

What is the function of assessments in executive coaching practices?

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Abstract

This research will interpret how executive coaches use assessments in their work with clients and describe the learning generated from the use of assessments. In current academic research executive coaching has been the most studied subtopic of coaching and is considered to be the forerunner among other forms of coaching (Griffiths & Campbell, 2009). The assessment/data gathering phase is widely regarded as having a critical place in the process of coaching. Assessments have been utilized for years to predict how an individual will act or react and how that individual can more effectively interact with others, giving the executive coach, client, and the organization insight into the individual's behavior. There are no standard principles or practices for using assessments in executive coaching, however. **QUESTIONS:** How have executive coaches used assessments in their coaching practice? How do executive coaches describe their learning from utilizing assessments with their clients? What benefits and challenges do executive coaches describe in working with assessments? **METHODS:** Semi-structured interviews will be conducted with 12 participants who have been practicing as executive coaches for at least five years. Interviews will be audio recorded and transcribed. The data will be analyzed using the constant comparative method to identify descriptive categories and themes. **IMPLICATIONS:** The findings from the proposed study will contribute to the literature on executive coaching by examining it through an adult education lens. It will also build knowledge of best practices in an effort to standardize the profession of executive coaching.

Keywords: executive coaching, assessments, experiential learning, professional development

Chapter I

Background of the Problem

Introduction

The history of coaching goes back to the days of Socrates, who was deemed the first coach because of clever leading remarks such as, “I cannot teach anybody anything; I can only make them think.” The origins of the term “coaching” come from Hungary where, in the village of Kocs, a covered and very comfortable carriage (coach) safely carried passengers through the harsh terrain and elements to their destinations. Coaching can now refer to a human coach helping to carry a client from one point to another through the harsh terrains of the client’s environment (Stern, 2004).

In current academic research, executive coaching has been the most studied subtopic of coaching and is considered to be the forerunner among other forms of coaching (Griffiths & Campbell, 2009). Definitions of executive coaching generally focus on the practice of working with executives one-on-one to assist them in leadership roles and performance in their organizations. Orenstein (2006) states that executive coaching is a “one-on-one intervention with a senior manager for the purpose of improving or enhancing management skills” (p. 106), whereas Stern (2004) defines it as a one-on-one interaction that is driven by data and is “an experiential, individualized, leadership development process that builds a leader’s capability to achieve short and long-term organizational goals” (p. 154). Another definition by Griffiths & Campbell (2009) declares that coaching is more of a “goal-directed, multi-experience process for enhancing people, work and life and as well as an industry” (p. 16). There are common roots in all of these definitions of executive coaching: it is a process; it is about individuals; and it supports those individuals in achieving their personal and organizational goals. For this research,

the definition of executive coaching by Orenstein (2006) will be used: it is a “one-on-one intervention with a senior manager for the purpose of improving or enhancing management skills” (p.106).

Whereas Stern (2004) defines it as a one-on-one interaction that is driven by data and is “an experiential, individualized, leadership development process that builds a leader’s capability to achieve short and long-term organizational goals” (p.154). Another definition by Griffiths & Campbell (2009) declares that coaching is more of a “goal-directed, multi-experience process for enhancing people, work and life and as well as an industry” (p. 16). There are common roots in all of these definitions of executive coaching: it is a process; it is about individuals; and it supports those individuals in achieving their personal and organizational goals.

Executive coaches come from various backgrounds and disciplines and an even broader range of credentials and techniques they use to improve clients’ performance. The profession provides services across corporate, governmental, and nonprofit sectors, exceeding over 25,000 practitioners worldwide (Orenstein, 2006). What does it take to be an effective coach? Wasylshyn (2003) discovered that there are three personal characteristics that clients look for: “(a) the ability to form a strong ‘connection’ with the executive, (b) professionalism, and (c) use of a clean and sound coaching methodology” (p. 98).). The executive coach needs to have credibility and competence when working with clients one-on-one to implement organizational change or transform individuals. Additionally, coaches must be perceived as respectful, caring, and practical. . The assessment process, one of the major steps in the coaching process, allows for the coach to obtain that credibility. Executive coaches, “regardless of their background need some basic knowledge and expertise,” (Stern, 2004, p. 156) one element being individual

assessments. Diedrich (1996) believes that it is important to use the coaching process in order to be considered “value-added.”

Even though there are many principles and processes that support the role of executive coaching in assisting individual development, these principles and processes vary. Feldman and Lankau (2005) identify four major activities: (1) data gathering, (2) feedback, (3) implementation (coaching), and (4) evaluation. Linley et al. (2010) look at the coaching process as three major steps: (1) identification, (2) assessment, and (3) development of an individual’s strengths. Stern (2004) states that executive coaches commonly preplan and follow a seven-step process: (1) initial needs analysis, (2) contracting, (3) data gathering, (4) specific goal setting, (5) coaching, (6) measuring and reporting results, and (7) transitioning into long-term efforts for the executive and the company.

Assessments and Coaching

Although there are differences in the processes of executive coaching, assessment is still a common factor. Best (2010) states that “the assessment phase of a coaching relationship is an indispensable component of the process” (p. 22). Successful assessments help coachees see their own strengths and weaknesses, permitting them to enhance and utilize their strengths and manage their weaknesses (Birkman International, 2007) as well as function more effectively (Diedrich, 1996). Furthermore, assessments are used inside of organizations to determine employee success potential or to explore whether a person is a good fit for the organization and as a developmental tool to help individuals function effectively or improve their effectiveness (Diedrich, 1996).

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Personality Assessments

Assessments are the wave of the future, and their use is on the rise. The use of personality assessments alone has risen from 34 percent in 2005 to 65 percent in 2006 (Birkman International, 2007). Research has found that “using one’s strengths leads to a range of positive outcomes including better goal attainment, higher self-esteem, self-efficacy, vitality and well being. Those who know their positive attributes also tend to have higher levels of work engagement, perform better at work, and are more constructive in their own development” (Linley et al., 2010). Birkman believes assessments are on the rise because of increased research on their validity and predictive value and because more organizations are accepting the research and applying the personality assessments. For executive coaches, assessments can give further insight into clients, giving the clients new and fresh viewpoints of their worlds, how they interact with others, and how they perform in their organizations.

Function of Assessments in Coaching

Successful assessments have potential leaders see their own strengths and weaknesses, permitting them to enhance and utilize their strengths and manage their weaknesses (Birkman International, 2007). Furthermore, assessments are used inside of organizations to determine employee success or explore whether a person is a good “fit” for the organization, and as a developmental tool to help individuals function effectively or improve their effectiveness (Diedrich, 1996). Research finds that “using one’s strengths leads to a range of positive outcomes including better goal attainment, higher self-esteem, self-efficacy, vitality and well being. Those who know their positive attributes also tend to have higher levels of work engagement, perform better at work, and are more constructive in their own development” (Linley et al., 2010).

Even though there are limitations to using assessments, considering that one-third of individuals cannot reliably identify their own strengths, assessments do provide both client and coach with a ready framework and a language with which to move forward (Linley et al., 2010). This common language can be shared and understood by the coach and the individual creating a culture and mindset shift through changing the nature of the conversations that people have, moving from their often inherent negativity bias to what Linley (2010) described as the positivity payoff—the idea and evidence that there are multiple positive outcomes that flow from paying more attention to the positive aspects of human experience” (Linley et al., 2010).

Assessments provide a further advantage of a clear framework in which coach and client can locate and understand strengths in context and in practice. In the absence of a framework, “professional practitioners have to depend much more on their own intrinsic models of strengths development, while lay consumers are left to make sense of what can be quite complex information without a guide map to do so” (Linley et al., 2010, p. 167).

Today, “assessing personal styles at all levels within a company is becoming best practice, replacing the old trend of assessing only upper-level employees. This trend supports the assertion that there will be an increased utilization of personality assessments throughout organizations of all sizes and at all levels” (Birkman International, 2007, p. 4). Birkman (2007) also states that

Personality assessments are one aspect of the pre-employment screening process, and their use is increasing because of their low cost and time savings. Personality assessments may be better than skill tests for matching a candidate’s strengths with the job’s responsibilities. Further, it has been stated that companies who use personality assessments in pre-employment screenings are three to five times more likely to hire the

right person for the job the first time. This finding is evidence of the growing amount of research that substantiates the effectiveness of personality assessments. (p. 8)

Statement of the Problem

The practice of coaching varies in assessment (data gathering), which is widely regarded as having a critical place in the process of coaching. Assessments have been used for years to help potential leaders see their own strengths and weaknesses, allowing them to see how to enhance their strengths and manage their weaknesses. They have also been used to predict how an individual will act or react and how that individual can more effectively interact with others, giving the executive coach, client, and the organization insight into the individual's behavior (Birkman International, 2007). In particular, Birkman's research observed that psychometric personality assessments are becoming increasingly important in leadership development even though there is no standard assessment or manner of use. In the absence of a standardized process of assessment, "professional practitioners have to depend much more on their own intrinsic models of strengths development, while lay consumers are left to make sense of what can be quite complex information without a guide map to do so" (Linley et al., 2010, p. 167).

Purpose of Study

The purpose of this study entails two key aspects which are to bring out a clear understanding of the concept of assessment in executive coaching practices and to respond to the research questions. To begin with, it is significant to identify the two key aspects being addressed in the study in order to respond to the research questions accordingly. It is impossible to respond to questions without understanding the motive and concept behind them. Executive coaching is a key aspect of advancing organizational performances (Robbins & Judge, 2007, p.172). The executives who may be new in organizations may require some advices and

directions as well as approaches and strategies on how to advance performance and penetrate into the marketing field. As mentioned by Blackman-Sheppard (2004) in the article *Executive Coaching*, the executive coaches are professionals who are specialized on helping the executives concerning the best approaches that lead to quality performances (p.214). Among the key aspects that the executive coaches examine in an organization before offering their advices include organizational culture, team assessments, the executive's personality, and employee performance among others. Executive coaching entails a step-by-step procedural approach to leadership where the coach offers the needed knowledge in a proficient manner (Blackman-Sheppard, 2004, p.214). Understanding this concept helps address other issues in organizations such as professional development and significance of experiential learning for the executives. The fact that executive coaching entails all these shows how significant it is to the betterment of organizations (Nelson & Cooper, 2007, p.168).

Another key purpose of the study is to respond to the research questions which show our understanding of the topic and the main aspects of the study. These questions include, how have executive coaches used assessments in their coaching practice? How do executive coaches describe their learning from utilizing assessments and the impact on their clients? And what benefits and challenges do executive coaches describe in working with assessments? These questions are addressed later in the study to determine if they have been appropriately addressed or not.

Scope of the Study

This study looks at the function of assessments in executive coaching practices. The aspect of coaching is extremely broad because there are different forms of coaching that takes place at different places. The fact that this study could not cover the entire aspect of coaching

made it settle on researching about executive coaching which is related to the concept of organizational management. Similarly, assessment is also a wide concept because there are numerous forms of assessments that normally take place. For example, there are school assessments where students are tested on what they learn in class in order for them to demonstrate their understanding of what they learn.

However, this study had to stick to the concept of assessment from a personal point of view where things such as personality assessment, behavioral assessment and team assessments are examined (Lusthaus, Inter-American Development Bank & International Development Research Centre, 2002). All these forms of assessments focus on the functions of an administrative in an organization. According to Pardini (2003), the executive employs an executive coach to take him through the assessment processes in order to find out where the problem lies and help him improve the performance of the organization (p.213). This means that the scope of my study include executives of different organizations, executive coaches who helps solve the challenges facing the executive in his management duty. The function of assessment in this study is limited to identification of challenges facing the executive in his line of duty in the organization.

