaching growth, and employee coaching outcomes, which could explain positivity and effectiveness. As the employees learned new skills and accomplished their goals, thus, they were more likely willing to repeat the developmental coaching cycle with their manager-coaches. Also, the employee and the manager-coach enhanced their relationship and increased the personal and professional growth of the employee when the developmental coaching cycle repeated. This theme emerged from one subtheme:
effective interdependence. Seventeen (94%) of the 18 participants believed they experienced positive employee coaching outcomes. For example, Participant 16 said,

I am very grateful the way my manager-coach facilitated my learning and development. For example, one goal was to set par levels in the pediatrics department within a time frame of 2 months. I think that the expectation of this goal was clear, attainable, realistic and challenging. I was able to accomplish this goal because my manager-coach and I had great and fun conversations about how to get this goal done by working together, having the same vision and understanding of what was expected.

Effective interdependence. As described by the participants, this subtheme emerged as a result of the positive mutual influence between the manager-coach and employee relationships and employee coaching growth. The participants described how the manager-coach and employee relationships were more positive and more effective when they worked together and interacted with each other. Equally important, this subtheme also captured the increased positivity of the participants toward their jobs, their manager-coaches, and their organizations. This subtheme was important because it showed that positive and interdependent manager-coach and employee relationships could deliver effective and positive developmental coaching results in organizational settings. Figure 10 depicts the relationship between themes. Some examples of effective interdependence described by employees were: (a) increased engagement toward the manager-coach and the organization, (b) increased morale, (c) increased job satisfaction, (d) increased job motivation, (e) commitment to personal development, (f) willingness to listen and be influenced, (g) increased productivity, and (h) increased responsibility to attain goals. Seventeen (94%) of the 18 participants believed they experienced effective interdependence with their manager-coach.

Participant 9 said,

He always makes sure that morale is high within the team. My boss’s comments made me feel great and valued. My boss is very supportive and very positive. It feels great to
experience that, you know because he is positive during our interaction and he is not judgmental. I would have never got the special award without the support and help of my manager-coach.

This study’s results were consistent with other research about coaching outcomes (Batson & Yoder, 2012; de Haan et al., 2013; Kim et al., 2013). In a quantitative study about executive coaching relationships, de Haan et al. (2013) found that the coaching relationship was a predictor of coaching outcomes. The results of the current study concurred with the findings of de Haan et al. regarding the association between the manager-coach and employee coaching relationship and employee coaching outcomes.

Also, the results of Batson and Yoder (2012) and Kim et al. (2013) supported the current study’s results. Batson and Yoder found that nurses’ growth and increased job satisfaction were a result of managerial coaching. Similarly, Kim et al. found that employee’s performance and organizational commitment improved because of managerial coaching. Similarly, the results of this current study showed that employee productivity, and level of employee engagement toward their organizations and the manager-coaches, increased. Additionally, the results showed increased levels of employee (a) job satisfaction, (b) morale, (c) motivation, (d) willingness to listen and be influenced, (e) responsibility to attain goals, and (f) commitment to professional development.

Conclusions and Interpretations Based on the Results Linked to Theory and Previous Literature

The research literature about the employee coaching relationship showed that earlier quantitative studies have not fully captured the common factors that contribute to successful coaching outcomes (Gregory & Levy, 2010, 2011, 2012). Researchers found that manager-coaches find it difficult to set up effective coaching relationships with their direct reports
Managers also lacked understanding about the important components of effective coaching relationships that impact coaching outcomes (Grant, 2014; Gregory & Levy, 2012; Joo et al., 2012; O’Broin, 2016). Therefore, this qualitative exploratory and theoretical thematic study contributed to closing the identified gaps in the literature about employee coaching relationships in organizational settings.

The results of the current study fit within the theoretical framework and the review of the literature discussed in Chapter 2. The researcher set out to find factors that the participants believed led to an effective manager-coach employee relationship. The researcher found eight factors that led to effective employee coaching relationships and employee coaching outcomes. The eight factors that led to effective employee coaching relationships and employee coaching outcomes were derived from SIT (Deutsch, 1949a; Kelley & Thibaut, 1978; Johnson & Johnson, 2009) and applied into the employee coaching relationship context by using theoretical thematic analysis (Percy et al., 2015). Therefore, the eight factors found in this study likely added new understanding for how effective employee coaching relationships and employee coaching outcomes are established in organizational settings.

The chronological literature review examined in Chapter 2 supported all eight factors found in this study. Multidisciplinary studies in coaching (Cremona, 2010; Gyllensten & Palmer, 2007) and coaching relationships (Philippe et al., 2011; Rezania & Gurney, 2014) supported the results. Employee coaching relationship studies (Gregory & Levy, 2010, 2011, 2012) did not support the results because of the lack of empirical studies on this topic. Additionally, all eight factors from this study correlated with the trends of the literature review on the topic of employee coaching relationships. For example, the researcher found similarities in one trend from the seminal literature about employee coaching relationships related to a manager-coach’s
effective traits and the characteristics needed to practice effective employee coaching. In the current study, the manager-coach person-set and the manager-coach and employee partnership themes captured the characteristics of an effective manager-coach. These characteristics are necessary to build successful employee coaching relationships, and these characteristics were also in the seminal literature.

