The Discourse of Being a Business Executive:

An Exploration of Executive Coaching Advertisements to Illuminate the Discourse of Being a Business Executive and the Degree to which Executive Coaching Engages in Psychotherapy

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Abstract

There has been growing interest in the field of business management in developing methods to improve management competency. One popular management development method has been executive coaching, but because of the unique needs of business executives, executive coaches are constantly looking for new and more effective methods to work with business executives' life, career, physical, and psychological problems.

There has not been an agreed upon solution discovered to solve this problem. On the one hand, it was proposed that there is a need for executive coaches to employ psychotherapeutic methods in coaching to meet the psychological demands of business executives. But on the other hand, there are numerous issues related to standardizing executive coaching methods, qualifying executive coaches, and resolving ethical dilemmas.

The author of this thesis views this issue as an over expectation of society of individuals in positions of power and responsibility. This thesis uses social theories to explore the expectations behind the high demands on the performance of business executives, and to illuminate the degree to which executive coaching engages psychotherapy.

The findings of this study show that certain themes such as business skills, leadership, self-development, success, interpersonal skills, and achieve work-life balance dominates the advertisements of executive coaching professionals. These advertisements also use rhetorical devices to make these skills seem attractive and important to possess, which inevitably impacts on the view of self of executives and stimulates their desire to self-improve. It was also found that 21.26% of the advertised executive coaching services could be promoted by psychotherapists instead.

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Contents

1. Introduction and overview of the thesis

This introduction is a brief overview of the thesis. It gives the rationale and objectives for the research, and describes its layout.

1.1. Research rationale and objectives

It is commonly agreed that an organization's success depends largely upon the competence of its top management. However, problems such as depression, emotional impairment, suicide, alcohol dependency and many other types of psychological problems are all related to the work stress of leadership. This can lead to a decrease in decision making ability, changes in mental capacity, reduced energy and reduced motivation, all of which can seriously reduce managerial competency (Salib, 2005). The problems of these leaders have often been ignored as we always overestimate the effectiveness and competency of these organizational leaders. To the disbelief of many academics, the estimation for the base rate of managerial incompetence in America in one study was between 60 and 75% (Hogan et al, 1990). Then in 1991, Shipper and Wilson found the base rate for incompetent management in a large hospital with 101 departments to be 60%. Organizational leaders are prone to stress at their workplace; the unique psychological problems faced by corporate managers have a high relation to the uniqueness of their job roles. Unpleasant tasks such as firing employees and dealing with the trauma of downsizing can greatly reduce the desire of these leaders for their jobs (Smith, 1994).

To improve managerial competency, numerous management development programs have been developed and proven to be effective. Pestonjee and Muncherji (1991) describe the major psychological, psychosomatic, and physiological illnesses faced by executives and suggest that human resource development interventions should be integrated with concern for health to promote the physical, mental and social well-being of corporate executives. Furthermore, recent publications such as Iris Martin's book *From Coach to*

Corporation, Len Sperry's *Corporate Therapy and Consulting*, and an entire issue of the *Consulting Psychology Journal* on executive coaching shows the growing interest of coaching in psychological theories. In 2006, Jones and Spooner investigated the common characteristics of high achievers and the implementations of this for coaching high achievers. It was found that it may be inappropriate to use a single technique for coaching because a number of factors need to be considered when coaching high achievers. For this reason, there is no single technique that is suitable for executive coaches to use on all executives. Furthermore, the ethical dilemmas of integrating psychotherapeutic techniques with traditional coaching and the arguments about the ability of coaches to deliver these techniques have been at the center of the debate with no prospect of resolution.

From researching topics in the area of executive coaching, the author believes that it is too early in the evolution of the profession of executive coaching for it to be able to standardize or impose any form of coaching method to meet the unique needs of their clients. The arguments about whether psychotherapeutic techniques should be used in executive coaching have come to a full circle, and a different approach is needed to explore the problem. Thus, the rationale for this research is to examine the discourse of being a business executive to clearly illustrate the expectations of executive performance, and to illuminate the degree to which executive coaching engages psychotherapy.

From reviewing the executive performance and executive coaching literature, a number of issues have been revealed. The executive coaching literature has focused on management development techniques and methods for coaching different areas of managerial and personal difficulties for executives. However, there has not been a study on what the expectations of executive performance are, or the extent to which executive coaching engages psychotherapy. Thus, the objective of this study is aimed at investigating the expectations of being a business executive, and to explore the degree to which executive coaching engages psychotherapy. The author of this thesis hopes that the results of this research can provide some understanding of how discourses impact on individuals and professions, and that awareness can be raised about the extent to which executive coaching engages psychotherapy.