In order to acquired the desired results, the study involves a research methodology which helps it respond to the research questions. The methodology used for this research is the qualitative design method. This technique was selected for this research in order to generate data-rich details, stories, illustrations encompassing the function assessments play in the coaching practices of executive coaches (Halas & Klobučar, 2009, p.109). Qualitative research is used to endorse a profound understanding from the point of view of the research participants, permitting the researcher to understand the meaning the participants make of their experience in

the context of their environment. Therefore, the study meets its objective of examining the entire function of assessments in executive coaching practices because it acquires the desired outcomes through its findings. The study also manages to meet its objective of responding to the research questions which are as shown below.

Research Questions

This research will examine the function of assessments in executive coaching practices.

Specifically, the following research questions will be asked:

1. How have executive coaches used assessments in their coaching practice?
2. How do executive coaches describe their learning from utilizing assessments and the impact on their clients?
3. What benefits and challenges do executive coaches describe in working with assessments?

Importance of the Study

This study will inform the theory and practice of coaching. Currently there is not a lot of literature on the processes of using assessments in coaching. Additionally, the coaching profession does not have a standardized process for using assessments; some coaches use them, and some do not. This research will contribute to the growing profession of coaching by determining whether and how assessments can be an effective tool in executive coaching and what some of the best practices are for using assessments. The research will contribute to the literature by examining this topic from an adult education lens and describing the types of learning generated from the use of assessments in executive coaching.

This study will inform the theory and practice of coaching. Personality assessments have been utilized for years to predict how an individual will act or react and how that individual can more effectively interact with others, giving the executive coach, client, and the organization insight into the individual's behavior. Most personality assessments are used to look at and understand how the client's personality connects with his or her performance (Birkman International, 2007), but currently there is not a lot of literature on the effectiveness of assessments and the processes of using assessments in coaching. Additionally, the coaching profession does not have a standardized process for using assessments; some coaches use them, and some do not. This research will provide the growing profession of coaching with an opportunity to determine whether standardizing assessments can be effective, possibly by regulating coaching processes and improving the requirements for professional certification. In addition, it will benefit the growing literature on coaching by providing a framework within which the effectiveness of the coaching process and the coaching profession can continue to expand. Since currently there is no research on the foundation methods or theories that guide the profession and coaching, this research will provide a grounding of the profession and process of coaching in theory and foundation.

Significance to Theory

Adults are constantly engaged in learning; the question is what type. Looking at the different established theories in adult education, coaching can be seen through the theoretically lens of experiential learning theory in particular formal, informal, and incidental learning. Experiential learning theory defines learning as "the process whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of experience. Knowledge results from the combination of grasping and transforming experience"(Kolb 1984, p. 41). One is always engaging in learning; the

question is what type. One might agree that learning is either formal, informal and or incidental, depending on the intention, awareness and direction (Marsick, Watkins, Callahan, & Volpe, 2011). Formal learning is institutionally sponsored, classroom-based, and highly structured (i.e. training). In contrast, informal learning may occur in institutions, but it is neither classroom-based nor highly structured (Marsick & Watkins, 1990). Informal learning is based on the idea that learning is by chance: one's learning is "organized around real-life experience" (Marsick & Watkins, 1990, p. 55) and is "experienced-based, non-routine and often tacit" (Marsick & Watkins, p. 15). Informal learning can take place anywhere at any time, but the motivation to learn is higher when an individual is confronted with new challenges. The control of learning rests on the learner and is enhanced by critical reflection.

The definition of incidental learning is defined by many as learning "which occurs as a byproduct of something else" (Marsick & Watkins 1990, p.12), or a "byproduct" of some other activity such as task accomplishment, interpersonal interaction, the organizational culture, trial-and-error experimentation, or formal learning. Informal learning can be deliberately encouraged by an organization, or it can take place despite an environment not highly conducive to learning. In short, learning takes place even when one is not conscious of it (Marsick & Watkins 1990, p.12).

When using the informal learning theory in a setting where a coach is working with a client that does not feel like he is valued as an employee, the coach works with the client using the ladder of reflection (gleaned from Ladder of Inference). Starting off the client from the lower rung, the coach collects the observable data, listens, and models an alternative view in the feedback. The two in partnership explore hidden thoughts and misperceptions that are in the way

of learning and action (Marsick & Watkins, 1990). The client is able to see his assumptions and is able to go into the workplace with new thoughts and actions.

There is not a lot of literature where executive coaching is looked at with the experiential learning lens (Stachowiak, 2011). This study allows for the comparison of the different types of learning that takes place in the relationship as a coach and coachee via using assessments in the coaching process.

Similar to the definitions of informal and incidental learning, coaching is about individual learning, supporting the individual in becoming more effective in his own life and in the workplace. All though coaching is highly structured in its design, which does not lend it to be informal or incidental learning; informal and incidental learning can take place anywhere and anytime along with way in the coaching process. (Marsick & Watkins, 1990)

Watkins and Marsick (1990) both state that the essential undertaking for learning is to develop new strategies for enabling an individual to be more effective (p. 207). In the learning process, gaining experience is through working and interacting with people. The learning must take place with the “collaboration and joint inquiry” (p. 209). In coaching, to create new strategies and collaboration with the individual and coach, there are many principals and processes to support the function of coaching in assisting individual development. Although these principals and processes vary, there seems to be a sequence of four major activities: 1) data gathering, 2) feedback, 3) implementation (coaching), and 4) evaluation (Feldman & Lankau, 2005, p. 837). Linley et al. (2010) look at the coaching process as three major steps: 1) identification, 2) assessment and 3) development of an individual’s strengths (165). Stern (2004) states that executive coaches commonly pre-plan and follow a seven-step process: 1) initial needs analysis, 2) contracting, 3) data gathering, 4) specific goal setting, 5) coaching, 6)

measuring and reporting results, and 7) transitioning into long term efforts for the executive and the company (p. 155).

The usage and understanding of this theory in the coaching process also allows for the coach to have a stronger connection with the individual, since in incidental learning, part of the learning is embedded in the interpersonal interaction (Marsick & Watkins, 1990, p. 14) and a social contract is arranged among people who are working together to achieve goals. It is suggested that individuals learn and grow by being open with others (Marsick & Watkins, 1990, p. 40).

Definition of Terms

Coaching refers to the close examination, education, and mentorship offered to an individual by a professional person specialized for that job. Coaching is a profession that works to the benefit of individuals undertaking the process.

Executive Coaching is the process through which workers and/or leaders of an organization engage in education or training that enable them advance their knowledge, skills and talents which in turn, make them better performers. Siljanovska-Davkova (2009) explains that executive coaching process is undertaken by the executives who wish to advance the performance of their organizations (p.67). Personality testing is the methods that are employed to truthfully and constantly measure behavior

Assessments are the processes of bringing together and discussing information from manifold and varied sources in order to establish deep comprehension of what learners know, comprehend, and can do with their information as a result of their learning experiences.

Personality Assessment refers to something that people casually evaluate and illustrate each day when they talk about themselves and others, they often refer to distinct attributes of a person's personality.

Review of the Literature

Topic:

The purpose of this study is to examine the function of assessments in executive coaching practices. Specifically, the following four research questions will guide the study:

1. How do executive coaches use assessments in their coaching practice?
2. How do executive coaches describe their learning from utilizing assessments?
3. What is the executive coaches impression of the impact of assessments on their client's professional development?
4. What benefits or challenges do executive coaches describe in working with assessments?

Outline for Chapter 2

Understanding Professional Development

Annacchino (2007), states that, "Professional development refers to an incessant cycle of ruminating, preparation and undertaking" (p.233). He explains that rumination is where a person is at the moment and where he wishes to be in future. Preparation is done on the development operations to assist one meet personal goal. Undertaking is carrying out and logging personal activities (Annacchino, 2007). Enelow & Kursmark (2003) defines professional development as "the process of advancing and augmenting the abilities of workers through admission to training and education opportunities in the working environment, through exterior or, via watching other

individuals perform the work” (p.301). Professional development assists construct and uphold morale of the workers, and is believed to attract higher quality employees to one’s organization (Moon, 2004).

According to Annacchino (2007), professional development is categorized into two which are initial professional development (IPD) and continuing professional development (CPD). The initial professional development (IPD), as mentioned by Garet and National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance (2008), is “the development one does when he first joins the place of work” (p.196). This time will last for approximately first four years in the place of work. They emphasize that, “After this period, a person applies for professional membership grade where he achieves expertise membership that enables him uphold skills and capabilities at a professional level” (Garet & National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, 2008, p.196). This falls under the continuing professional development (CPD) where an individual starts taking part in operations at a superior level.

How Executive Coaching falls under Professional Development

Numerous institutions are focusing on executive coaching as a means to speed up expertise and personal development. According to Halley and Fridian (2009), executive coaching entails a step-by-step procedural approach to leadership where the coach offers the needed knowledge in a proficient manner. The organization might have become unproductive because, as the Halley and Fridian mentions (2009), “Luck of ideas to further the processes or lack of knowledge concerning the significance of hard work or team work” (p.333). Executive coaching comes in when something is not working out in the organization especially where the organization wishes to retain its current workers. However, these workers might be lacking some skills on the best way to deal with a certain state of affairs which they may require help on the

way forward (Ronis, 2007). That is where both executive coaching and professional development comes in because as mentioned earlier by Halley and Fridian (2009), “professional development is the process of advancing and augmenting the abilities of workers through admission to training and education opportunities in the working environment, through exterior or, via watching other individuals perform the work” (p.332).

Ronis (2007), states that executive coaching helps build up executive-level abilities, developmental and expansion requirements which influence the whole organization. He adds on that, “The executive coaching processes concentrate on facilitating personal natural talents and build up powerful headship” (Ronis, 2007, p.188). This evidently shows that professional development and executive coaching are consistent in the sense that they both focus on enhancing organizational performance. The only difference is that professional development sometimes involves watching other persons perform their duty and learn from it (Ronis, 2007). Sandler (2011) mentions that, “Executive coaching entails personal tutoring process where one explores his natural talents and passion to undertake some activities” (p.76). Both professional development and executive coaching have benefits such as managing changeovers through retaining and adding knowledge and skills to the current staff, whetting skills of future heads, generating at crest performance, and identifying fresh solutions and routes to success (Sandler, 2011). McAdam (2005) states further that, “Both professional development and executive coaching help come up with conflict management solutions, transformational headship, financial management and strategic planning through a continuous process of learning or training the workers” (p.341).

Executive Coaching as a Developmental Tool

In the present demanding business surroundings where cost stress leading to cajole organizations, executive heads with extremely direct accounts, and ‘swiftness to market’ as a competitive advantage with time demands, executives have restricted chance to dedicate time and energy to their personal development as heads. Siljanovska-Davkova (2009) mentions in his article termed *Legal and institutional framework of local self-government in the Republic of Macedonia* that, “numerous executives fight hard to accomplish the liabilities of their positions and are extremely busy to get back and learn from their experiences or to apply modifications to content best management practices” (p.113). This is where executive coaching comes in because it enables them progress their natural talents and skills while still at work. Siljanovska-Davkova mentions at some point that executive coaching victory has transformed the lives of numerous people in different organizations (Siljanovska-Davkova, 2009, p.114). The notion of executive coaching has ‘taken on legs’ and has enlarged to massive companies and become the recognized paradigm that is well-liked by many individuals.