This study might inductively offer conclusions that lead to a different understanding of the employee coaching relationship from the perspective of SIT. Bertucci et al. (2016) and Johnson (2014) used SIT and reported that positive interdependence could lead to effective learning in the context of educational settings. Also, Fausing et al. (2015) found that interdependence was a predictor of shared leadership. These earlier studies supported the current findings reported in this study.

In this current study, one inductive conclusion derived from the data set was that positive interdependence was an antecedent for effective manager-coach and employee relationships in organizational settings. The application of theoretical thematic data analysis and the predetermined definitions from SIT about employee coaching relationship contexts allowed the researcher to infer that manager-coaches and employees were positive and interdependent people even before they set up their employee coaching relationships. All 18 participants reported they experienced positive relationships with their manager-coaches from the very beginning of their relationships. As reported by the participants, when the manager-coaches and employees met for the first time, they both experienced positive feelings.

A second inductive conclusion derived from the data set was that the employee coaching relationship was a complex relationship. In this current study, the employee coaching relationship was more than just a working relationship between the supervisors and employees
(Gregory & Levy, 2012). One inductive conclusion derived from the data could be the manager-coach and employee relationship was a positive and mutually dependent professional partnership-oriented relationship that positively evolved to become a personal working relationship. As reported by all 18 participants, their manager-coach and employee relationships occurred in five stages: (a) meeting for the first time, (b) the initial relationship, (c) the quality of the relationship before coaching began, (d) the quality of the relationship after coaching began, and (e) nurturing the coaching relationship. All 18 participants reported they experienced positive relationships during the five relational stages, which led to effective professional, personal, and coaching relationships.

A third inductive conclusion derived from the data set was that the manager-coach focused on positively addressing the employee’s needs and positively enhanced the employee’s well-being. Gabriel et al. (2014) reported similar results. The authors reported that humanistic coaching focused on the unique needs and well-being of the coachee. In this current study, as reported by the participants, the manager-coaches advocated for addressing employees’ unique developmental needs, belonging needs, and self-esteem needs. Additionally, the manager-coach used positive pro-social behaviors, and positive promotive interaction behaviors to promote and facilitate employee growth and development. Twelve (67%) of the 18 participants reported that their manager-coaches treated them as friends. Also, eight (44%) of the 18 participants reported that their manager-coaches treated them as equals.

**Seminal Literature and Theory**

In reviewing the seminal literature on employee coaching, researchers reported on the manager’s traits (Buzzota et al., 1977; Frankel & Otazo, 1992), and manager and employee partnerships (Evered & Selman, 1989; Stowell, 1988). Buzzota et al. (1977) found that attentive
listening was a trait of good managers. Similarly, Frankel and Otazo (1992) found that the manager’s humanistic orientation toward the employee was a trait of good managers. The findings of the current study supported the results of Buzzota et al. and Frankel and Otazo. The results of this study revealed that the factor, *manager-coach person-set*, captured the results of the seminal research about the manager’s humanistic characteristics to set up good relationships with employees.

The effective subfactors of the manager-coach person-set factor included (a) being a mutually dependent individual, (b) having partner-oriented thinking, and (c) practicing behavior interdependence. Active listening was one effective part of being interdependence. Also, becoming close and committed to the employee was one effective part of partner-oriented thinking.

Evered and Selman (1989) and Stowell (1988) found that managers who could build partnerships with employees were good managers. Evered and Selman also found that relating to employees was important for setting up partnerships. The results of this study supported the results of Stowell. The factor called *manager-coach and employee partnership* captured the characteristics of a good manager for building effective partnerships with employees as offered through the lens of SIT. The effective subfactors of the manager-coach and employee partnership included (a) *being an interdependent partner*, (b) *joint control interdependence*, (c) *outcome interdependence*, (d) *group processing skills*, and (e) *social skills*.

**Contemporary Literature and Theory**

In a review of the contemporary literature in coaching, researchers focused on different types of coaching practices, such as managerial coaching (Ellinger et al., 2011; Ladyshewsky, 2010; McLean et al., 2005), the employee coaching relationship (Gregory & Levy, 2010, 2011),
and sports coaching (Philippe et al., 2011; Philippe & Seiler, 2006). They also focused on psychology coaching (Gyllensten & Palmer, 2007), and executive coaching (Cremona, 2010). In a study about managerial coaching, Mclean et al. (2005) found that one characteristic of the manager-coach’s role was to value people over tasks. Ladyshewsky (2010) and Gyllensten and Palmer (2007) found that trust was an important component of the coaching relationship.

