How is coaching perceived by leaders engaged in a global talent management and leadership development programme?

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Leadership Coaching Research Symposium

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Coaching in Talent Management (TM) and Leadership Development (LD) programmes

Relevance
- Talent war
- TM and LD: priority N.1 for CEOs
- Widespread use of coaching in TM and LD programmes

Objectives
- Understanding coaching as TM practice in global corporate environment
- Role of coaching for talent leaders at various stages in their career
- Specificities of coaching for TM and LD purposes

Methodology
- Interpretivist paradigm
- Social constructivist approach
- Qualitative, inductive
- Single case study
- One multinational bank, focus on EMEA region
What is the perceived role of coaching for leaders receiving coaching at various stages in their career in a global organisation?

How do leaders, HR managers, internal and external coaches perceive the contribution of coaching in the context of a global talent management and leadership development programme in a multinational company?

How can coaching intervention be construed in the context of global talent management and leadership development?
Review of TM and coaching literature

Growing fields of study, emerged about 15-20 years ago. Initially led by practitioners, empirical research lagging behind. Empirical quantitative research conducted by global consulting firms (PwC, Deloitte) and professional bodies (ICF, CIPD...).

More qualitative studies needed for in-depth understanding of coaching as TM practice.

Lack of consensus on the theoretical frameworks (Cascio and Boudreau, 2016; Schutte and Steyn, 2015). PC theory used in TM studies to understand the reactions to talent status (Farndale et al., 2014).

Psychological contract as theoretical lens to understand talent coaching?

Data collected at employee/coachee level, to reveal the perception of TM and impact of coaching as a TM practice (Gallardo-Gallardo and Thunnissen, 2016a, Blackman et al., 2016).

What about the organisational level?

Most studies reflect the views of CEOs, executives and HR managers. Little empirical research on the role of coaching as it is perceived by the participants involved in GTM and LD programmes (Passmore et al., 2013)

What about the views of talent leaders, coaches, HR managers?

Dramatic increase of the practice of exec. coaching in MNEs. But, What is being done? What is possible? What is the impact?
### Research design:

- Single case study
- Global firm in banking and financial services industry
- EMEA region- 55 countries
- Purposive and snowball sampling
- Semi-structured interviews
- Thematic analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Talent Management Programmes</th>
<th>1st round interviews</th>
<th>2nd round interviews</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Programme A - Emerging leaders- VP</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Programme B- Growing leaders-SVP-D</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Programme C- Women leaders- D and MD</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Programme D- Senior leaders- D and MD</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>External coaches</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Internal coaches</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HR managers and internal coach</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Programme managers</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total:</strong></td>
<td><strong>23</strong></td>
<td><strong>7</strong></td>
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Total: 30
Thematic analysis
(Nowell et al., 2017, Braun and Clarke, 2006, Clarke and Braun, 2017, Gioia et al. (2012)

Stage 1: Preparation and pre-analysis

- 1st round interviews: fieldnotes
- Emerging themes
- 2nd round interviews: fieldnotes

Stage 2: Open coding

- Memos
- Codebook 1

Stage 3: Axial coding

- Memos
- Codebook 2

Stage 4: Theoretical sampling

- Memos
- Codebook 3

Stage 5: Data structure

- 1st order themes (informant-centric)
- 2nd order themes (research-centric)
- 3rd order themes: Aggregated dimensions and underlying themes

Continuous familiarisation with data
# Roles of talent coaching

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Junior and middle managers</th>
<th>Senior and executive managers</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Extension of social capital</td>
<td>• Extension of human capital</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Reputation- visibility</td>
<td>• Leadership and work identity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Individual career path</td>
<td>• Space to think</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Confidence building</td>
<td>• Management of emotions</td>
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</table>

= SPONSOR/MENTOR

= TRUSTED PARTNER, MEDIATOR

**Heightened Psychological Contract (PC)**

Coaching is not a panacea

Risk of PC breach when unfulfilled expectations
Factors of successful talent coaching

- Long-term
- Reflective
- Bespoke
- Trustworthy
- Developmental
- Inter-connective
Talent coaching continuum

Junior leaders

- Directive interventions
  - Instructional/Feedback
  - Sponsoring
  - Mentoring

Senior leaders

- Non-directive interventions
  - Dialogic coaching
Social and human capital

Emma (SVP): “And that’s where coaching comes in – either on understanding it or having the coach that will be your brand ambassador, or the mentor or the sponsor. You name it.”

Coaching culture

Charles (MD-coach): “So, I see a need for coaching to be embedded in the leadership. I see a need for leaders to be able to coach organisations through a lot of complexity and a lot of uncertainty.”

Rhetoric

Oliver (MD): "I use it more as a kind of a ritual thing and as an acknowledgement as manager."

Instrumentalisation

Eleonor, (MD): "[I] don’t need to go all the way to Employee Relations [to discuss an issue] (...) Coaching is by definition more private, more intimate, more informal."
Role of talent coaching through the lens of psychological contract theory

Social and human capital
- Network
- Trust and affiliation
- Knowledge and confidence building
- Bespoke career plan

Rhetoric
- Symbol of high status
- Way of doing vs being
- Expectations vs experience

Coaching culture
- Coaching key leadership competency
- Better conversations
- Ripple effect

Instrumentalisation
- Natural selection of talent elite
- Conflict resolution
- HR as strategic partners

INDIVIDUAL

RELATIONAL

ORGANISATIONAL

TRANSACTIONAL
Contributions and implications

**Theoretical contributions on TM and coaching literatures:**

1. Talent coaching as expectation of talent leaders in their extended psychological contract
2. Talent coaching perceived as enactment of the TM strategy
3. Talent coaching is a specific and context-sensitive intervention, embedded in the politics, power and people’s dynamics

**Practical contributions:**

1. Design of TM programmes according to needs and expectations of talent leaders at different stages of their career in the organisation
2. Preparation, training and supervision of internal and external coaches
3. How to develop a coaching culture through TM
Thank you!
ATHANASOPOULOU, A. & DOPSON, S. 2017. A systematic review of executive coaching outcomes: Is it the journey or the destination that matters the most? *The Leadership Quarterly*.