Executive coaching has proven to be a developmental tool because it has assisted technical luminaries become more efficient in executive positions. Because of the unbelievable successes that organizations identified, executive coaching is now present to smaller businesses via what is known as business coaching. Any instrument that ensures progress in business or corporate activities is a developmental tool. According to Underhill, McAnally and Koriath, (2007), the fact that executive coaching has gone beyond that through advancing talents and skills proves that it is indeed a developmental tool designed to transform organizations and corporations. As a person might imagine, the outcomes attained by coaching clients have been extremely exciting (Underhill, McAnally & Koriath, 2007, p.231). However, more significantly, it has been proven in numerous independent surveys that executive coaching offers a more than

ample “return on investment.” The purpose of establishing most of these organizations and companies is to have a return on investment through expanding beyond borders and offering products and/or services overseas. Ramachandra, Anubama and Mansor, Abu (2011) states clearly in their article *Calling line managers in employee continuous professional development in South East Asia* that, executive coaching as a developmental tool ensure these purpose is perfectly achieved. According to the article *Realization and experience of professional mechatronics e-training*, some surveys conducted on organizations in the United States show from 500 percent to 1000 percent ROI for businesses and executives who undergo coaching (Rojko, Hercog & Jezernik, 2009).

History of Coaching

According to McAdam, (2005), “Coaching has been present as long as individuals have dwelled on earth. For centuries now, the world’s painters, athletes, artists, rulers, kings, and generals have used personal coaches to establish and facilitate their performance” (p342). In the 1960s, particularly in the US, McAdam (2005), explains that the sports coaching model started to be embraced by the business environment. In the past, three decades or so supplementary morphing took place and education and development have become vital attributes of organizations and businesses. This has been additionally been dictated by the swift alteration in a worldwide market (British Psychological Society, 2012). This means that coaching models centered on the standards of education and psychology transformed to meet the altering requirements of organizations and businesses internationally.

Even the casual viewer will realize that presently, coaching for small business possessors, public institutions, and corporations is propagating at a strange rate. Presently, the success of coaching has shaped people. According to British Psychological Society (2012), “the fact that

coaching has advanced to massive companies and organization has made it be termed as executive coaching” (p.263). This has enabled so many individuals become highly effective in decision-making positions. Small businesses have also embraced to a large extent the aspect of coaching which has become familiar as business coaching. Underhill, McAnally and Koriath, (2007) adds on that, “coaching is designed to improve the skills and abilities of the performers to enable them become better persons in what they undertake. It has given a lot of people the confidence to initiate businesses with massive hope of attaining return on investment” (p.312). They understand well that, with coaching process at hand, they can never go wrong which ensures they are on the right course whether the business is booming or still slugging (Underhill, McAnally & Koriath, 2007).

As the profession of executive coaching shifted into small business market, there were a multitude of fresh challenges (Walter & Marks, 2003). The principal coaching design of concentrating on personal development only was far from becoming effectual for the small business possessors. According to Walter and Marks, (2003), this happened because “the business possessor was the core of each operation that was undertaken within the corporate; they were faced with a broader diversity of business difficulties” (p.241). On the contrary, nevertheless, they had minimal resources to conquer them. In the process of this progression, some of the clients have come to believe that coaches are personal physical educators for their businesses. Walter and Marks, (2003) emphasizes that this is the reason why coaches are coming up with fresh programs and services to conquer these difficulties in the business markets. As part of the excelling business design, Zirovnik (2012) states, “coaches will go on coming up with fresh programs and services which will make them proud associate members of the World Association of Business Coaches (WABC) and the global Coaching Network (GCN)” (p. 222).

The same challenges have been experienced in organizations and companies, but they are easily combated because the coaches do not have to deal with one person as observed in personal business. They deal with a group of workers or leaders who wish to advance and take the organization at another level. The mutual understanding and interest to gain and progress their skills and abilities enable them to work as a team and easily overcome the challenges (Zirovnik, 2012). In fact, the executive coaches find it easy to handle or coach workers or leaders in an organization than a business individual handling personal business.

Understanding Executive Coaching

According to Valerio and Lee (2005), “executive coaching is the process through which workers and/or leaders of an organization engage in education or training that enable them advance their knowledge, skills and talents which in turn, make them better performers” (p.321). Executive coaching takes place while the workers are still at work where they are shown new concepts and programs as they continue undertaking their work. It is where the coach notices where they go wrong and impact them with new skills and knowledge that enable them to become competent and strengthen the competitive advantage of the organization (McAdam, 2005). Leadership coaching is highly required presently more than ever as a vital instrument for organizational transformation. Transformation is necessary for an organization to develop and become accustomed to present time’s swiftly shifting marketplace, although individuals and organizations are logically dead set against change (Underhill, McAnally & Koriath, 2007). Leadership coaching can enhance productive modification in individuals, teams and structures through facilitating leaders, workers, and managers to discover potential that may have otherwise been untapped.

In unison, numerous organizations discover that the conventional hierarchical design of heading and influencing workers is not longer most favorable to victory in today's complicated and vibrant souk. Valerio and Lee (2005) stresses on that, "In order to become accustomed of more collaborative, relational, and consultative designs for heading and influencing, businesses and organizations are transforming to fabricate coaching cultures that motivate organizational education and flexibility" (p321). Moreover, leadership coaching has come up as the most excellent means of assisting people learn to reason and work effectively together as a team. Team work, proper communication and friendship or associations, are the building blocks of organizational success. According to McAdam (2005), "proper communication leads to friendships and associations, which in turn lead to team work that ensures competency and organizational success" (p.345). The ability to coach managers or heads is a principal competency for those assisting organization to grow. Through coaching process, Sandler emphasizes that leaders discover how to optimize the worth of organizations and teams (Sandler, 2011). Leadership coaching assists clarify beliefs, vision, and values, as well as, stretch the ability to lead people and influence them in different ways. Through executive coaching leaders become or act as catalysts of transformation within their organizations.

Why Executive Coaching?

Executive coaching is simply a developmental tool that enhances understanding of concepts. It is always significant for managers and workers to comprehend how things takes place, why they occur, what an individual can do and what should not to be done (Halley & Fridian, 2009). Peng (2005), on the other hand, states that "an administrator needs to be in a state of understanding that workers are unable to show their competency because there is no aspect of team work" (p. 356). He has to be in a situation to comprehend that there is no team work

because the organization lacks friendship and associations among the workers. Moreover, the manager should comprehend that lack of friendship among the workers is a result of poor communication within the organization which starts with him (Peng, 2005). Executive coaching is significant because it enables both leaders and workers discover the essence of proper communication, close ties and friendships as well as team work.

Executive coaching is significant because it enables the leaders identify the marketing field, understand the fluctuations experienced and the economic imbalances so that they know how to adjust or escape losses when they engage in selling products or services. It is significant for the leaders to understand the surroundings in which they are situated in order to associate well with the neighbors (McIvor & Raynor, 2007). For example, different communities have different cultures and ethnic beliefs. McIvor and Raynor (2007) adds on that “When an organization is established in a certain community, it must be able to learn, understand and be consistent with the cultural beliefs and ethnic values of that community in order to gain confidence and support from the people in that society” (p.303). Executive coaching encompasses all these activities and many others. It digs deep to all aspects that might make the organization successful through examining the factors that can make it unsuccessful.

Therefore, it is significant to note that for whatever reason, different from other sorts of training, coaching concentrates on a precise means of learning for the executive. It is thought that the more a person is engrossed in discovering challenges, in trying out and implementing solutions for them and in assessing outcomes, the more absolute and enduring the learning process becomes (Walter & Marks, 2003). This form of self-advancement has a tendency to bring about education with a profound comprehension than learning that is taught in institutions or class. Note that executive coaching is learning that takes place while at work so that the coach

can identify where the leader goes wrong and correct him instantly. According to Walter and Marks (2003), “When issued with the correct circumstances, one-on-one interface with a purposeful third party, who is not connected to the organization or other company influences, can offer a focus that other kinds of organizational support cannot provide” (p. 411).

An executive coach is a person who has the intention to see the organization improve through strengthening its competitive advantage, as opposed to other influencers who might have personal interests on the organization. Coaching establishes the manager in ‘real time’ within the framework of their present job while permitting them to uphold their day-to-day liabilities. In order to assist put coaching into viewpoint, it is significant to distinguish between mentoring, coaching, therapy/counseling, and consulting (Moon, 2004). Each title has its specific function and responsibility which needs not to be mystified with the other. According to Weinstein Whittington and Leiba (2003), “an executive coach cannot be a mentor despite the fact that he impact knowledge and skills into the mind of the organizational leader” (p.290). In contrast to therapy, which sinks deep about a variety of issues normally dealing with the past and consulting which mostly results in issuing the client responses, coaching is more action-oriented and concentrates principally on the current and the future.

Executive coaching concentrates on what the client wants and makes use of a procedure through the one-on-one coaching sittings to enable the client to self-identify, learn and determine their personal responses (McIvor & Raynor, 2007). Therefore, executive coaching is significant because it makes a lot of sense to the client to the extent that he discovers his own mistakes and determines personal answers without being informed by the coach which mostly happens during counseling. It is the client who establishes the aims and devotes to their aims, while permitting the coach to assist hold them accountable.

Different Types of Coaching

Coaching can depict different types although most of them lead to attainment of identical goals. For example, all organizational and company engage in executive coaching because they want to advance their performance and strengthen their competitive advantage. The following are the key types of coaching applied in organizations (Underhill, McAnally & Koriath, 2007).

Performance Coaching: this coaching style entails coaching operations that aim at facilitating a person's performance in their present role at workplace, to augment their efficiency and productivity at place of work. The performance of a person like the manager of an organization is extremely vital because it enables the entire organization to become competitive (Weinstein, Whittington & Leiba, 2003). The personal performance coaching draws from its theoretical foundations and models from sports psychology and business, as well as general psychological theory.

Skills Coaching: this type of coaching concentrates on the central skills a worker requires to perform in their position. Skills coaching offer a supple, adaptive, 'real time' loom to skills establishment. Sandler (2011) explains that, "Coaching programs are custom-made precisely to the person and are concentrated on attaining a number of skill growth aims that are connected to the requirements of the organization" (p.361).

Career Coaching: it is the coaching that concentrates on personal career concerns, with the coach drawing out and employing feedback on the person's capabilities as part of a discussion of career alternatives (Walter & Marks, 2003). The process normally leads to augmented clarity, personal transformation and forward action.

Personal or life coaching: this kind of coaching offers support to people wishing to make certain form of essential alterations take place within their lives (National Research Council, Koenig, &

Bachman, 2004). The function of the coach in this type of coaching is to assist people explore what they desire in their livelihood and how they might attain their ambitions and accomplish their needs. Personal or life coaching takes the person's agenda as its starting point and tries as much as possible to build on it and help attain the objectives.

Business Coaching: this type of coaching is always undertaken within the constrictions placed on the person or group by the organizational framework (Underhill, McAnally & Koriath, 2007).

Executive coaching: this is the one to one performance coaching which is gradually more being identified as the way for organizations and people to perk up performance. Through advancing the performance of the most powerful individuals within the organization, the hypothesis goes that business outcomes need to get better. Executive coaching is frequently delivered through coaches operating from exterior to the organization whose operations are demanded for an approved duration or number of coaching sessions (Halley & Fridian, 2009).

Team facilitation: this type of coaching assumes role as catalyst to teamwork and is precisely precious during the finances and strategic planning period. It is clear that coaching a team of workers before presentation can radically advance performance and self assurance.

Work Shadowing: apart from being a means of discovering a person's conduct and performance, work shadowing is an outstanding excellent technique of getting instant criticism on behavior, with a discussion of optional means of handling future such circumstances (Ronis, 2007).

An Effective Executive Coach

An effective executive coach entails principals and standards that are consistent with organizational success. As Blackman-Sheppard (2004) mentions, "An effective executive coach is one whose interest is to impact client positively and enable them perform better" (p.164). He is a person who avoids associating with the organization at any given cost in order to offer the best.