In a study on the employee coaching relationship, Gregory and Levy (2010) defined the employee coaching relationship as a working partnership focused on addressing the developmental needs of employees. Later, Gregory and Levy (2011) reported that supervisor-coaches focused on employee development by addressing employees’ unique needs. In sports coaching, Philippe et al. (2011) reported that a coach’s supportive behaviors were important to enhance the coaching relationship with athletes. In a study in executive coaching, Cremona (2010) reported that positive emotions were important for building sustained coaching relationships, and they found that creating a positive environment enhanced the executive learning experience.

The results of the current study supported the findings related to managerial coaching (Ladyshewsky, 2010; McLean et al., 2005), employee coaching relationships (Gregory & Levy, 2010, 2011), and sports coaching (Philippe et al., 2011). They also supported the results of psychology coaching (Gyllensten & Palmer, 2007), and executive coaching (Cremona, 2010). The results of the current study revealed that the factor manager-coach role-set and the factor manager-coach and employee psychological processes captured the positive, interdependent subfactors of an effective manager-coach. The effective subfactors of the manager-coach role-set included (a) interdependence situation and (b) promotive interaction. Also, the effective
subfactors of the manager-coach and employee processes included (a) cathexis, (b) substitutability, and (c) inducibility.

In this current study, the theme *manager-coach role-set* was like the results of some contemporary studies. For example, Mclean et al. (2005) found the importance of valuing people over a task. The data for the sub factor *interdependence situation* as part of the factor *manager-coach role set* also included the importance of valuing people over a task. Gregory and Levy (2010, 2011) reported that coaching supervisors assessed the developmental needs of their employees. The Gregory and Levy results were like the results of this study, which included the pattern *assessing employee’s needs* for the subfactors *interdependence situation* and *manager-coach role set*.

Gyllensten and Palmer (2007) and Ladyshewsky (2010) found that trust was an important component of the coaching relationship. Philippe et al. (2011) found that the coach’s supportive behaviors were important in the coaching relationship. In this study, the sub factor *promotive interaction* as part of the *manager-coach role set* factor captured and integrated the previous findings from the contemporary literature. Finally, Carmona (2010) found that good coaches showed positive emotions and were able to create positive work environments. The relational energy pattern of the sub factor *cathexis* from the *manager-coach and employee psychological processes* factor captured and integrated these findings from the literature about coaching relationships.

**Most Recent Literature and Theory**

The researcher reviewed the most recent literature on managerial coaching (Batson & Yoder, 2012; Ciutiene & Petrauskas, 2012; Kim, 2014; Kim et al., 2013; McCarthy & Milner, 2013; Utrilla et al., 2015), employee coaching relationships (Gabriel et al., 2014; Gregory &
Levy, 2012), sports coaching relationships (Rezania & Gurney, 2014; Freeman et al., 2014), executive coaching relationships (de Haan et al., 2013), coach-coachee relationships (Grant, 2014) and psychology coaching (O’Broin, 2016; Spaten et al., 2016). The research focus was on the association among coaching, coaching relationships, and coaching outcomes. In a quantitative study about employee coaching relationships, Gregory and Levy (2012) found that the quality of the employee coaching relationship predicts the willingness of a manager-coach to show coaching behaviors. In other words, Gregory and Levy (2012) reported that the coaching relationship precedes actual coaching. However, the authors also reported that the association between employee coaching relationships and coaching could be reciprocal because effective coaching behaviors could improve the coaching relationship.

In an executive coaching relationship study, de Haan et al. (2013) found that coaching outcomes may predict strong coaching relationships, and the coaching relationship may predict good coaching outcomes. In a managerial coaching study, McCarthy and Milner (2013) claimed that the coaching relationship was a critical factor in employee coaching. The results of this current study supported the results of Gregory and Levy (2012), de Haan et al. (2013), and McCarthy and Milner (2013). The results of this study revealed that the factors manager-coach and employee relationship, employee coaching growth, employee coaching outcomes, and manager-coach and employee positive interdependence, could provide greater insights to understand the complex nature of employee coaching, employee coaching relationships, and employee coaching outcomes.

The results of the current study revealed that the coaching relationship precedes actual coaching, and effective coaching behaviors also improve the coaching relationship, which was also claimed by Gregory and Levy (2012). All participants reported they experienced positive
coaching relationships with their manager-coach before coaching and after coaching began. Equally important was (a) meeting for the first time, (b) the initial relationship, (c) the relationship quality pre-coaching, (d) the relationship quality post-coaching, and (e) nurturing the relationship. The coaching relationship between the manager-coaches and employees, thus, began when they met for the first time.

