

## The effectiveness of Strength Based Executive Coaching in Enhancing Full Range Leadership Development – D. MacKie, 2014

---

### Aim of study:

To investigate the impact of strength- based leadership coaching on transformational leadership using a full range leadership development model(FLRM)

### Background:

#### **Challenges involved in conducting coaching research in organisations:**

1. No universal coaching methodology - difficult to establish consistency in the delivery of executive coaching
2. Range of outcomes is vast – difficult to conduct cross-study comparisons
3. Coachees engage in coaching with a variety of motivations, abilities and capacity to change – difficult to ascertain which coachee variables predict coaching outcomes
4. Coexistence of several initiatives in organisations makes it difficult to attribute change purely to coaching

#### **Evidence for the effectiveness of coaching on workplace performance and leadership – examples:**

- Theeboom et al., 2014: meta-analytic study into coaching effectiveness, very few studies used between-subject designs and collected other data than self-reports. Limited evidence for generalizing results
- Grant et al., 2010: used a cognitive behavioural solution focuses approach to examine effectiveness of executive coaching in the education sector. Results of a randomized controlled trial showed significant increase in goal attainment, well-being and reduction in stress. No evidence pointing to changes in constructive leadership were found.
- Bozer et al., 2012: Quasi-experimental study of executives' performance and job satisfaction after receiving executive coaching through the use of self-rating scales and supervisor rated scales for performance. Career satisfaction was increased in coaching group, and so was supervisory rated job performance.

### Tools:

#### **Full Range Leadership Model (FRLM) as an outcome variable for coaching:**

- Comprehensive leadership model that encompasses transformational and transactional elements of leadership, as well as laissez-faire leadership behaviours

- MLQ – a questionnaire that measures nine elements of the FRLM:
  - 1) Influence attributes
  - 2) Influence behaviours
  - 3) Inspirational motivation
  - 4) Individualized consideration
  - 5) Intellectual stimulation
  - 6) Contingent reward
  - 7) Management by exception active
  - 8) Management by exception passive
  - 9) Laissez faire

### Strength-Based Coaching as an effective methodology in leadership coaching

- Offers a coherent theoretical framework, empirical validation and well developed and reliable psychometric assessment tools
- Standardized inventories have been developed to measure strengths in coachees – Realise2:
  - Development tool that assesses 60 different attributes or strengths
  - E.g., curiosity, authenticity, action
- Asking coaches to follow a defined, written protocol and track coachee behavior within that framework was used as a way to operationalize coaching interventions.
- Operationalization also offered the opportunity to be specific and consistent about what is meant by strengths development.
- Strength-based leadership coaching protocol – Used in all coaching sessions as a model for delivery of strength based coaching:
  - Strength awareness – taking Realise 2 and MLQ and applying strengths to performance issues
  - Managing potential overuse of strengths - arrogance
  - Pairing strengths with other complimentary competencies – technical expertise
  - Aligning strengths with broader business goals - innovation

### Process

#### Methods used

- 37 senior managers from a non-for-profit organization, with managerial responsibility for a number of direct reports
- Research design: nonequivalent control group design with two cohorts – coaching group and waitlist group
- Coaches: external and highly experienced
- Procedure:
  - Using the strength-based coaching protocol to set strength based objectives for participants

- Participants completing Realise2 and received feedback from coaches with the aim of identifying existing strengths and areas for development
- MLQ 360 tool used to provide multirater feedback on participants scores on the FLRM dimensions – transformational, transactional and laissez faire leadership styles
- Coaches track coachees progress on 3 selected goals using the principles included in the coaching protocol

## Results

- Significant increase is shown in MLQ 360-rater feedback after strength-based coaching is completed. This indicated that participants' transformational leadership style improved via coaching
- Significant increase in leadership outcomes for participants – other perceived them to be more effective, reported greater satisfaction with their leadership and were willing to provide extra discretionary effort
- Adherence to the coaching protocol used showed significant positive prediction of transformation leadership scores. This suggests that a structured strength-based methodology can be highly effective at enhancing transformational leadership
- FLRM is recognised as an effective model that can be used as a coaching outcome criterion when it comes to leadership coaching effectiveness