1.2. Methodologies and findings

This investigation has been achieved through analyzing the executive coaching advertisements, using discourse analysis to reveal the themes of their coaching services. This has served to illustrate the expectations of being a business executive. There were two research questions:

1. What is the discourse of being a business executive as illustrated in the offer of executive coach services?
2. What is the degree to which executive coaching engages psychotherapy?

The first question was answered by using internet advertisements for executive coaching as data for content analysis. The results of the content analysis showed patterns and themes in the ads such as the focus of their service, and what it means to receive this service. It also revealed the rhetoric features of the advertisement, which are analyzed to discover how rhetoric features such as words, phrases, and sentences can have an effect to instruct, inform, convince or persuade their audience. The combined effect of the two analyses reveals how the discourse of an ideal 'business executive' is constructed through executive coaching advertisements.

This research has found that the main themes in these advertisements were:

1. To have business skills (32%)
2. To have leadership skills (29%)
3. To be constantly self-developing (21%)
4. To be successful in their profession (11%)
5. To have good interpersonal skills (7%)
6. To achieve a work-life balance (6%)

Each of these main themes have been explored further to reveal the contents within each of these themes and to analyze the rhetoric devices that were employed. The most commonly used rhetoric device in these advertisements was the ‘narrative point of view’, which aims to make a personal connection with the target audience. Other rhetoric devices included: metaphors and similes that were used to make problems seem mechanic; rhetoric questions that were used to make the audience think; unique selling propositions to promote the uniqueness of a service; and ellipses that were used to establish closeness to the audience. There were also a few examples of comparative references, stereotyping, cause-and-effect analysis, and some clever use of idiomatic language and cliché to describe executives.

The second research question was answered by analyzing the contents of the main themes: the themes were compared against the function, role and professional training of psychotherapists. The contents of the services advertised by executive coaches that could be better promoted by psychotherapists were isolated from the total services advertised. It was found that 21.26% of the executive coaching services advertised could be promoted by psychotherapists; this is also the degree to which executive coaching engages psychotherapy.

1.3. Thesis structure

Chapter one of this thesis is the introduction, which describes the research rationale, the research objectives, the research methodology, the findings, and the thesis structure. The next chapter is a detailed literature review of the concepts involved in this research. Firstly, the role of executive coaching is explained and compared to other similar helping professions, mentoring and psychotherapy. Secondly, the concepts of social construction and societal power over an individual’s identity are explained, which leads to the exploration of ‘discourse’ as a concept in relation to this research. Finally, in the next chapter, the relationships between ‘discourse’, the profession of ‘executive coaching’, and ‘advertisements’ are explained.

Chapters three and chapter four of this thesis explain the rationale and objectives for this research in detail. The logic behind using these social theories to generate the research question is discussed in chapter four.

Chapter six is a detailed account of the research design, methods employed, and procedures for this study.

Chapter seven provides the results of the study, illustrated with pie graphs and percentages of the frequencies of the themes and contents of the advertisements that were analyzed. The results also include the forms of rhetoric devices that were used in the advertisements and descriptions of their purpose and effect for the audience.

Chapter eight explains the limitations of this research, relating to: the theories that were used in this thesis, the research methodologies (qualitative, data, and quantitative), and the author.

Chapter nine of this thesis concludes the research in three parts: implications, recommendations, and contributions. Firstly, the implications of the research results for the professions of ‘business executives’, ‘executive coaches’, ‘organizations’, and the wider society are given. Secondly, this chapter provides some recommendations for future research. Finally, it concludes with a description of the contributions of this research to the fields of business management and social science.

2. Literature review

This literature review first defines the concept of 'executive coaching' and its relationship and differences with mentoring and psychotherapy; this is discussed in Chapters 2.1, 2.2 and 2.3. These three professions have many overlapping roles and responsibilities as they are different forms of 'helping' professions that aim to improve leadership performance. Chapter 2.4 concludes the definition of executive coaching with tables to illustrate the differences between the three professions. Chapters 2.5 and 2.6 present some arguments around the possibilities of integrating psychotherapeutic techniques with executive coaching, and the limitations of existing research in that area.

In Chapter 3. the author looks at some postmodern social theories that may explain the unfulfilled demands of executives and how the profession of executive coaching has been created. In this chapter, the social construction theory, social power, discourse, and personal identity are briefly explained and related to the profession of executive coaching. Finally, the author looks at the use of language in advertising and its usefulness in providing a map of the discourse that the audience of the advertisements is immersed in.