His work is to monitor what his client does and advise him accordingly (Walter & Marks, 2003). Several administrators work hard to meet the liabilities of their posts and are extremely busy and pressured to step back and learn from their past experiences or to apply modification to content the most excellent practices. The reasons for selecting coaching extend above the need to resolve or correct problem behaviors issues (Cherry, 2006). Executive coaching is also selected to establish executive-level abilities, developmental and expansion requirements which influence the whole organization. The coach is aware of the aspect of behavior and performance problems and he handles the client with utmost professionalism.

Since the executive coach employs professionalism and the end results are admirable shows that he is effective in his undertaking. In a survey undertaken by Diane Lewis in the United States, respondents discovered various motives for hiring executive coaches (Moon, 2004). Moon (2004), states that “The reasons issued resolve around solving the challenges and developmental stressing” (p.212). They could be illustrated as a transformation-oriented, with a stress on complementing and refocusing the skills of participants, or growth-oriented, a stress on speeding up the education curve for high-latent or currently promoted administrators. The first motive for hiring executive coaches was to develop the leadership abilities of high potential people (Peng, 2005). This aspect was supported by 86 percent of the participants. The second reason was that the participants want to advance the odds that freshly promoted executives would be triumphant. This was supported by 64 percent of the respondents (Blackman-Sheppard, 2004).

Moreover, they also supported executive coaching because it enables develop leadership and management abilities among their technological individuals. This concept was supported by 59 percent of the respondents. They also supported it because it helps correct behavioral

difficulties at the management level (Halley & Fridian, 2009). This was supported by 70 percent of the respondents while the last reason that was supported by 59 percent of the respondents was that executive coaches help heads solve interpersonal conflicts among the workers.

The Executive Coaching Process

Every coaching appointment starts with a discovery sitting of some kind. This is the period where the latent client and coach have a conversation to establish and discuss numerous items which may engross what the client expects in the coaching association, what the coaching association is and is not, the system of coaching and how it reverberates with the client, and laws of appointment and protocol (McIvor & Raynor, 2007). Coaching is always confidential because there are some sensitive issues that might arise and must not be disclosed. According to Baek Kyoo (2007), priority to the client is the way forward, nothing else.

Other items involved include the official documents of the coach which must be comparative to the needs of the client, timing and logistics of the process, how the education will be gauged, and lastly, accord to move forward. The coaching process engrosses different coaching options. Kyoo mentions that, in numerous cases, “the coaching sessions takes place on a weekly basis (3 to 4 times per month)” (p201). Now that the client anticipates making alterations and step ups for themselves, weekly teachings assist keep the procedure on course and also operate as an accountability quantify to the incremental advancement, along with tackling any other circumstances the client wishes to talk about with the coach.

Developmental Coaching (8-15 hours)

Usually, this takes a maximum of three months but can also be less than that. The concentrate of the work is to discover and prioritize needs pertaining development. This operation is normally undertaken in juxtaposition with the executive and their supervisor or HR

(Moon, 2004). Sometimes interviews are undertaken and a developmental scheme is developed with the client. This coaching initiates the scheme with a swift changeover to client sovereignty with the HR and supervisor support for continued growth. This form of coaching is illustrated further as a three-way joint venture between the client, the organization and the coach, in which all concerned parties concur on precise goals and considerations. Kyoo (2007) emphasizes that concepts discussed during the coaching session nevertheless, exterior of the set of limitations, are regarded “private and confidential” (p.231).

Executive Coaching (30 – 60 hours)

This coaching process is taken for a minimum time of six months but can go as far as one year. The focal point is to recognize and prioritize developmental concepts and aims with an action plan. According to Pardini (2003), “The coach has the responsibility to collect data through a client questionnaire, a 360 degree feedback procedure, and/or other analytical evaluations like Strength Finders and Myers-Briggs among others” (p.99). The coach has a liability of working with the client to establish the plan, its application and successive follow-up (Walter & Marks, 2003). The coach also offers support to the executive in tackling and concentrating on strategic concepts of the association, while consequently, addresses private developmental concepts.

Team Coaching (30 – 60 hours)

In many occasions, an administrative team will have an off-site meeting where the strategic plan of the company is debated, values and vision and developed, and/or team aims are established. As an outcome of this distinct team procedure, people make a “commitment” to transform in order to assist the organization progress to the next degree (Halley & Fridian, 2009). In other words, if transformation is to take place, each person has to devote to undertaking

something distinct than they have undertaken before. Personal executive coaching then comes after the off-site conference for six to around twelve months to make sure the team goals are met and remain in focal point. This illustration of executive coaching would be applicable. Periodical “check-ins” with the team is conducted to validate growth and make sure primary priorities are still truthful.

Moon (2004) describes that, “Executive coaching becomes planned in the grounding that precedes the real coaching procedure but before it starts, the coach meets with the executive headship of the client to describe the tactical context” (p.213). This entails addressing some of the critical questions. These questions include, what are the primary business difficulties facing the organization? (Ronis, 2007) What business aims is the person attempting to attain? What central values best illustrate a frequent structure of how business outcomes are attained in the organization? What headship knowledge, skills, and capabilities have been vital for the victory in organization in the precedent? What has to be done in future? How does the organization establish whether a person has the leadership bench potencies to compete efficiently in the future? What is the organizational tactics for developing future heads? How do the executive assess the success of his approach? Does the organization have confirmed techniques to attract, grow, and maintain needed talent?

Once the tactical context has been plotted out, the real executive coaching process can start (Moon, 2004). From the view point of the executives being trained, this is the individual element of the coaching procedure, where their individual specific potencies and development requirements are benchmarked against the headship characteristics required to attain the tactical aims of the business. These questions can be disturbing to the executive to find responses to them (Underhill, McAnally & Koriath, 2007). However, he has an option of conducting the

executive coach who can help simplify them and explain one concept after another. He can also help the executive find solutions to all the questions through issuing him with best approaches and strategies of handling difficulties facing the organization.

Valerio and Lee (2005) states firmly that the coaching procedure can be split into five distinct steps. The actual determination of the splitting lines between the personal steps is not significant as compared to the loom that is assumed to tackle the problems that come up during the process as a whole (Valerio & Lee, 2005). They mention that, “The first step is careful contracting which requires skill to come up with a trusting surrounding where open conversation can take place and fundamental issues can be brought to light (p.261). The contracting dialogue entails accord pertaining confidentiality boundaries, recognition of success features for a precise executive or team’s present and latent function, and recognition of precise outcomes anticipated. Others that are mentioned by Ronis (2007), include clarity concerning functions and responsibilities, confirmation that the chemistry is right, accord concerning milestones and timelines and accords concerning financial terms. The second step as stated by Valerio and Lee (2005), is comprehensive evaluation where the executive coach has to undertake the evaluation process to identify where the problems lie and the best approach of solving them. The assessments include personality assessments, behavioral assessments, team assessments, and performance assessments (Peng, 2005). The third step is feedback and action planning where the executive coach gives the executive feedback of strategies and best approach as well as an action plan on how to move forward. The fourth and fifth steps are active learning and evaluating and supporting accomplishment respectively (Valerio & Lee, 2005).

Benefits of Executive Coaching

It is significant to recognize some of the motives why organizations might settle on hiring an executive coach. The following are some of the motives and benefits of executive coaching. The first one is the improvement of the existing culture of the organization (Walter & Marks, 2003). At times when an individual is too close to a circumstance, he or she might not notice the difference and might require a new set of eyes to look at undertake an assessment of what the culture really looks like and its implication to the organization. It never harms to engage an outsider in undertaking an honest evaluation and issuing certain strategic solutions to the best approach on advancing organizational culture. Altering culture is a challenge but it begins with recognizing the common actions, policies, or attributes that may be leading to an unwanted culture within ones agency (McIvor & Raynor, 2007). The second significant benefit of executive coaching is that it augments the abilities of a leader to leverage his or her time and resources.

According to McIvor and Raynor (2007), “Executive coaching puts some sense to the leader and enables him or her to start focusing on certain significant issues” (p.332). Speaking out what one wants to accomplish to the coach assist one comprehend how he is using time and the coach brings fourth some proposals on what to stress and how to best make use of time (Brunning, 2006). Executive coaching enables the leader try as much as possible to eliminate numerous AOBs on his schedule so that he can have sufficient time to accomplish his duties. It also helps him to impose the same knowledge to the workers who also learn to make good use of time and perform to their level best (McIvor & Raynor, 2007). Time is a key factor in progress of any activity. Another key benefit is improvement of the interpersonal skills of the leader.

Brunning (2006) states categorically that, “When the executive coach undertakes the assessment process, he can issue a honest evaluation of interpersonal skills, help one identify

person strengths and weakness as a leader, as well as, how to improve on the weakness so that one can become a great leader” (p.311). The executive coach also helps promote discussion of fresh ideas. Leaders are always great people but sometimes they run short of ideas not because they do not think big but because they are concerned about so many things in the organization (Ronis, 2007). Their daily activities put them under pressure that sometimes pulls them down in terms of performance. Ronis also stipulates that, the presence of a coach helps further discussion on fresh ideas that can take the organization to another level. This means that at times, it is paramount to talk through notions with a person disengaged from personal program because they can offer new insights and an exclusive view point on one’s ideas.

Peng (2005) also contributes on the same by mentioning that, “executive coaching helps obtain an outsider’s point view point” (p.212). The outsiders mostly have numerous contributions meaning that through obtaining an executive coach who can truly listen to the leader and his needs, the leader can reconsider policies, positions and attain fresh insights to difficulties in his office. Lastly, the executive coaching helps clarify, expound, and eloquent the vision of the leader. Each person has a difficult when he has a massive notion, but is facing some problems articulating the notion. An executive coach who can do extremely well at thoughtful listening, can go over the leader’s notions and assist him devise his suggestions (Valerio & Lee, 2005). Additional benefits of executive coaching include provision of a safe and secure opening for the leader to vent, pointing out what the head cannot, will not, or does not see, helps discover a better means of lessening stress, augmenting efficiency, and still have a great life. Executive coaching also assists the executives view, feel, measure, sense, and process more data without tiring themselves.

History of Assessment

Assessment began long time ago when education started being meaningful to people. It was the best way of testing students whether they had understood what they had been taught or not. Education has existed for centuries all over the world although it was initially embraced in Europe before other parts of the world adapted it. Miner (2007) defines assessment as “the process of evaluating and examining the abilities of students in terms of what they were thought to prove their competency” (p.312). The person who performs well in assessments proves to have better learning skills than those who perform poorly as they prove they either never understood the concepts when they were taught or they were too lazy to revise their works after learning the concepts (Miner, 2007). Miner mentions further that in around 1950s and 60s, college conscription was enlarging, and numerous World War II experts were searching for college education. Until that period, the worth of college level education had never been taken seriously, and universities were never anticipated to disclose to exterior audiences what was taking place in their classrooms. In the 1970s, numerous alterations took place in higher learning.

Other people who address the aspect of assessment at length are Debra Nelson and Cary Cooper in their article *Positive organizational behavior*. They mention that, “Numerous universities experienced financial disasters, with the number of learners attending college becoming highly varied and concerns were lifted up that college graduates never had the abilities and skills required in the place of work” (p.243). The worth of higher learning came into question through the public and politicians. The critics stated that the higher learning graduates were extremely unproductive because they could not implement what they learned in college at the place of work. According to these critics, such people who were unproductive in organizations and companies could not be accommodated in such places to undertake professional duties. As a result, around 1984 and 85, four accounts were given out tackling the

need for college restructuring and modification (Lusthaus, Inter-American Development Bank & International Development Research Centre, 2002). The first report addressed the admission to quality undergraduate learning while the second addressed the aspect of integrity in the curriculum offered at college level. The third and fourth reports mentioned by Nelson & Cooper (2007) addressed the involvement in learning and reclamation of a legacy respectively. These accounts highlighted that higher learning needed to become learner-based, and that students, faculty, and educational centers required feedback in order to perform better.