The results of this study revealed that the manager-coaches practiced effective coaching behaviors. As reported by the participants, the employee coaching growth factor captured the manager-coach’s experience of practicing effective coaching behaviors. The researcher derived the employee coaching growth factor from four subfactors: (a) employee development, (b) process interdependence, (c) goal interdependence, and (d) task interdependence. Four (22%) of the 18 participants experienced task interdependence when they held developmental coaching sessions with their manager-coaches. Additionally, 16 (89%) of the 18 participants experienced coaching developmental conversations with their manager-coaches. Furthermore, six (89%) of the 18 participants experienced process interdependence when they worked together with their manager-coaches. Finally, four (22%) of the 18 participants experienced goal interdependence when they pursued mutual goals with their manager-coaches.

The results of this study revealed that effective coaching outcomes might predict a positive coaching relationship, and the positive coaching relationship may predict effective coaching outcomes. The results concurred with the findings reported by de Haan et al. (2013). The results of this study revealed that all participants experienced positive relationships with their manager-coaches, and the positive relationships started when they met for the first time. The subfactor manager-coach and employee relationship process captured this result. Also, all participants mentioned they experienced positive developmental coaching activities with their
manager-coaches, which was evident from the factor *employee coaching growth* and the subfactors *employee development, process interdependence, goal interdependence,* and *task interdependence.* Furthermore, 17 (94%) of the 18 participants said they experienced positive coaching outcomes. The results of this study revealed that the participants’ positive coaching outcomes were part of the factor, *employee coaching outcomes,* and the subfactor, *effective interdependence.*

As reported in this study, effective coaching relationships might predict effective coaching outcomes, and effective coaching outcomes might predict effective coaching relationships. Seventeen (94%) of the 18 participants said the relationship between the manager-coach and the employee became more positive and effective as the employees experienced positive coaching outcomes. In this study, the factor, *employee coaching outcomes,* and the subfactor, *effective interdependence,* captured the manager-coach and employee experience of becoming more positive and effective while the employee reached positive coaching outcomes. Thus, a mutual positive reciprocation might exist among the coaching relationship, coaching, and coaching outcomes as reported in this study with the factors *manager-coach and employee relationship, employee coaching growth,* and *employee coaching outcomes.* Figure 10 shows the positive reciprocation among these three factors.

The results of this study revealed that the coaching relationship was a critical factor in coaching. McCarthy and Milner (2013) also found that the coaching relationship was a critical factor in coaching. The results of this study revealed that the factors *manager-coach and employee interdependence* and *manager-coach and employee relationship* captured the critical importance of the coaching relationship. In this study, as discussed earlier, participants believed they experienced positive interdependence with their manager-coaches. As also revealed in this
study, (a) positive interdependence might predict positive coaching relationships, (b) positive coaching relationships might predict effective coaching, and (c) effective coaching might predict effective coaching outcomes.

**Holistic Conclusion and Interpretation Based on the Results**

Based on the lenses of SIT (Deutsch, 1949a; Johnson & Johnson, 2009; Kelley & Thibaut, 1978), manager-coach and employee positive interdependence precede the manager-coach employee relationship. The positive interdependent factors *manager-coach person-set*, *manager-coach role-set*, *manager-coach and employee partnership*, and *manager-coach and employee psychological processes* positively affected the manager-coach and employee relationship. If the manager-coach and coaching relationship stayed positive, the manager-coach and employee relationship positively impacted employee coaching growth and employee coaching outcomes through positive and reciprocal influence. Figure 10 shows the relationships among the eight positive and interdependent factors.

**Limitations**

This exploratory qualitative study had two basic limitations. One limitation of this research was the sample size. Qualitative research uses small representations of the population investigated to gain participants’ perspectives (Bellamy et al., 2016) although the researcher tried to recruit participants from all industries, most of the participants were from government agencies, healthcare, banking, manufacturing, retail, and information technology. The researcher used purposive snowball sampling to gather participant knowledge about the topic and to decrease bias caused other types of qualitative sampling (Cleary et al., 2014). Thus, lack of representativeness of the sample was a limitation in this research (Reay, 2014).
A second limitation was the credibility of this research. The researcher used member checking to ensure the accuracy of the transcriptions (Ghafouri & Ofoghi, 2016). Participants received a copy of the transcribed interviews with a request for confirmation of the transcription accuracy. Additionally, the researcher engaged in a reflective practice to manage his subjective thoughts and decisions during the interpretation phase of data analysis (Orange, 2016). The researcher used a reflexive personal journal to document and track the methodological decisions, the data analysis procedures, and all emerging ideas related to the completion of the research.

Implications for Practice and Recommendations for Future Research

The employee coaching relationship in organizational settings is a complex phenomenon. This qualitative exploratory theoretical thematic study offered manager-coaches a unique perspective into employee coaching relationships using the principles of SIT (Deutsch, 1949, Johnson & Johnson, 2009; Kelley & Thibau, 1978). Organizations can use the results of this research to implement effective manager coach-employee coaching relationship programs that may aid recruitment and retention of top employees. Organizations can use the results to create positive organizational outcomes and support continued organizational growth.