2.1. Executive coaching defined

The Human Resources Glossary (2004) defines coaching as "a one-on-one, face-to-face teaching/learning/counseling relationship. Involves a continuous flow of instructions, comments, and suggestions from coach to employee – listening, questioning, relating learning to the learner's experiences, and providing guided practice. Also called tutoring" (p. 112). Hoffman (1999) also states that coaching helps "define clear goals and set a specific time frame in which to meet them (p. 4)." In organizations, coaching is to work with people so that they become more competent and fulfilled so that they can contribute more to their organization, and understand more about what they do (Flaherty, 1999).

However, coaching is not about teaching, instruction, training, or managing, and the coach does not need to be an expert in the field or responsible for the performer's behavior. A coach is someone available for the performer to learn with, and to unlock their client's natural ability to perform, learn and achieve. Coaches can increase the awareness of the factors that determine performance in their client, can increase their sense of self responsibility and ownership of their performance, can teach their clients to self-coach, and can identify and remove internal barriers to achievement (MacLennan, 1995).

In business, coaching refers to continually developing employees so that they do their job well. Comparable to the work of a professional coach, managerial coaching involves not only assessment of development needs and subsequent training but also starts with good hires (Stone, 1999).

In the corporate world, coaching is a positive program for competent people and high performers. Management consultants often declare that coaching is not therapy, nor counseling, as it is in many people's perception: counseling is personal and aimed to help troubled employees, and therapy is for the abnormal (Peltier, 2001), Only people who are competent at their jobs and still want improvement get coaching, which is why in the corporate world, coaching is much more accepted than other forms of therapeutic programs. Recently, executive coaching has gained more attention from the top management and executives that are looking for performance improvement. It is the preferred method for professional development not only because of its powerful and highly effective approach to productivity and leadership excellence, but it is also favored for its relatively low costs and time effectiveness compared to psychotherapy and traditional training and development approaches (Sperry, 2004).

Executive coaching is a form of coaching that focuses on the performance improvement of organizational leaders (Kilburg, 2004). The coach forms a helping relationship with the client who has managerial authority in an organization within a formally defined coaching agreement, uses behavioral techniques and methods to help the client to achieve a set of goals that are mutually identified, improves the client's professional performance and personal satisfaction, and improves the capability of the leader to achieve organizational goals (Ennis et al., 2003). As a result, the effectiveness of the client's organization is improved (Kilberg, 1996).

Coaching is a partnership between the organization, the executive, and the coach to gain maximum learning and impact. It is done by one-on-one interactions, using data from multiple perspectives, and emphasizes mutual trust and respect (Ennis et al., 2003). It is more issue-focused than other forms of coaching, by specifically examining the developmental needs of the executive (Richard, 1999). It focuses on personal behavior change, fostering stronger relationships, personal development, and/or work-family integration and specific performance issues on the job (Quick & Macik-Frey, 2004).

In one definition, "reduced to its essence, executive coaching is the process of equipping people with the tools, knowledge, and opportunities they need to develop themselves and become more effective" (Peterson, cited from Douglas & Morley, 2000, p. 40). It also involves the teaching of skills in the context of a personal relationship with the learner, and providing feedback on the executive's interpersonal relations and skills (Sperry, 1993). It is tailored to the individual's current issues or relevant problems and designed by the coach to assist the executive in maintaining focus as they adjust their strengths or weaknesses (Tobias, 1996).

This type of coaching is often done by someone from outside of the organization who uses psychological skills to develop effective leaders. Much of these skills are developed from the psychotherapy literature, such as: active listening and empathy, self-awareness, process observation, giving and getting feedback, assertive communication, conflict resolution, cognitive restructuring and learned optimism, effective use of reinforcement, hypnotic language, resistance management, detriangulation, reframing, and even paradoxical intent (Murphy, 2000).

Even though some other essential skills that are coached may not be psychological skills, such as delegation, public speaking, presentation of self, time management, strategic planning, goal setting, use of information technology, and project management (Murphy, 2000), the implications of psychotherapy drawn from the frameworks of humanistic, existential, behavioral, and psychodynamic psychology are important and highly relevant to coaching in the corporate world (Macmillan, 1999).