After these accounts, certain states applied performance funding agendas where money was issued to institutions that achieved performance targets like graduation rates, retention rates, and student learning. This made the local certification agencies to get engrossed and needed member institutions to undertake outcome evaluation as a means of upholding their status as attributed institutions (Peng, 2005). In mid 1989, the commission on Institutions of Higher Learning of the schools and colleges under North Central Association initiated the requirement that each affiliated organization undertake outcomes evaluation. Thereafter, professional accrediting bodies like those for engineering, medicine, architecture, and counseling among others, also embraced the outcomes loom to program assessment.

In late 1980s, the evaluation lobby group was manipulated by the employment of quality practices and principles. Universities and colleges chased continuous advancement because of contest for learners, the need to lessen charges and advance the most excellent services, and the aspiration to facilitate education. As Valerie and Lee highlights, one of the pioneers of the most excellent advancement movement is W. E. Deming who developed fourteen standards for continuous improvement (Valerio & Lee, 2005, p.378). These standards have been adapted for education and motivate the assemblage of data for knowledgeable verdicts. The evaluation

movement started with an exterior persuasion on learning and has developed into an interior force of perfection as accountability. Eventually, it is apparent that the most excellent means for institutions to be held responsible to any audience is to integrate the assessment of student learning into the way they undertake their services on regular base.

When faculty jointly take charge of their educational programs, making perceptible their intent and purpose, and setting up a database system of assessment that concentrates on advancing the student learning, the education organization itself is the central beneficiary whereas exterior audiences are contended as well (Friedman, MJF Associates & MediVision, 2005). Presently, the education system, not only in the United States but the entire world, has advanced in terms of quality and performance. The competition among the universities and colleges from different regions makes learning extremely interesting and enables quality performance.

Understanding Assessments

Assessment refers to the process of bringing together and discussing information from manifold and varied sources in order to establish a deep comprehension of what learners know, comprehend, and can do with their information as a result of their learning experiences. The process concludes when evaluation outcomes are employed to advance succeeding learning. This is what Huba and Freed (2000) terms as “shifting of learning-based evaluation from teaching to learning” (p123). The two define assessment as a methodical foundation for making deductions concerning the learning and development of learners. It is the process of describing, choosing, collecting, designing, analyzing, decoding, and employing information to augment learner’s education and development. Assessments are significant because they determine the abilities and

skills of students not only in class but also in the workplace. Students who perform well nowadays also perform better at the workplace.

Different Types of Assessments

According to Halas and Klobučar (2009), assessments depict three main types which are formative, interim, and summative assessments. Formative assessment takes place immediately but never lasts because learners or executives are in the procedure of bringing meaning of fresh content and of incorporating it into what they are familiar with (Halas & Klobučar, 2009, p.134). Feedback to the executives or learners is instant (or nearly so), to assist them alter their behaviors and comprehension without ado. Johnson and Nelson (2004) who also addressed the concept of assessment mentions in their article, *Organizational competence in strategic safety management* that “formative evaluation also makes it possible for the teacher to “turn on a dime” and reorganize instructional activities, strategies, and content centered on executive’s comprehension and performance” (p.254). His or her duty here is identical to that of an executive coach. This is because formative evaluation can be as casual as viewing the executive’s work or as official as a scripted test (Johnson & Nelson, 2004). This proves that formative evaluation is the most influential form of evaluation for advancing student or executive comprehension and performance.

Interim assessment, on the other hand, occurs sporadically throughout a superior period. Feedback to the executive or learner is also almost immediate, but cannot be instant. Interim evaluations have a tendency of becoming more official, using equipments like tests, written assignments, and projects (Johnson & Nelson, 2004, p.154). The student has to be issued a chance to re-illustrate his or her comprehension after the feedback has been assimilated and implemented. Interim evaluations can assist teachers and coaches recognize gaps in learners and

executives' comprehension and instruction, and ideally tutors tackle these before shifting to other things or through weaving remedies into imminent training and operations (McIvor & Raynor, 2007).

The last form of assessment is the summative evaluation which occurs at the summit of a huge hunk of learning, with the outcomes being principally for the school's or teacher's use. Outcomes may take quite a long time before they be returned to the learner or parent. Moreover, feedback to the learner s normally extremely restricted, and the learner normally has no chance to be re-evaluated (Martin, 2010). Therefore, summative evaluation has a tendency of having the slightest impression on advancing a person learner's comprehension or performance. Learners or parents can employ the outcomes of summative evaluations to see where their accomplishments lies in comparison to either a standard (MME/MEAP) or to a movement of learners (normally a grade-level group, like all 6th graders nationally, like Iowa examinations or ACT). Tutors or institutions can employ these evaluations to discover strengths and faults of curriculum and instruction, with enhancements impacting the next period's learners.

Personality Assessments

The aspect of Personality assessment is addressed extensively by Robert Robbins and Judge in their article, *Organizational Behavior*. According to them, personality refers to “something that people casually evaluate and illustrate each day when they talk about themselves and others, they often refer to distinct attributes of a person's personality” (Robbins & Judge, 2007, p.398). Psychologists do much similar thing when they evaluate personality, but on a slightly more methodical and scientific intensity. Personality testing is the methods that are employed to truthfully and constantly measure behavior (Robbins & Judge, 2007, p.398). The personality tests are used in numerous ways. First, they are used to evaluate theories especially

those related to the psychological and psychosocial studies (Moon, 2004). Second, personality test helps examine changes in personality because people change their behaviors depending with circumstances. For instance, it is believed that when women are pregnant, they tend to alter their personality because they become sensitive to changes of the weather and so many other things. Moreover, the test is extremely significant in assessing the efficiency of therapy. When the psychologist understands the personality of his or her client, it becomes easy for him to come up with the best approach on how to help the client find solution to their problems (Halley & Fridian, 2009). Additionally, personality test helps the psychologists in diagnosing psychological challenges even before they become severe on their clients. The last benefit of personality test is screening job candidates.

Types of Personality Assessments

Personality assessment entails two primary forms of personality tests which are self-report inventories and projective tests. Self-report inventories entails having test-takers go through questions and then evaluate how proper the statement or questions apply to them. Among the most widespread self-report inventories is the Minnesota Multiphasic personality catalog, or MMPI (Robbins & Judge, 2007). The second form which is projective tests entails presenting the test-taker with an indistinct scene, scenario, or object and then requesting them to issue their elucidation of the test item. One well-recognized example of a projective test is the Rorschach Inkblot Test. Note that numerous personality evaluations are used to look at and comprehend how the personality of a client associates with his or her performance. The three most frequently used and mentioned assessments that Birkman International's (2007) study points out are Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) and the DISC evaluation are two of the most frequently employed personality evaluations (p.444). Another evaluation form that is well-liked

among executive coaches and institutes is the 360 Degree Evaluation which is a multi-rater evaluation that concentrates on the performance and growth required for the client, permitting the executive coach to evaluate the client and develop goals for advancement (Martin, 2010).

Behavioral Assessments

Brunning (2006) states that behavioral assessments offer a methodical evaluation of a recognized behavior, engrossing examination of the interrelatedness of precursor “triggers” elements of the behavior itself, and outcomes of the behavior. Strengthening factors are recognized and proposals are issued for behavior modification. Behavioral evaluation entails looking at or otherwise gauging an individual’s real behavior – what they really undertake – in one or multiple settings where the individual is undergoing certain kind of behavioral complexity (Friedman, MJF Associates & MediVision, 2005, p.64). Immediately the behavior is described and gauged, keen consideration is issued to distinct factors that may be strengthening and upholding the behavior. Eventually, a detailed structure that entails strategies for altering or substituting the behavior is produced. Behavioral evaluation normally entails one or multiple interviews and observations, and may entail variety of official and casual evaluation measures as required.

According to Brunning (2006), behavioral evaluation usually falls within two wide categories namely clinical behavioral evaluation, and functional behavioral evaluation. The “clinical behavioral evaluation is normally undertaken for difficulties observed in homes, work, school, or other settings, and is normally generated to offer an obvious intervention arrangement for case managers, therapists, family members, or other individuals who work consistently with the client being assessed” (Brunning, 2006, p. 241). The work of the clinician in this case is to offer assessments and plans. The CEH normally gives the clinician, who acts as an executive

coach, the role of listening and observing a person's behaviors in the mentioned places and offering an assessment and plan on the best strategy that can be effective.

Functional behavioral evaluation or FBA is normally undertaken by an institutional system whenever there are apprehensions that a learner with a disability or who is claimed to have a disability is illustrating unsuitable behaviors. Brunning (2006) mentions that, "institutional districts are needed by rule to generate FBAs under these situations as part of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, or IDEA" (p.254). Over these lawful needs, FBAs have numerous resemblances to clinical behavioral evaluations, with the distinguished exclusions that FBA are more constrained in capacity, applicability, and depth. Clinical behavioral evaluations are present as consultants for the construction of FBAs, as well as enlarging behavioral evaluations to regions and settings not tackled by the FBA. Behavioral assessment is extremely significant to organizations because it enables the "leaders to discover some character traits they were never aware of and find a way of handling them" (Martin, 2010, p.222). Behavioral assessment gives a clear understanding of how people behave under certain circumstances. When the organization identifies the characteristics of each worker, it becomes easy to deal with them during different situations and make sure the organization progresses even in difficult times.

Performance Assessments

Performance assessment which is also termed as optional or reliable evaluation is a kind of testing that needs learners to undertake a task other than choose a response from an already prepared list. For instance, a learner may be requested to illustrate historical occasions, produce scientific theories, and find solutions to math problems, communicate in a foreign language, or even undertake research on a tasked topic (Friedman, MJF Associates & MediVision, 2005,

p.213). Experienced raters, who can be coaches, teachers, or other trained individuals, then evaluate the quality of the learner's work centered on a concurred set of criteria. This fresh kind of evaluation is most broadly employed to directly evaluate writing capacity centered on text generated by learners under test instructions. The same can be applied in organizations where a certain form of assessment is most broadly used to directly evaluate performance capacity based on work undertaken by the workers under test instructions.

Performance assessment works in different ways using different techniques (Miner, 2007). The following are some of the key methods used to victoriously evaluate performance. According to Miner (2007), "the first one is open-ended or comprehensive response exercises which are questions or other related prompts that need learners to dig deep into a topic through verbal communication or in writing" (p.187). Learners might be requested to illustrate their annotations from science experiment, or issue arguments that a historic individual would give about a specific proposition. For instance, what would Abraham Lincoln argue concerning the motives of the Second World War or the Civil War? Extended tasks, on the other hand, are assignments that need constant thought in a single work region and are conducted over numerous hours or longer (Walter & Marks, 2003). Such tasks could engross reviewing, drafting, and revising a project, undertaking and describing the outcomes of a science experiment on photosynthesis; or even painting an automobile in auto shop. The last method is portfolios which are chosen collections of varied performance-centered work (Miner, 2007, p.221). A portfolio might engross a learner's "best pieces" and the learner's assessment of the strengths and faults of numerous pieces. The portfolio may also enclose some "works in growth" that demonstrate the advancements that the learner has made over time.