This study offered a concrete direction for further research in employee coaching relationships. Future researchers could replicate the current study with lower-level employees who have experienced successful coaching relationships with their manager-coaches using different demographics. The results could offer a way to compare similarities and differences by sample demographics. From the results, researchers could develop an employee coaching relationship instrument based on the eight positive interdependent factors. Finally, another area for future research could be to test the association of the eight positive interdependent factors
found in this study to find out whether there is a positive causation among the eight positive interdependent factors.

**Conclusion**

The purpose of this qualitative exploratory theoretical thematic study was to explore the factors that employees believe lead to effective manager-coach and employee relationships. The researcher set out to find the factors that employees believe lead to effective manager-coach and employee relationships. The researcher collected data from 18 participants via telephone interviews using open-ended and semi-structured interview questions. The theoretical thematic analysis (Percy et al., 2015) revealed eight factors and 22 subfactors that exemplified the rich descriptions of the employees’ beliefs about their successful coaching relationships with their manager-coaches.

This study used SIT as the theoretical foundation (Deutsch 1949a; Johnson & Johnson, 2009; Kelley & Thibaut, 1978). Using SIT allowed this study to have a theoretical foundation and a unique perspective of the employee coaching relationship phenomenon in organizational settings. Viewing the manager-coach and employee relationships through the lens of positive interdependence offered a greater understanding of the development of positive and interdependent relationships between the manager-coaches and employees. The results of this research could help manager-coaches in organizational settings as they work to build positive and effective coaching relationships with their direct reports.
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STATEMENT OF ORIGINAL WORK

Academic Honesty Policy

Capella University’s Academic Honesty Policy (3.01.01) holds learners accountable for the integrity of work they submit, which includes but is not limited to discussion postings, assignments, comprehensive exams, and the dissertation or capstone project.

Established in the Policy are the expectations for original work, rationale for the policy, definition of terms that pertain to academic honesty and original work, and disciplinary consequences of academic dishonesty. Also stated in the Policy is the expectation that learners will follow APA rules for citing another person’s ideas or works.

The following standards for original work and definition of plagiarism are discussed in the Policy:

Learners are expected to be the sole authors of their work and to acknowledge the authorship of others’ work through proper citation and reference. Use of another person’s ideas, including another learner’s, without proper reference or citation constitutes plagiarism and academic dishonesty and is prohibited conduct. (p. 1)

Plagiarism is one example of academic dishonesty. Plagiarism is presenting someone else’s ideas or work as your own. Plagiarism also includes copying verbatim or rephrasing ideas without properly acknowledging the source by author, date, and publication medium. (p. 2)

Capella University’s Research Misconduct Policy (3.03.06) holds learners accountable for research integrity. What constitutes research misconduct is discussed in the Policy:

Research misconduct includes but is not limited to falsification, fabrication, plagiarism, misappropriation, or other practices that seriously deviate from those that are commonly accepted within the academic community for proposing, conducting, or reviewing research, or in reporting research results. (p. 1)

Learners failing to abide by these policies are subject to consequences, including but not limited to dismissal or revocation of the degree.
Statement of Original Work and Signature

I have read, understood, and abided by Capella University’s Academic Honesty Policy (3.01.01) and Research Misconduct Policy (3.03.06), including Policy Statements, Rationale, and Definitions.

I attest that this dissertation or capstone project is my own work. Where I have used the ideas or words of others, I have paraphrased, summarized, or used direct quotes following the guidelines set forth in the APA Publication Manual.