However, even though many mental health clinicians have moved into organizational consulting positions such as coaching, the consulting literature is poorly defined, documented and integrated in relation to clinical theories and their application to consulting work (Macmillan, 1999). There is also a lot of confusion in the types of business consulting work: both mentoring and coaching are employee development programs used by Human Resources, but their roles in improving work performance are different though overlapping. To clarify the confusion between the two, it is necessary to define the closest program to coaching – mentoring.

Management development programs can dramatically improve management competency. However, programs such as mentoring are the most effective at developing lower level management into highly competent top management personnel. Even though it seems to provide more field expertise for the client to learn from, there would be little possibility for a CEO to find a more competent mentor to learn from. Top management already possess expertise in their field and have reached the top of the organizational ladder: what they need is someone that can work alongside them to unlock their hidden abilities, to resolve personal issues and to teach them about dealing with emotions. Executive coaches are designed for this type of development as they are usually equipped to use specific techniques to fulfill these client needs. However, to be a competent coach, they should understand the problems that they will face in dealing with their clients. It is highly agreed upon that psychological problems are one of the main issues in coaching executives. Thus, executive coaches are expected to have a high understanding of and ability to use psychotherapy as a way of helping their clients to work with a healthy and competent mind.

2.2. Executive coaching vs. mentoring

Executive coaching and mentoring are both relatively new professions in the business field. Their overlapping roles and responsibilities have caused much confusion around these concepts. This section provides a detailed explanation of the concepts of mentoring in general, business mentoring, and the differences between business mentoring and executive coaching.

2.2.1. Mentoring defined

Mentoring is also an effective way to develop management skills; however, there is much confusion between the definitions of mentoring and coaching. The above is a set of collective explanations of coaching and its implications to top management development. The following is a similar set of definitions for mentoring, followed by a model to distinguish the differences between the two concepts.

Mentoring is also a method of helping others to grow and develop, but it involves a greater range of helping activities and skills than coaching. A mentor is generally defined as an individual with advanced experience and knowledge who is committed to giving support and advice to a less experienced person. The less experienced person is called the protégé (DuBrin, 2005).

The Human Resource Glossary (2004) defines mentors as “senior, experienced, and respected managers or staffers who serve as role models, coaches, counselors, advisors, and advocates for younger or less experienced persons but who are not directly involved in their charges’ personal or work lives” (p. 422). Theoretically, a mentor is one that the protégé can learn from (MacLennan, 1995). They are a “wise and trusted counselor or teacher” (The American Heritage, 2007); they act as a role model, coach, broker, and advocate, motivating and providing opportunities for their protégé to use abilities for the benefit of the organization and themselves (Stone, 1999). It is a significant transition of knowledge, work and thinking from one person to another (Megginson et al., 2005). Murray (1991) identifies some misconceptions about the relationship between a mentor and a protégé. One misconception is that mentors are influencers who positively influence the behavior of the protégé, even if the two never met in real life, or the mentor does not even know the protégé exists: this is a form of role model, not a mentor. Murray argues that for a mentorship to exist there has to be "deliberate pairing" and "agreed upon goal"; the mentor and the protégé have to interact to facilitate protégé learning, growth, and skill development.

Based on these definitions, there can be many types of mentoring programs for different purposes. In general, there are two types of mentorship: formal and informal. Informal mentorship can be between parent and child, teacher and student, peers (Kram & Isabella, 1985), employer and employee, and so on. It is not structured, and has less responsibilities involved. Formal mentorship however, is structured, facilitated, and has responsibilities assigned.

2.2.2. Business mentoring

As organizations become lean to cope with the competitiveness of the modern market, years of downsizing have seriously affected the development of employees. There are few top management positions for employees to learn from and workers have to develop skills by learning from each other (DuBrin, 2005). This is when mentorship can help to develop talent in organizational management, as it helps young professionals learn technical knowledge and the organizational rope, develop their competence and effectiveness, and learn the expected behavior of the organization (Hunt & Michael, 1983). Mentoring has long been recognized for its effectiveness in career advancement in the majority group. And recently, a survey of successful minority executives found that 48 percent of the respondents had a role model who guided them towards their earlier career goals. A minority respondent specifically said that mentors were very helpful in helping them climb the corporate ladder (DuBrin, 2005).