These techniques, like all forms of performance evaluations, require that learners lively develop their looms to the task under described conditions, being aware that their work will be assessed in accordance to agreed-upon principals. This requirement differentiates performance evaluation from other kinds of testing. Since they need learners to lively illustrate what they acknowledge, performance evaluations may be a more legitimate signifier of learners' knowledge and skills. There is a massive distinction between responding to multiple choice questions on how to come up with a verbal presentation and really making a verbal presentation (Martin, 2010). More significant, performance evaluation can offer impetus for advancing instruction, and augment learners' comprehension of what they must know and be able to undertake. In preparation of their learners to labor on a performance duty, tutors illustrate what the task involves and the standards that will be employed to assess performance. This needs a careful description of the components of good performance, and permits learners to judge their own labor as they progress.

Team Assessments

Teamwork has a theatrical impact on organizational performance. An influential team can assist an organization attain incredible outcomes. According to Cherry (2006), "a team that is not working can lead to needless disturbance, unsuccessful delivery and strategic failure" (p.435). Currently, it is almost unfeasible to keep away from being a member of the team. If a person is not a formal team at the organization, chances are that the person functions within one in one way or another. So it is significant for personal and career growth to know his team working strengths and faults. This evaluation assists an individual uncover common team-working difficulties that he might be going through (Cherry, 2006). Once he has accomplished the evaluation, he is directed towards team equipments that will assist him to advance and develop

these significant skills. Keys to originality and innovation are a team and organizational evaluation that gauges the climate for originality and modernism that is present in a work collection, allotment or organization.

It evaluates the working environment through checking on the resources, management practices, interactions, and motivations. It can be employed to jump start novelty, to communicate the significance of novelty and modernism within an organization and as an evaluation preceding any form of novelty or change involvement (Cherry, 2006, p.398). Similar to a manager who obtains 360-degree feedback to achieve self-awareness, work collections and organizational requirements to evaluate their environment before applying a growth plan to advance the climate. Teamwork in an organization proves that the association between workers and leaders is credible and that there is proper communication. Lack of teamwork in organizations means lack of a competitive advantage. Cherry (2006) adds on that “teamwork occurs as a result of good ties among workers who identifies their priorities and works towards attaining them” (p.399). Teamwork is also significant in institutions because it gives teachers humble time. Students who engage in teamwork increases their chances of performing well because their understanding of concepts broadens through extra work undertaken during teamwork. Teamwork is key to success in all sorts of institutions only that the manager or teacher has to be part of the association.

Benefits of using assessments

Assessment is extremely significant because it determines all the verdicts made about the organization. The decisions facing the executives of different organizations entail how best they can improve the organizational performance (Nelson & Cooper, 2007). While some of the verdicts may appear small and insignificant, others may be “high stakes,” impacting the

performance of the organization. The decision made by the executive in an organization determines its progress. “Decision making is extremely significant for organizations but it is determined by the kind of assessment undertaken” (Walter & Marks, 2003, p.187). All kinds of assessments have to be undertaken before the executive makes critical decisions concerning the organizational performance. For example, if the organization is not performing well, it is upon the executive to undertake assessment to determine where the problem lies before making decision.

The poor performance may be caused by lack of credible communication and teamwork. The decision he makes must be in line with such factors meaning that he has to undertake assessment first before settling on some verdicts. Another significant benefit of assessment is that it promotes leadership skills. Leadership skills entail possessing and portraying managerial characteristics in all organizational functions (Halley & Fridian, 2009, p.301). Leadership entails being authoritative and at the same time maintain close ties with the workers. This means that when practice authority, the executive must be very careful not to become a dictator because extreme exercise of power in the organization can be harmful to the workers. Leadership also entails good communication skills which enables the executive to be close to the workers, allow them to air their views concerning progress of the organization and promoting teamwork.

Leadership skills engross problem solving where the executive is able to identify a problem and face it with utmost intelligence so that he can solve it effectively. For example, when the performance of the company goes down, the executive monitors the entire process and identifies where the problem lies before engaging in good practices such as communication, close ties with workers and motivation to the workers who perform better (National Research Council, Koenig, & Bachman, 2004). The executive also gives the workers a chance to air their

views on the best way forward concerning the performance of the organization and in the process, solve the problem at hand. Other benefits of assessments in organizations include improvement on time management, project management, and communication skills.

Experiential Learning

Experiential learning theory is different from behavioral and cognitive theories in the sense that cognitive hypotheses stress the function of mental procedures while behavioral hypotheses pay no attention to the likely function of prejudiced experience in the learning procedure. The experiential theory suggested by Kolb assumes a more holistic loom and stresses how experiences, engrossing cognitions, emotional influence, and environmental factors in the learning process (Kolb, 2011, p.132).

In the experiential model, Kolb illustrates two distinct means of grasping experience. These are the concrete experience and abstract conceptualization (Kolb, 2007, p.132). Kolb recognized two means of changing experience which are active experimentation and reflective observation. These four modes of attaining education are mostly depicted as a cycle. According to him, concrete experience issues the information that operates as a source of reflection (National Research Council, Koenig, & Bachman, 2004). For example, in a company or an organization, the executive experiences the concrete experience through viewing how the workers perform and this serves as the source of reflection on whether to improve on workers' performance or just motivate them to continue with the same spirit. This depends with what the reflective experience suggests.

In this case, the reflective experience is observing the competitive advantage of the organization and compares it to the concrete experience which is the performance. If the reflective experience is not satisfactory, then the executive has to do something on the concrete

experience. From these reflections, the executive assimilates the information and comes up with the abstract concepts (Kolb, 2011, p.134). The executive then employs these concepts to create fresh theories concerning the world, which he then lively test. In this case, the new theories are structured to advance the performance of the organization. Through the testing of the new notions, the executive one again collects information via experience, cycling back to the start of the procedure. The process does not essentially have to start with experience, nevertheless (Moon, 2004, p.212). Instead, every individual has to select which learning mode will function best centered on the specific circumstance. For instance, imagine a new executive who is going to learn how to manage the organization.

Some new executives may decide to start learning through reflection where they observe other executives perform their daily activities as they explain some concepts to the new executives. According to Martin (2010), another new executive might prefer to begin more abstractly through reading and examining an organization managerial book that contains all managerial instructions (p.322). Yet another new executive might settle on jumping straight in and begin the executive work in an organization to practice the executive functions while on a test course. All models can work for the new executives only that each of them must be sure with what he or she wants at the end. Experiential learning does not only work for the executives but also for the employees who undertake the field works in organizations and companies. Some of them learn through reflective experience, others through abstract experience while others learn through concrete experience (Weinstein, Whittington & Leiba, 2003). The model that each person selects can work out effectively depending with how good the person is on learning.

Distinct forms of learning and development are needed for distinct purposes. Conservative teaching and training are centered primarily on skills or knowledge transfer, but

this does not tackle personal development and potential as it should be addressed. This is because conservative knowledge or skills transfer normally assumes (mistakenly) what the person requires to learn, and the most excellent means in which they can acquire knowledge (Moon, 2004, p.214). Additionally, the subject at hand has a tendency of focusing on organizational requirements, or the urge to pass an exam, which are normally somehow distinct (sometimes a lot distinct) from a person's natural potencies and preferred individual direction. Experiential learning is an influential means of addressing personal development and potential which is frequently a much ignored loom to educating and developing individuals of all ages and classes.

Experiential learning is malleable for personal style, partialities, potencies, and directions among others. As such, it is more likely to generate positive emotional impacts than conservative arranged training (Walter & Marks, 2003). The positive emotional impacts include self-esteem, confidence, and a sense of individual value and purpose. Individuals need learning which is malleable for them as people and also the conventional prescriptive teaching and training concentrated on external requirements, usually of the organization, or gain qualification, or pass exams. It is significant to employ the best kind of learning and growth techniques for the given circumstance. Only a balance of techniques can content organizational and exterior requirements, and also assist the individual grow as a confident and satisfied individual (Weinstein, Whittington & Leiba, 2003). Organizations and the people who develop the education policies need to consider that societies and organizations operate better when individuals are accomplished and developing to their natural preferences, far more than they do by being knowledgeable and measured in the tremendously narrow contests that those in power deem to be critical. Teaching and training individuals has to concentrate on latent and styles, as well as, on the requirements of the environmental systems.

How Professionals learn and the History of learning in the Workplace

The work environment offers a context for learning that is extremely distinct from that offered within universities and colleges. According to Reynolds and Vince (2007), “not only do individuals learn distinct means, but they also learn distinct constructive things” (p213). In the recent past, some critics have argued that learning through observation and practice is more effective than spending time in class learning theories that only explain concepts but do not show them practically. This is what used to happen in ancient times when education was not viable in most parts of the world. The few who managed to attain education only learned how to read, write and do some calculations but not attain life skills in specific fields (Weil et al., 2004). Therefore, most of the skills in the workplace were attained through experiential learning where the workers learned through observation and firsthand experience.

Most ancient time mechanics that repair automobiles in several parts of the world learned their work through experiential learning. In fact, approximately 80 percent of the retired mechanics of 65 years and above never went to school. They attained their education through experiential learning (Malik, Bhugra & Brittlebank, 2011, p.243). Despite the fact that the workplace seems to be centrally concerned with personal ability, it is equally significant to be able to undertake the right thing at the right time and place. In practice, Reynolds and Vince mention that an individual has to (1) comprehend both the overall context and the precise situation he is anticipated to handle, (2) decide what has to be done by oneself and probably with others too, and (3) apply what one has decided, personally or with others, through performing a sequence of actions (Reynolds & Vince, 2007, p.213). All these three procedures add on personal perceived capability. Nevertheless, this is not the way forward for the professionals.

Professionals are people who have extreme knowledge on what they do and can handle any kind of situation in their fields. These are people who believe in intellectual where they must attain higher degree such as master's degree or PhD in order to qualify as experts in their respective fields. In fact, there is no person who attains the title of a professor in a specific field without attaining Master's degree or PhD which is the highest form of education in the world (Sandler, 2011, p.243). Some of them go on to attain more than one degree in the same field of work in order to qualify as respected professionals. These are individuals who are better at work and they involve numerous distinct things. First, these professionals are able to undertake things faster and advance the superiority of the procedures. Second, professionals are better at work through advancing communications around the task and learning extremely faster (Walter & Marks, 2003). Their learning process enables them to foresee the performance of the organization from how the workers undertake their activities. They are able to advance the performance of the organization from the word go.

This is opposed to most individuals who undertake experiential learning that enables them to employ trial and error methods in some activities. Professional learning does not contain such a phrase like trial and error (Sandler, 2011, p.243). It is all about being sure with what one does and how best he does it. Moreover, professional learning enables individual become more independent and requiring less supervision, as well as, combine activities and functions more effectively. A good example of a professional who undertakes these things better is the executive coach. The executive coach is a professional who is able to examine an organization and understand the kind of problems facing it. He can enter into an executive's office and after a short dialogue, learns where the problem of the organization lies. An executive coach is always independent and requires no form of supervision to undertake his duty.

He visits the executive in his office in the organization and discusses about the best approach of coaching and assessment that the executive wishes to engage in so that he can improve the performance of the organization. He is extremely perfect in combining his tasks more efficiently. An executive coach is able to handle both long term and short term goals of an organization at the same time (National Research Council, Koenig, & Bachman, 2004). For example, an organization that is at the verge of collapsing requires immediate hold up and long term solutions so that it does not collapse in future. When the executive coach interviews the executive of an organization, the issues of long and short term are raised and handled concurrently. Other factors that enable professionals handle their work well include faster recognition of latent challenges, expansion of the range of circumstances in which one can perform capably, assist other people learn to undertake the job or part of the job, and augments in task difficulty while handling jobs of massive intricacy.