Learner name
and date   Erick A. Albarracin Alarcon   January 21, 2018
## APPENDIX A. SEMINAL LITERATURE COACHING FACTORS SUMMARY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Characteristics/Traits/Behaviors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mace, 1950</td>
<td>Coaching is leadership relationship based, working relationship, seeing relationship with subordinates as co-equals, cooperative task, getting to know subordinates, building a climate condition for growth (belief), practicing self-disclosure, being a role model, having access to superiors, accepting subordinates for who they are, treating subordinates with fairness, seeking concrete situations for coaching, being sincere and honest, setting standards of performance, showing consideration about employees’ motivation, creating a sense of belonging, challenging subordinates to growth, and fostering subordinate participation in decision-making.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clarke, 1971</td>
<td>Observation, listening, appraisal, and discussion.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buzzota et al., 1977</td>
<td>Listening attentively, genuine two-way exchange, mutual candor, mutual openness, and skillful probing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Terry, 1977</td>
<td>Capacity to work with people, build rapport, being social savvy, and skilled to understand subordinate’s behaviors.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Axmith, 1982</td>
<td>Two-way communication, share thought and feelings, specific feedback, listen actively, be empathetic to understand employee’s situation, show respect and like, being sincere, genuine, and honest, environment where employee can express feelings and thoughts, being non-judgmental, and encourage autonomy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mills, 1986</td>
<td>Information sharing 0.67, $p &lt; .01$ (two-tailed) $t$-test.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orth et al., 1987</td>
<td>Supportive and helping environment, develop trust, open two-way communication, respect employee’s individuality, being supportive rather than judgmental, and provide a helpful feedback.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Source</td>
<td>Characteristics/Traits/Behaviors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stowell, 1988</td>
<td>Supportive behaviors (consideration, concern, acceptance), initiative behavior (feedback), collaboration, express concern for employee’s needs, empathy, recognition, and build partnerships.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evered &amp; Selman, 1989</td>
<td>Partnership, acceptance, honor uniqueness of subordinates, being nonjudgmental, listening, collaboration, and mutual support.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frankel &amp; Otazo, 1992</td>
<td>Feedback, goal setting, being non-judgmental, listening, care about employees, and praise employees.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graham et al., 1993</td>
<td>Share information 0.64, $p &lt; .01$ (two-tailed) $t$-test, providing feedback 0.62, $p &lt; .01$ (two-tailed) $t$-test.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graham et al., 1994</td>
<td>Warm, friendly relationship (highest mean = 8.28) includes listening, being caring, being sensitive, being concerned, and feedback.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ellinger et al., 1999</td>
<td>Empowerment behaviors, question framing, being a resource, transferring ownership, holding back, facilitating behaviors, feedback, promoting a learning environment, setting expectations, shifting perspectives, soliciting feedback from employees.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minter &amp; Thomas, 2000</td>
<td>Supportiveness, consideration (getting to know employees), patient, trust building, openness, vision, and goal clarity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kilburg, 2001</td>
<td>Enough trust, mutual respect, empathy, warmth, positive regard, tolerance, diversity dimensions, playful challenge, tactful exchange, authenticity and genuineness.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jowett, 2003</td>
<td>Closeness, personal feelings, like, trust, generic feelings, belief, respect, co-orientation, shared knowledge, self-disclosure, information exchange, shared understanding, acceptance, influence, commitment, complementary, reciprocal behavior, roles, task, helping transactions, instructional support, and emotional support.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Source</td>
<td>Characteristics/Traits/Behaviors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stinglhamber &amp; Vandenberghe, 2003</td>
<td>Support, caring, respect, personal development, well-being, opportunities for autonomy, and recognition, positive work experiences, and value employee’s contribution.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## APPENDIX B. SUMMARY OF COACHING FACTORS FOUND IN CONTEMPORARY LITERATURE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Characteristics/Traits/Behaviors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>McLean et al., 2005</td>
<td>Open communication, valuing people over task, accepting ambiguous nature of work environment, and team approach.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beattie, 2006</td>
<td>Challenging, empowering, thinking, assessing, advising, caring, informing, and being professional.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jowett, 2006</td>
<td>Form of relational leadership, thinking dyadically (e.g., bi-directional and reciprocal interactions).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Philippe &amp; Seiler, 2006</td>
<td>Establishing a professional and friendship relationship with athletes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gyllensten &amp; Palmer, 2007</td>
<td>Trust, confidentiality, valuing coaching (e.g., working on goals to improve performance).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alvey &amp; Barclay, 2007</td>
<td>Self-disclosure, seek and receive feedback, trust, reciprocal interactions, coaching relational situation (e.g., goal setting and clarity of goals), evaluations and coaching outcomes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wycherley &amp; Cox, 2008</td>
<td>Trust and rapport.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Olympiou et al., 2008</td>
<td>Perceived partnership by athletes, task-involvement climate, friendship and commitment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baron &amp; Morin, 2009</td>
<td>Relationship facilitation of coaching learning (e.g., creating developmental plans, tracking progress and learning, providing structure), coach’s support behaviors, and frequency of coaching sessions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mahsud et al., 2010</td>
<td>Leader’s relations-oriented behavior (e.g., empathy, supporting and developing employees).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>O’Broin &amp; Palmer, 2010</td>
<td>Coach’s attributes, bond and engagement (e.g., trust and listening), and collaboration (e.g., reciprocal two-way process, shared understanding, working together, and shared goals).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rhind &amp; Jowett, 2010</td>
<td>Two-way communication (e.g., openness), giving and receiving feedback (e.g., reward feedback and constructive feedback).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Source</td>
<td>Characteristics/Traits/Behaviors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boyce et al., 2010</td>
<td>Trust, rapport and commitment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ladyshewsky, 2010</td>
<td>Building trust through shared values (e.g., getting to know subordinates at the personal level), manager’s capability, supportive behaviors, confidentiality, investing time in the relationship, showing integrity, honesty, and authenticity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fernandez et al., 2010</td>
<td>Relations-oriented leadership behaviors (e.g., partnership as being equals, appreciating and recognizing contributions, giving opportunities for professional growth, being part of the decision-making process, showing collaborative behaviors).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cremona, 2010</td>