Ensher and Murphy (2005) found that traditionally, mentoring in a corporate culture has a basic pattern: a top executive finds a young person who reminds him of his younger self and grooms the young with his knowledge and wisdom until the young becomes a mirror image of his mentor, and settles in a high position in the same organization. This type of mentor supports the protégé in three ways: by offering career guidance by suggesting a career path and projects to take, by providing emotional support during conflicts or stress, and by serving the protégé as a role model of appropriate behaviors. This type of mentorship has been found to be very effective, and scholars such as Kathy Kram and Michael Zey studied the prevalence, function and benefits of this mentoring relationship in the 1980s. This traditional form of mentoring was so effective for improving the rate of promotion, career satisfaction, and salary of protégés that numerous companies started developing formal mentoring programs for employee development. Originally, the organization would pair mentors with protégés in one-on-one relationships and arrange meetings for them to interact, and even though many of the pairings started off as mismatches, this type of formalized mentoring program was generally effective. As time has passed and more research has been done on the effectiveness of mentoring, more innovative mentoring programs have been developed, and formalized mentoring programs have proved to have good returns for organization investments.

Mentors are usually from the same organization as the protégé; even though it is not exactly the job of a line manager, they are usually more experienced and senior than the protégé. Line managers might sometimes spontaneously develop a mentoring relationship with an employee, but they often pressure the protégé into immediate results because of their job responsibilities. A good mentor devotes time and space for the protégé to develop by taking a wider view of the protégé's skills and capabilities. Thus, a large part of the mentor's role is to point out something that the protégé might perceive as insignificant and to help the protégé to grasp the significance of an event (Lacey, 1999).

Murray (1991) suggests that formal mentorship is a facilitated mentoring program, which is often used in organizational contexts for employee development. In Murray's paper, it is the formal assigned mentorship program that is compared with executive coaching as they are both effective management development programs used by organizations. This mentoring program is designed with a structure and a series of processes aimed at behavior change, and the results are evaluated for the mentor, the protégé and the organization. He identifies a list of criteria for this type of mentorship to exist:

- A design that meets the perceived needs of the organization
- Criteria and a process of the selection of protégés
- Strategies and tools for diagnosing the developmental needs of protégés
- Criteria and a process for qualifying mentors
- Orientation to the responsibilities of the role for both mentors and protégés
- Strategies for matching mentors and protégés on the basis of skills to be developed and compatibility
- A negotiated agreement between the mentor, protégé, and boss (if appropriate)
- A coordinator responsible for maintaining the program and supporting the relationships
- Formative evaluations to make necessary adjustments to the program
- Summative evaluations to determine outcomes for the organization, the mentors, and the protégés.

Lacey (1999) describes how a good mentoring relationship starts off by the mentor devoting most of the time to encouraging, listening and helping the protégé to identify and solve their own problems. When the relationship develops and understanding of each other's style grows, the mentor should offer different views on the protégé's perceptions and confront their problematic behavior. It takes great interpersonal skills and timing to be a good mentor: many formal mentoring programs never move into the second stage because the facilitated mentors are not prepared or do not have the skills to raise issues with their protégés, and do not have the ability to deal with their reactions. It was also found that organizations have different mentors for different programs and that no mentor can be suitable for all programs. Mentors usually assist their protégé in identifying areas of growth and development, and then provide training, support, counseling and advice to help the protégé in achieving their goals. They are usually required to:

- Encourage the exploration of ideas
- Encourage risk taking in learning
- Listen when the protégé has a problem
- Provide appropriate and timely advice
- Provide appropriate skills training
- Assist the protégé to identify and solve problems
- Help the protégé to shift their mental context
- Confront negative intentions or behaviors

2.2.3. The difference between coaching and mentoring

As mentioned before, there are many misconceptions about defining the exact meanings of coaching and mentoring. The confusion is common and even professionals have their own perceptions of what a coach of mentor does. For example, Business Mentors New Zealand (2007) define mentors quite differently: "A business mentor is a coach not a consultant. They won't do the work for you, they will advise you from their own experience." These misconceptions about the two concepts come from the roles that a coach or mentor plays in an organization: there are common roles, specific roles, and overlapping roles. MacLennan (1995) compares the meanings of coaching and mentoring and suggests that they are different but overlapping. They are similar in the way that they both form a relationship with the performer to help them develop, and overlap when a person performs successfully as a coach. Successful coaches are likely to be adopted as a mentor of coaching skills, but not vise versa. Other distinctions are: the coach helps the performer learn how to achieve more but the mentor is to be available for the performer to use as a resource; a mentor can fulfill the performer's role quite adequately and has basic management, people, and training or teaching skills. They should be expert in the same field as the protégé, while assisting the development of the protégé's unique skills and abilities, but they should not clone the protégé into themselves (Lacey, 1999). The difference with an effective coach is that the coach must have the knowledge, techniques and skills to help the performer achieve, without directing. In practice, whatever an organization defines for each role creates the parameters of that role; coaching assumes more self-responsibility on the part of the performer but mentoring assumes more performer responsibility than a conventional training course.