Experiential Learning

As the name proposes, experiential learning entails learning from experience. The theory of experiential learning was suggested by Psychologist David Kolb who was persuaded by the works of fellow theorists such as Jean Piaget, Kurt Lewin, and John Dewey (Kolb, 2011). According to Kolb, this form of learning can be described as “The process through which knowledge is developed via the altering experience” (Kolb, 2011, p134). Whereas situational variables are significant, people’s own partialities play a massive role. Kolb notes that individuals who are regarded as “watchers” prefer reflective observation, while those who are go-getters have high probability of engaging in lively experimentation (Weil et al., 2004). Because of people’s inherited equipment, their specific past life experiences, and the stipulations

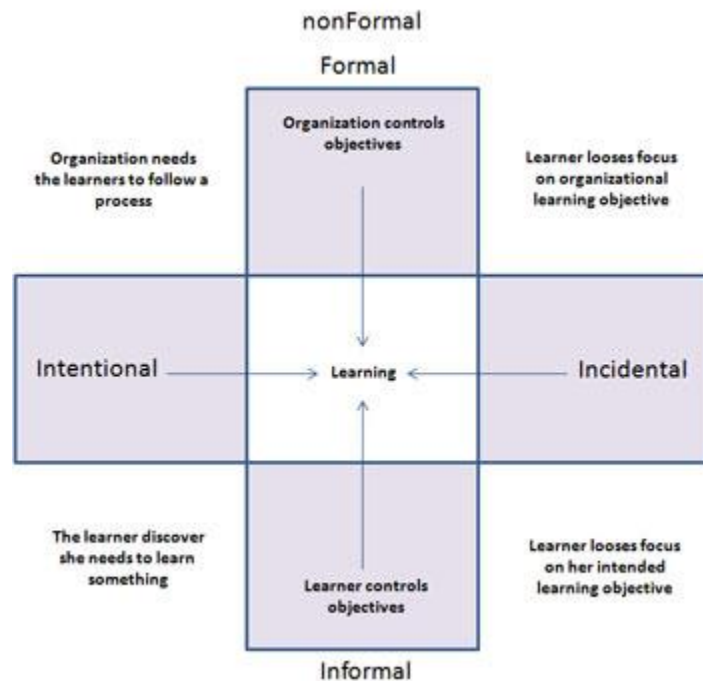
of their environment, they create a preferred means of selecting. These partialities also serve as the foundations for the learning scheme imposed by Kolb.

According to his learning model, each of the four kinds has central learning abilities in two regions. For instance, individuals with the deviating learning style are central in the fields of tangible experience and thoughtful observation. Kolb proposes that some of distinct factors can manipulate preferred learning styles (Kolb, 2011). Among the factors that he has discovered engross career choice, personality type, present job function, educational occupation, and adaptive competencies. Whereas Kolb's theory is among the broadly employed learning models in the education field, it has been broadly criticized for some reasons. First, Kolb's personal research proposes that there is an association between learners studying styles and their selected majors (Kolb, 2011). As he mentions, "experiential learning is assistive for individuals exploring their own potencies when learning fresh things" (p.136). Moreover, the theory looks at how learners can play to their own potencies as well as, improving in fields which they are weak. Some critics state that the theory does not sufficiently tackle the role that is played by the non-reflective experience in learning process.

Whereas the theory is excellent at examining how learning takes place for people, it does minimal work in explaining learning that takes place in huge social groups. How do people's interfaces with a huge group influence the experiential learning procedure? Moreover, other critics point out that learning style may not be steady for long time (Weil et al., 2004). For instance, one survey has established that grownups over 65 years have a tendency of becoming highly observant and meditative while learning. Other critics propose that the theory is too narrowly concentrated and preventive.

Formal, Informal, and Incidental Learning

The phrases formal and informal educations are not related to the requirements of the learning, although with the course of who manages the learning aims and objectives. In a formal learning surrounding, the training or learning section decides on aims and objectives, while informal learning is where the students themselves set goals and objectives. Additionally, if the larger organization other than the training section decides on the learning aims and objectives, like a line administrator directing OJT, then it is usually termed as non-formal learning (Walter & Marks, 2003, p.411). Therefore, in a formal learning incident, learning experts like trainers or instructional designers, decides on the goals whereas on a non-formal incident, someone who is an outsider of the learning section like a supervisor or a manager decides on the goals or objectives. Executive coaching, in this case falls under the formal learning because he is a learning professional who sets the goals depending on his agreement with the client. For example, he may decide that the training will be taking place on weekdays from nine in the morning to around three in the afternoon.



It is for the client to fit into the program set by the executive coach and not vice versa as some people usually think. If the executive coach decides that the learning process will take a maximum of one month then the client has to respect the decision. However, most of the executive coaches are extremely honest individuals who believe in dialogue. He cannot just make a decision that does not suite the client's perception. The executive coach always engages the client on decision making process where he discusses with the executive on the most preferred time to start the learning process and the best time to end it in a day. They also discusses the maximum period through which the coach will be undertaking the learning process. However, the final decision lies in the hands of the executive coach.

Two other phrases that must be mentioned are the incidental and intentional learning, which normally refers to the aim of the learning objectives (Malik, Bhugra & Brittlebank, 2011). An intentional learning surrounding has a self-directed intention in the sense that it has aims and objectives on what, where and how to study. Incidental learning takes place when the student selects something else in the learning surrounding like the act of a model that makes the person lose concentration on the learning aims and objectives and concentrates on unexpected learning goals. Therefore, formal learning is usually intentional because there is always focus on the learning goals and objectives. It is upon both the learner and the trainer to focus on the aims and objectives and it is apparent that both of them cannot lose focus. Informal learning is also intentional when the learner decides on the goals or objectives but it can be incidental if the learning takes place randomly or coincidentally. As far as executive coaching is concerned, the learning process cannot be informal and incidental but there is a possibility for it to be informal and intentional at the same time. The only difference is that the decisions are made by the executive coach as opposed to the client. However, this is not permanent because the client may

have some outside activities in a day which means that the executive coach has to fit into the client's plans by skipping that day and fixing another day to compensate on the skipped day.

Whereas incidental learning is occasionally released by trainers, it is a significant concept in the sense that it mostly has an encouraging influence to the learners because it leads to what is known as discovery learning. That means that whereas occasionally a person is able to recognize an incident of learning as being either informal or formal, at other times they will intermingle or combine together. For instance, After Action Reviews offer a formal learning surrounding, but the learning has a tendency of being informal in the sense that the participants decides on the topics to be talked about. Whereas it might appear apparent to several readers that both informal and formal learning engross both intentional and incidental learning, it might not be as apparent that formal education mostly engrosses incidents of informal learning and vice versa.

Two-year learning computed that each hour of official learning spills out to four-hours of informal learning at a ratio of 4:1. Marsick and Watkin (2006) employed the metaphor of brick and mortar to illustrate the association between informal and formal learning. Formal learning functions as bricks combined into a rising bridge of individual development. Informal learning functions as the mortar because it enhances the acceptance and growth of the formal learning. The two authors documented that informal should not at any given time substitute formal learning functions as it is this synergy that generates effective development. And definitely the opposite also takes place in that incidents of informal learning mostly lead to formal learning. Additionally, certain learning incidents that are firmly informal may be too barely centered because the learner only becomes skilled on part of a job or superficial skills that may be fixed to the job.

How Formal, Informal and Incidental Learning Fit into Executive Coaching

Just as mentioned earlier, formal learning is consistent with executive coaching. Since at some point formal and informal learning combine together, then it means that informal learning also fit into executive coaching. Moreover, since occasionally incidental learning engrosses both formal and informal learning means that executive coaching also entails incidental learning.

Executive coaching can be formal in two ways. In a formal learning process, the decision lies in the hands of the trainer. The trainer has to be a professional who understands what he is doing so that he does not mislead the learner or at any given time lose focus. The final decision on how the learning process will take place lies in the hands of the executive coach.

However, most executive coaches are understanding and believe in dialogue. Despite the fact that the decision lies in their hands, they always engage the clients so that they end up with a mutual understanding where both parties are contented. The learning program must favor both the executive coach and the client. The two have to talk about the learning time and the period through which the learning process has to take place. For example, they may decide that the learning process will take place in the organization at the executive's office. Learning will be conducted from nine in the morning to three in the afternoon from Monday to Friday. However, since the executive has to represent the organization in numerous other ways, the executive coach allows him to proceed with his plans at any given time. This shows that the executive coach is a professional who engages the client in a professional learning process that is extremely effective. Executive coaching can also be formal learning because both the coach and the client are familiar with the goals and objectives of the learning process. There is no way both of them can lose focus and start doing some other things that are not related to learning. In fact, the executive coach always operates professionally and it is difficult for him to lose focus. It is

upon him to make sure the client also maintains focus so that all the goals and objectives laid down can be met.

Informal learning also fits into executive coaching if it is intentional aiming to achieve something specific. The intention of the learning must be clear to both the client and the executive coach who takes the responsibility of engaging the client in training and improving the performance of the organization. The intention of learning is for the executive coach to interview the executive in order to find out where the client faults and correct him in the process. For example, the executive coach must ask about the association between the executive and the employees (Walter & Marks, 2003). The response from the client may be that the relationship is good but it is upon the executive coach to prove if the relationship is good or not. He undertakes a team assessment which enables him to find out if the executive has close ties with the workers. Since the learning period is from nine to three in the afternoon, the executive coach can easily find out. He will assess the number of times the executive visits the workers in the field in a day and discover if the executive was being truthful or not. The number of times that the executive visits the workers determines if their relationship is credible or not in the sense that close friends must see each other frequently especially if they are working in the same organization. Therefore, there must be a specific intention in the learning process in order for it to qualify as an informal learning.

Incidental learning fits into executive coaching when it combines both formal and informal learning. This is when the clients are able to discover something new in the learning process other than losing focus on the aims and objectives. Note that the executives of organizations have so many things in mind that make them worry a lot. For example, the organization may not be doing well with frustrations from all sides both interior and exterior.

These frustrations may affect the concentration of the executive in the learning process. The same may cause the executive to lose focus on the aims and objectives of the learning process. For example, if the learning process was to take a period of three months, the frustrations may cause the executive to speed up things and miss on significant concepts. It is upon the executive coach to come in and straighten things through engaging the client in discovery learning where he speaks sense to the executive through helping him understand that things can only come back to normal if he is patient to learn and discover where he went wrong so that he can correct the mistakes. In this case, the executive coach will have combined both formal learning and informal learning through maintaining focus and making the intentions of the learning clear to the client.

Current Findings

The purpose of this research was to find out how the functions of assessments relate to executive coaching practices. Executive coaching, assessments and experiential learning work consistently in the sense that executive coaching involves an executive coach who practices experiential learning on his clients. An executive coach is a professional who undergoes professional learning but during his normal activities, he engages in experiential learning. Experiential learning as mentioned earlier depicts different models such as concrete experience, abstract experience, reflective experience, and active experimentation experience. The executive coach engages in a dialogue with his client and allows the executive to mention the best learning model that can work well for him during the executive coaching and experiential learning process.

Most of the clients usually select concrete experience and reflective experience which work consistently to the better understanding of the organizational challenges. It is through these means that the executive coach brings in the aspect of assessment which in this case is mostly

behavioral, personality, team and performance assessments. The behavior of the executive towards the stakeholders of the organization is extremely significant. The function of the executive coach is to empower the executive understand how well to possess and use his character and behaviors to the betterment of the organizational performance. The first research question addressed the aspect of how executive coaches employ assessments in their normal coaching work and as discussed, the executive coaching and assessments work consistently. There is no way the executive coach will recognize the improvement of the executive of the organization without engaging him in behavioral and performance assessments. He has to assess them at the start of the coaching practice and at the end of the process in order to recognize how far the executive has gone in understanding specific concepts that increase performance.