<td>Developmental partnership and positive emotions (e.g., enjoyable work experiences, and fun at work).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kowalski &amp; Casper, 2010</td>
<td>Setting expectations, partnerships (e.g., co-create relationship, mutual understanding).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gregory, 2010</td>
<td>Four dimensions genuineness of the relationship, effective communication, comfort with the relationship, and facilitates development. Other components trust, empathy, feedback.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gregory &amp; Levy, 2011</td>
<td>Providing feedback, focusing on employee’s unique needs, caring about functional relationships, trust, creating a friendly feedback environment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wheeler, 2011</td>
<td>Providing information, transferring ownership, role modeling, dialoguing (e.g., soliciting feedback, genuine listening, providing feedback, question framing, broadening perspectives, not providing answers), and building a culture of coaching (e.g., collaboration, support, encouragement, praise, being non-hierarchical, being inclusive, and alignment of values).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phillipe et al., 2011</td>
<td>Developing bonds (e.g., friendship, supportiveness, and personal closeness), developing cooperation (e.g., being collaborative, joint decisions), and power relations (e.g., supportive behaviors).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lafreniere et al., 2011</td>
<td>Autonomy-supportive behaviors (e.g., taking into account athlete’s perspectives, encouraging athlete’s self-initiative, and explaining task being performed).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## APPENDIX C. SUMMARY OF COACHING FACTORS FOUND IN RECENT LITERATURE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Characteristics/Traits/Behaviors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gregory &amp; Levy, 2012</td>
<td>Subordinate feedback orientation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taylor &amp; Brunet, 2012</td>
<td>Rapport behaviors, e.g., acknowledging and embracing athlete’s values and beliefs, and working cooperatively to achieve mutual goals.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Batson &amp; Yoder, 2012</td>
<td>Role modeling, e.g., congruency between words and actions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jowett et al., 2012</td>
<td>Coach and athlete’s harmonious passion for specific developmental activities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jowett et al., 2012</td>
<td>Partnership, commitment, and cooperation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cox, 2012</td>
<td>Foundation of trust, e.g., need for having intimate and personal conversations, need for confidentiality, framework of trust, e.g., encouraging confidentiality and reducing uncertainty, exercise of trust, practicing and balancing reciprocity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Krot &amp; Lewicka, 2012</td>
<td>Trust as a form of benevolence, e.g., considering partner’s interest in decision making, acting with consideration and sensitivity on partner’s needs, willingness to do favors to partner’s desires.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ciutiene &amp; Petrauskas, 2012</td>
<td>Friendship and partnership</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>de Haan et al., 2013</td>
<td>Working alliance, e.g., mutual respect, showing genuinely concern for coachee’s welfare and setting clear expectations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>McCarthy &amp; Milner, 2013</td>
<td>Listening, questioning, goal setting, feedback, balanced power, and confidentiality.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ianiro et al., 2013</td>
<td>Interpersonal affiliation behaviors, e.g., listening, understanding, and friendliness.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Source</td>
<td>Characteristics/Traits/Behaviors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Freeman et al., 2014</td>
<td>Emotional support, e.g., cheering, listening, showing concern, being always there, comforting, esteem support, e.g., encouraging, emphasizing abilities, reinforcing positive, and enhancing confidence, informational support, e.g., giving advice’s about performance, providing tactical advice, giving ideas, and offering suggestions for actions, assisting to put things in a new perspectives, and offering advice on what to do and tangible support, e.g., assisting to plan train, set activities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grant, 2014</td>
<td>Goal-focused relationship behaviors, e.g., helping to create clear, simply, and reachable goals, discussing setbacks to finish mutual action plans, setting important goals from client’s perspective, asking for progress on goals, ensuring client’s goals were challenging and reachable.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rezania &amp; Gurney, 2014</td>
<td>Information sharing was a predictor of commitment to the coach in the coaching relationship, β = 0.37, p &lt; 0.05, training and development, β = 0.22, p &lt; 0.05, and promoting teamwork, β = 0.33, p &lt; 0.05.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agwu &amp; Luke, 2015</td>
<td>Setting and communicating clear expectations, creating a sense of belonging by offering equal career opportunities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Utrilla et al., 2015</td>
<td>Ensuring a positive exchange, e.g., obtaining mutual benefits.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kim &amp; Kuo, 2015</td>
<td>Manager’s trustworthiness as predictor of employee’s role performance, β = 0.69, p &lt; 0.01, organizational citizenship behavior-individual, β = 0.56, p &lt; 0.01, organizational citizenship behavior-organization, β = 0.45, p &lt; 0.01.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Huang &amp; Hsich, 2015</td>
<td>Psychological empowerment behavior was predictor of employee’s in-role behaviors, β=0.18, p&lt;0.01, proactive career behaviors, β = 0.44, p &lt; 0.01.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gan &amp; Chiong, 2015</td>
<td>Rapport, e.g., strong connection, mutual agreement, understanding, and good task coordination was a strong predictor of the coaching relationship, β=0.55, p&lt;0.01. Trust, e.g., feel secured, confidentiality, open and honest communication was a strong predictor of the coaching relationship, β = 0.45, p &lt; 0.01, and commitment of the coachee to be coached was a predictor of the coaching relationship, β = 0.39, p &lt; 0.01.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Summary of Coaching Factors Found in Recent Literature (continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Characteristics/Traits/Behaviors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Parker et al., 2015</td>
<td>Relational process, e.g., social interaction.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gessnitzer &amp; Kauffeld, 2015</td>
<td>Clear agreement on goals and tasks.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muhlberger &amp; Traut-Mattaush, 2015</td>
<td>Relational form of leadership, e.g., acting friendly and showing concern for employee’s well-being.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chiniara &amp; Bentein, 2016</td>
<td>Servant leadership behaviors, e.g., showing empathy, emotional support, providing feedback, giving resources, empowering, and putting subordinates first.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lu et al., 2016</td>
<td>Informational support behaviors and tangible behaviors.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appleton &amp; Duda, 2016</td>
<td>Empowerment coach-created motivational climate behaviors, e.g., task involvement climate behaviors, autonomy supportive climate behaviors and socially supportive climate behaviors.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Netolicky, 2016</td>
<td>Building a trusting environment and a trusting relationship.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Will et al., 2016</td>
<td>Empathy, e.g., feeling understood, listening skills, paraphrasing, positive interactions.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX D. RESEARCHER-CREATED INTERVIEW GUIDE