2.3. Executive coaching vs. psychotherapy

There are many similarities and differences between the practices of psychotherapy and executive coaching. Seven dimensions of these two professions are described and compared in this thesis:

1. Professional functions and roles
2. Skill, training, and experience requirements
3. Personal and professional characteristics
4. Ethical standards
5. Working alliances
6. Phases of psychotherapy and the coaching process
7. Methods and techniques

Both psychotherapy and executive coaching lead to personal change. Psychotherapy helps clients to cope with their daily life, whereas executive coaches are specified to help corporate executives improve at dealing with work and non-work issues. They have similarities in all of the seven dimensions that are compared; the differences are more apparent when comparing the details of these dimensions.

2.3.1. Professional functions and roles

Both psychotherapists and executive coaches play a role of helping clients to lead personal change. The roles and functions of psychotherapists are well defined and have a rigid structure. However, different therapeutic orientations have different roles and functions. Compared with psychotherapists, executive coaches do not have well defined roles and functions. It is advised that they should only play the role of a coach and not behave like a psychologist or other helping professionals; they should also be clear about their functions while coaching, even though these functions may overlap and change over time.

2.3.1.1. Psychotherapist functions and roles

The role of psychotherapists can be broadly described as being agents for therapeutic change. Their role is to help their clients to recover from dysfunction (Sperry, 2004). Therapists from different therapeutic orientations have various different roles and functions to induce therapeutic change. Corey (2001) describes the roles and functions of some of the major therapeutic orientations, which we will now address individually.

Psychoanalytic therapist functions and roles

The psychoanalytic therapist has the role of transferring the client's emotions onto the therapist. The therapist does not disclose their personal reactions to the client and remains neutral for the transference relationship. The client projects his/her feelings onto the therapist while the therapist analyzes the projections and relates them to unfinished and repressed situations.

The functions of psychoanalytic therapists are to help clients achieve self-awareness, honesty, effective personal relationships, and achieve the freedom to love, work, and play. They also teach clients to realistically deal with anxiety, to gain control over irrational and impulsive behaviors, and to accelerate the process of uncovering unconscious material. An important function of the psychoanalytic therapist is to teach the client how to achieve insights into their problems from the analysis that the therapist performs.

Metaphorically, the psychoanalytic therapist is a person who puts together a client's puzzled emotions and interprets the full picture, so that the client can be more knowledgeable and rational about their actions and feelings. However, the accuracy of the therapist's interpretation and the client's readiness for change can greatly affect the effectiveness of the therapy outcome.

Adlerian therapist functions and roles

Adlerian therapists believe that the client's dysfunctions are caused by their own destructive beliefs, faulty values, and goals in life. The therapist therefore functions to assess and correct the client's destructive beliefs. The therapist first analyzes the client's current functioning by gathering information on the client's family constellation to interpret the client's early social world; then the used client recollections of early childhood incidents as a diagnostic tool to find major mistakes that have been made earlier. The reflections from these efforts are then translated into targets for therapy.

Metaphorically, the therapist acts like a mirror for the client to reflect their mistaken beliefs onto, and gives the client perspective on convictions, evaluations, attitudes and biases.
Counselors realize that clients can become discouraged and function ineffectively because of mistaken beliefs, faulty values, and goals in life. They operate on the assumption that clients will feel and behave better when they discover and correct their basic mistakes. Therapists tend to look for major mistakes in thinking and valuing such as mistrust, selfishness, unrealistic ambitions, and lack of confidence.

Person-centered therapist functions and roles

The person-centered therapist believes that therapist knowledge, theories, or techniques are unimportant in therapeutic change. The therapist's role is to provide genuine caring, respect, acceptance, and understanding for the client to loosen their defenses and perceptions so that they can move to a higher level of personal functioning. They function to establish a therapeutic climate in which the client can grow. They act on a personal level and give the client freedom to explore their problematic areas of life. The therapist does not view the client as a patient, but must be willing to be genuine in their relationship with the client and meet them on a moment-to-moment experiential basis; the therapist must be in their world. Metaphorically, the therapist acts like an instrument to help the client grow.

Gestalt therapist functions and roles

Gestalt therapists believe that therapeutic change can be achieved by making the client aware of what they are, rather than what they think they should be. The therapist's role is to invite the client to learn about themselves and to try new behaviors. A gestalt therapist's main role is to provide the client with a climate for change. The therapist uses techniques in their dialogue to suggest new ways of being.