Another research question talks about how the executive coaches illustrate their learning from making use of assessments. According to the findings, it is clear that executive coaches engage in coaching the executive through observing the daily activities of the executive and correcting them as time goes by in order to improve the performance of the organization (Malik, Bhugra & Brittlebank, 2011). For example, through examining the daily activities of the executive, the executive coach can find out how many times, if any, does the executive visit the workers in the fields to check on their work and engage in communication that helps build good relationship between the administrator and the workers. If the executive visits the field once every day, then the coach might advice him to make it twice or thrice a day so that the employees may feel close to their leader and find it easy to share a lot with him including personal issues that might also be affecting their performance.

Note that all these processes are undertaken through experiential learning because the learning process is through observation and experience. The coach observes what the executive

does and advises him on the best practices through engrossing new strategies and approaches to management. Therefore, the current findings are consistent with the research questions because each question is responded accordingly.

Depth and Analysis

This research meets the requirements of the study because it answers the question that needs to be answered. The question addresses the concept of how the executive coaches use assessments in their coaching practice. Executive coaching is a developmental tool that enhances understanding of concepts. Executive coaching enhances understanding of assessments, experiential learning, formal and informal learning, and professional development. It is through executive coaching that the concept of assessment is implemented in organizations. Before the executive coach undertakes his duty of coaching an executive in an organization, he has to undertake an assessment on various issues to find out where to start and how to go about with the learning process.

The first thing to look at is the performance assessment whereby the executive coach evaluates the performance of the organization, identifies the faults and comes up with strategies and best approaches that leads to rejuvenation of organizational performance. Miner (2007) confirms that “It is through the performance of the organization that the executive coach learns about the behaviors, personality and team assessments of the organizational leadership” (p.371). If the performance is poor then it means the personality and behaviors of the leaders are not consistent with that of workers. The teamwork of the organization is also determined through performance assessment. Poor performance means poor teamwork in the organization. This is where the executive coach has to employ professional learning to influence the executive on positive approach and strategies that can work out well for the organization. As a professional in

what he does best, the executive coach has to empower the executive concerning enhancing suitable communication between his leadership and the workers. Good communication entails engaging them in conversations pertaining how to improve performance of the organization.

The executive has to allow the workers to air their views so that they may feel integrated in decision making concerning improvement of performance. Good communication enables the workers to feel appreciated as laborers in the sense that they are given opportunity to take part in enhancing the performance of the organization (Robins, 2007). The communication also enhances quality relationship between the executive and the workers. The executive must be a friend to the staff as opposed to being authoritative and dictatorial. It is through these ties that enable the executive to empower the staff on the benefits of hard work and focusing on meeting the objectives of the organization. He can also use that opportunity to encourage the staff to work together as a team as they help each other in meeting individual objectives that collectively help meet the goals of the organization. These are some of the key advices that the executive coach can give to the executive after assessing the performance of the organization and the weaknesses of the executive. Through utilization of these assessments, the executive coach can describe his learning as a professional one because eventually the organization will perform better through his effort, strategies and approaches.

However, these are just short term goals that the executive accomplishes through engaging an executive coach. This is to help the executive salvage the organization from collapsing and making it attain a strong competitive advantage. There is a need for the executive coach to address the long term goals too. According to Miner (2007), this can be reached through integrating professional development. Professional development is an incessant cycle of ruminating, preparation and undertaking. Rumination is where a person is at the moment and

where he wishes to be in future (Miner, 2007). Preparation is done on the development operations to assist one meet personal goal. Undertaking is carrying out and logging personal activities. During the start of the coaching practice, the executive is at the rumination stage where he contemplates on reviving the organizational performance but at the same time, worry about the future. After tackling the present issues, the executive coach must help the client prepare for the future. According to Robins (2007), “the executive coach has to look at the development operations undertaken by the executive in order to see if they can meet his future objectives or not” (p.433). After handling the preparation process, the executive coach can now issue the executive with strategies and approaches on how to undertake the processes in order to develop professionally.

This study also addressed the aspect of experiential learning where it mentions Kolb’s models of learning. According to Kolb, experiential learning entails for key learning styles which are concrete experience, abstract experience, experimentation and reflective experience. Experiential learning at the workplace is highly valuable because the skills people attain in institutions are not sufficient to help them undertake their duties effectively. However, when they join organizational staff, they get to learn a lot from colleagues concerning the operations of the organization (Moon, 2004). The approach they take in experiential learning determines how faster they capture things and become excellent in their new working environments. The same applies to the new executives who come from institutions to join the management team of an organization. These executives may decide to sit with the previous executive of the organization for a period of two to three weeks so that they can learn about the activities, cultures, personalities and behaviors of the staff and figure out the best approach that can enable the organization to progress (Malik, Bhugra & Brittlebank, 2011).

Initially, my questions included, how do executive coaches use assessments in their coaching practice? How do executive coaches describe their learning from utilizing assessments? What is the executive coaches' impression of the impact of assessments on their client's professional development? And what benefits or challenges do executive coaches describe in working with assessments? My questions answers something that required to be answered because the research addresses all the concepts pertaining executive coaching practice, professional development, experiential learning in the work place, assessments, and formal and informal learning in the work place.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

The purpose of this study is to examine the function of assessments in executive coaching practices. Specifically, the following four research questions will guide the study:

1. How do executive coaches use assessments in their coaching practice?
2. How do executive coaches describe their learning from utilizing assessments?
3. What is the executive coaches impression of the impact of assessments on their client's professional development?
4. What benefits or challenges do executive coaches describe in working with assessments?

This chapter is organized into six sections: (a) design of the study, (b) sample selection, (c) data collection, (d) data analysis, (e) research subjectivities, and (f) delimitations and limitations.

Design of the study

The proposed research is designed as an interpretive qualitative study. This method was selected for this research to generate data-rich details, stories, illustrations encompassing the function assessments play in the coaching practices of executive coaches. Bloomberg and Volpe (2008) state that qualitative research is used to promote a deep understanding from the viewpoint of the research participants, allowing the researcher to comprehend the meaning the participants make of their experience in the context of their environment (Merriam, 1998). Merriam and Associates (2002) state that an interpretative study demonstrates all the characteristics of qualitative research, the main focus being that the researcher is able to determine how a participant makes meaning of a situation or phenomenon. The data collected will be in a semi-structured interview format, where there will be a set of questions that guide the interview and also allow for the participants' responses that may lead to additional questions and probing. The qualitative interview design supports this study because it pursues to sensitized concepts, describes multiple realities (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003), and develops understanding, allowing for unforeseen themes, ideas, and constructs to emerge (Rubin & Rubin, 1995).

Sample Selection

To gather significant data the research process will involve selecting executive coaches who will be the sample or described as "a portion, piece, or segment that is representative of a whole" (Onwuegbuzie & Collins, 2007, p. 281). Researchers have to determine the number of participants to select (i.e., sample size) and how to select these sample members (i.e., sampling method). While the decisions can be difficult, the researcher's method must be designed with these ideas in mind (Onwuegbuzie & Collins, 2007).

Fraenkel and Wallen (2009) define a sample as "any part of the population of individuals on whom information is obtained" (p. 105). Qualitative studies usually focus in depth on

moderately small samples, selected purposely. For this study purposeful sampling will be used to collect information-rich cases strategically and purposefully (Patton, 2002). Purposeful selection is used in particular where specific participants are intentionally selected for the research to provide information that cannot be obtained from other selections (Maxwell, 2005). The goal of purposive sampling is to focus on particular characteristics of a population that will best help understand the problem and support answering the research questions (Creswell, 2009). Moreover, purposeful sampling allows the researcher the opportunity to choose from among those practicing executive coaching to acquire the most knowledge to discover, understand, and gain insight for the study (Merriam, 1988). For this study this selection method was chosen so that the participants are carefully chosen with the expectation that the researcher will generate the greatest insight and understanding on the phenomenon of assessments and coaching practices. Merriam (2002) validates this, stating that “it is important to select a sample from which the most can be learned” (p.12).

There are several options to purposeful sampling. The study will use the two most suitable purposeful techniques for this study. The sampling techniques used will be criterion-based purposeful sampling and snowball sampling. In this study executive coaches who use assessments in their coaching practice will be the focal point. The following criteria are central for participating in this study: (a) being an executive coach, (b) having been in private practice as a executive coach for over two (2) years, and (c) using assessments in their practice when working with clients. For this study an executive coach is defined as someone who equips “executives with the tools, knowledge, and opportunities they need to develop themselves and become more effective” (Perkins, 2009, p. #). Two years was selected as the minimum amount of executive coaching experience to increase the odds that participants will add sufficient data to

the study. This time period also allows for the participants to understand the processes and patterns of their coaching practice. There will be flexibility applied to the use of assessments in participants' coaching practice in that the type of assessment does not matter. There is wide range of assessments (e.g. behaviorally, personality), and no single assessment can be considered to give a comprehensive picture.

Along with criterion-based sampling, the researcher will use snowball sampling to identify participants for the research. The process begins with the researcher querying suitable participants: "Who knows a lot about X? Whom should I talk to?" (Patton, 2002, p. 237). Snowball sampling allows for the sample size to increase as more and more people are asked to refer potential participants for the study. As part of the snowball sampling, the researcher will use an existing data base of coaches from International Coaching Federation (ICF) – Georgia Chapter and her personal networks. Once the participants are identified, the researcher will contact the executive coaches to determine whether they meet the criteria and whether they are willing to participate. Once it is determined that the executive coach meets the criteria and agrees to participate, he or she will be sent a confirmation letter and consent form (see Appendices XXX)

Data Collection

In a qualitative research design data can be accrued through an assortment of ways. The three main forms of acquiring data are interviews, observations and documents (Patton, 2002). The method in which the data is collected is governed by the purpose of the study and which sources would yield the best information on the study (Merriam, 2002). In this study, interviews will be the primary method of data collection. This form of data collection was chosen to allow participants to delve deep inside their experiences and to allow the researcher to ask probing

questions about participants' thoughts, feelings, and meanings. Interviews will be semi-structured. A set of questions will guide the process but will leave room for participants' responses to lead to additional questions and probing (Rouston, 2011). The data collected will follow a protocol that has key research questions along with follow up [probing questions that were asked in order elicit unique perspectives of the participant, based on their individual experience (Booth, Colomb, & Williams, 2003; Creswell, 2003). The researcher will use an interview guide, which is created with specific predetermined range of questions to focus on during the interview. Even though the questions are determined and focused, the format will be flexible, allowing the researcher to initiate or expand on topics as the rise that will give richer data for the study (Payne, 1999). There are benefits to using an interview guide. One of the main advantages is that it allows the researcher to lead the dialogue and allows the participants an opportunity to (see appendix XXX) for the individual face to face interviews. The interviews will take place one-on-one in the participant's office or another agreed upon location and will last approximately 60 minutes each. There will be a minimum of 12 participants interviewed. The data will be reviewed to determine if more participants are needed until saturation occurs. The discussions will be digitally audio-recorded with the consent of the participant. The researcher will have the interviews transcribed and will then listen to the recordings while reading the transcriptions to verify accuracy.

The researcher will ensure the confidentiality of the participants by using the following techniques:

- (a) interviews will be audio-recorded, and when transcribed, no personally identifying information will be used;
- (b) participants will be referenced by a pseudonym at all times;

- (c) audio recordings will be destroyed once transcripts are finalized;
- (d) transcripts will be stored in a secure location indefinitely, and any published work resulting from this research will only reference comments based on the findings.

The researcher will not release identifiable results of the study to anyone other than as required by the department at the University of Georgia responsible for regulatory and research oversight.

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