Interview Questions

For all questions, I’d like you to think about your relationship with your manager-coach.

1. Tell me about your relationship with your manager-coach
   Possible follow-up questions/probes:
   a. When did the relationship begin?
   b. How were you brought together?
   c. When did you meet? (weekly? monthly?)
   d. How long did you meet (number of months, one year, two years, etc.)?
   e. Was your manager-coach a man or a woman?
   f. How would you describe the quality of your relation initially?
   g. What did you think of him or her when you first met?
   h. Did you like (him or her) right away?
   i. Why or why not?
   j. What is it that is most valuable about a manager-coach and employee relationship?
      • Is it working well?
      • If so, how is it working well?
   k. What is the most negative aspect about a manager-coach and employee relationship?
   l. How did you feel about being in a manager-coach and employee relationship?
   m. What is your vision of an effective manager-coach and employee relationship?
      • What does it look like?

2. Employee development is often a part of the manager-coach employee relationship. Please tell me about a time that you remember having an effective employee development conversation or coaching session with your manager-coach.
   Possible follow-up questions/probes:
   a. What did your manager-coach do and say, specifically, that was supportive of your development?
   b. How did your manager-coach show you (his or her) support?
   c. How did your manager-coach inspire you to attain your developmental goal(s)?
   d. How did you respond to (his or her) suggestions?
      • Do you remember what you said to (him or her)?
      • How did (he or she) indicate they understood you?
   e. Did your manager-coach show you that (he or she) cared about your professional development?
• How did (he or she) show you that (he or she) cared about your professional development?
• How did you feel when your manager-coach showed (he or she) cared about your professional development?
f. What was the outcome of the developmental task?
• Did you get a promotion?
• Did you receive some type of feedback?
  o How would you describe the feedback you received from your manager-coach?
  o How did you receive the feedback?
• In other words, how did you know that you achieved the desired goal?
• What did your manager-coach do and say when you attained your goal?
g. What did you learn about your coach manager during the time that (he or she) helped you with your professional developmental task?
• Was (he or she) warm?
• Did (he or she) remain professional?
• How did your manager-coach and you work together?
h. How would you describe the quality of your relationship before (he or she) helped you with the developmental task?
• Would you describe it as poor, good, very good, or excellent, for example?
i. How would you describe the quality of your relationship after (he or she) helped you with the developmental task?
• Would you describe it as poor, good, very good, or excellent, for example?
• Would you describe it as more professional, or more personal?
j. Did your manager-coach share important personal information with you?
• If yes, what type of personal information did (he or she) share?
• If no, would you have liked your manager-coach to share important personal information with you?
• How did you feel when your manager-coach shared (or did not share) important information with you at work?
k. Did your manager-coach treat you fairly and with respect at work?
• If yes, what did (he or she) do or say to treat you with fairly and with respect?
• If no, would you have liked your manager-coach to treat you fairly and with respect?
• How did you feel when your manager-coach treats you (or did not treat you) fairly and with respect?