The gestalt therapist functions to observe a client's body language and to make the client aware that they are using certain body language gestures to both express and mask their true feelings. The therapist will pay attention to the degree of congruence in the client's body language and ask the client to notice how their body language matches or does not match their verbal language. The gestalt therapist does not only call attention to a client's non-verbal language, they also increase client awareness of the degree to which their verbal language is congruent with their experienced emotions.

Reality therapist functions and roles

The function of the reality therapist is to help clients deal with the present. The reality therapist will ask the client questions such as, "Are the total behaviors that you are choosing getting you what you need? Is this choice realistic? Is it getting you closer to the people that you want to get to know?" Clients can then reflect on their ineffective behavior thoughts and what they can do to change. The reality therapist acts like a role model for the client to learn from; thus it is important for the client to perceive the therapist as someone who knows what life is all about and knows how to successfully deal with life situations.

Behavioral therapist functions and roles

Behavior therapists adhere closely to clinical theories and use the clues given by clients. They use summarizing, reflection, clarification, and open-ended questioning in the same ways as other therapists. But according to Corey (2001), they also function to:

1. Systematically gather information on the situation and analyze the dimensions of the problem and its consequences.
2. Clarify the problem with the client
3. Design a target behavior
4. Formulate therapeutic goals with the client
5. Identify the conditions for maintenance
6. Implement a change plan
7. Evaluate the success of the change plan
8. Conduct follow-up assessments

The behaviorist therapist plays the role of modeling appropriate behavior, because the behaviorist believes that learning can occur not only by experience, but by imitation as well. Clients often view the therapist as a role model for behavior, so the therapist must be aware of their power to influence the attitudes, values, beliefs, and behavior of their clients.

Cognitive-behavioral therapist functions and roles

The cognitive-behavioral therapist believes that their clients have irrational thoughts that are counter-productive. They help the client to realize and rationalize their thoughts, and then modify and abandon those thoughts. The therapist then challenges the client to think more rationally in the future to avoid further behavioral problems.

A cognitive-behavioral therapist often uses Rational Emotional Behavior Therapy (REBT). REBT practitioners do not have an intense relationship with the client, because the idea behind REBT is to direct behavior from cognition. The therapist mainly functions to provide education, and:

1. Encourages the discovery of irrational ideas that disturb behavior
2. Challenges irrational ideas (by confronting them with humor)
3. Demonstrate how to validate ideas realistically
4. Teach the client how to logically analyze irrational beliefs
5. Illustrate how irrational beliefs lead to emotional and behavioral disturbances
6. Explain how to replace irrational beliefs with rational ones
7. Teach the client to apply a scientific approach to thinking to prevent future irrational thoughts
8. Use cognitive, emotive, and behavioral methods to help clients work from their emotions to their behavior

The REBT therapist acts like a teacher to the client. They teach the client about how disturbances form cognitively and how irrational beliefs lead to self-defeating emotions and behaviors. The clients are expected to work hard by carrying out behavior homework assignments that reduce irrational thinking.

2.3.1.2. Executive coach functions and roles

The executive coach plays the role of a coach to help executives to make improvements on their work and life issues. However, they function very differently according to the executive's need: for example, they can help executives to learn new skills, to improve their performance, to prepare for the future, and so on (Witherspoon & White, 1996).

The executive coach must have a focus, whether it is to help their client learn specific skills, address performance issues, or support behavior change in their client. There are four main functions of an executive coach: coaching for skills, coaching for performance, coaching for development, and coaching for the executive's agenda (Valerio & Lee, 2005).

The coach must be clear with their role, and coach accordingly. For example, role clarity can help the coach to determine how to approach an opening for coaching, what should be left alone for the time being, and where to start the coaching process. Executive coaches must not cross the boundary of their professional role. They need to know the difference between coaching and other helping professions such as training, consulting, and therapy (Laff, 2007).

Even though coaches need to have role clarity, coaching functions will often overlap. A coach who has started on building executive skills may also end up working on performance issues (Witherspoon & White, 1996). Whatever the coaching role is, the coach should inform all stakeholders, and the coach should always provide feedback on the executive's perceived outcome (Valerio & Lee, 2005), because for the organization, their role is to train.

The most important element of an executive coach's role is flexibility. As executive coaching is a highly confidential personal learning and self-improvement process, it is much more individualized than other forms of organizational learning. Thus, executive coaches need to be aware of each executive's uniqueness, be flexible in their roles and pace the coaching process accordingly (Witherspoon & White, 1996).

2.3.2. Skills, training and experience

Skills training and experience are important for both psychotherapists and executive coaches. All these assets have an effect on these professions towards more successful outcomes. The major difference between the two professions is that it is a compulsory requirement for psychotherapists to be educated and trained in their area of profession, but there are no formal requirements for the background of executive coaches. Both professions require sound psychological knowledge, but executive coaching also requires sound business knowledge and more effective interpersonal skills than psychotherapy.

2.3.2.1. Psychotherapist skills, training and experience

Therapist training, experience, and skills have an effect on therapeutic outcomes. Inexperienced therapists are more likely to have varied and less effective outcomes than experienced therapists. Crits-Christoph (1995) found that therapists who have not attended graduate school and worked in community mental health centers tend to have higher dropout rates than the more trained and experienced therapists; he also found that therapist colleagues evaluate clients as more improved with highly trained therapists than with lowly trained therapists. Experience level is not predictive of the strength of an emotional bond, but experience helps the therapist to negotiate goals and tasks with the client (Dunkle, 1996). It was also found that therapist skillfulness improved as training proceeded (Diamond, 1997). According to Seligman (2004), important areas of training for psychotherapists should include:

1. Knowledge of the profession, such as history, functions and roles, ethical and legal guidelines, and the technology available
2. Relevant credentials and membership in a professional organization
3. Awareness of social and cultural issues of the profession, such as social problems, their causes, solutions, prevention, intervention, sensitivity, appreciation, and knowledge of multicultural issues
4. Knowledge on all aspects of human growth and development, such as individual development, family development, personality development, cognitive development, sexual development, and the ability to distinguish unhealthy development and facilitate healthy development.
5. An understanding of career and lifestyle, and their meanings to individuals, families, and society, and ability in using therapy skills to promote healthy lifestyle and career development
6. The ability to conduct individual therapy: to form positive therapeutic alliances; to have knowledge and skills covering the use of a broad range of well-established treatment approaches; the ability to conduct effective interviews; the

ability to form appropriate treatment goals and plans; and the ability to help clients in crisis

7. The ability to conduct group therapy: knowledge of group development and dynamics; knowledge of types of groups; knowledge of member role functions; appropriate use of group treatments; and knowledge of the effects of the treatments
8. The ability to assess and appraise clients: knowledge of a broad range of assessment tools and their uses; skills in presenting, planning, and using assessment tools in the treatment process; the ability to conduct interviews, mental status examinations, and observations; an understanding of the statistical and multicultural aspects of assessments; and awareness of when and how to make referrals for assessment
9. The ability to research and evaluate: knowledge of statistical, technological, and other aspects of conducting research in the field; and the ability to use them to improve professional success
10. The ability to diagnose psychopathology: the ability to recognize healthy and pathological personalities and functioning; familiarity with the most recent edition of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders; the ability to make accurate multi-axial assessments and form case conceptualizations; awareness of addressing dangers and risks in clients; and knowing when to refer clients to other professionals

2.3.2.2. Executive coach skills, training and experience

The most obvious requirements for an executive coach are education and training. Executive coaches need to have a wide range of knowledge and skills to fulfill the demands of this challenging work, especially in the business and psychology areas. Coaches should have knowledge in: clinical, organizational, individual, and group psychology; management practices; issues of senior leaders; and the functioning of different types of organizations (corporate, nonprofit, government, and educational)

(Orenstein, 2007). These skills include: interpersonal effectiveness, listening, empathy, patience, adaptability, problem solving, creativity, and humor (Wasylyshyn, 2003).

Coaches who do not have a background in psychology are unlikely to attend to an executive's psychological problems, which can worsen the situation. If behavior change is desired, coaches need to be trained clinically, as untrained coaches are less likely to usefully handle referrals. Psychologists who have no experience in business are likely to use language in the coaching session that is inappropriate or less representative of a business setting, which may not engage or gain support from business executives. This problem can be solved by getting the psychologist to engage the experience of different business settings, to read business literature, and to learn from training experiences (Wasylyshyn, 2003).

According to Orenstein (2007), there are seven knowledge components necessary for executive coaches, which we shall now address individually.:

Component 1: Psychological theory

- Psychodynamic theory
- Cognitive-behavioral theory
- Personality theory
- Adult development
- Adult learning
- Change theory

These theories are usually taught in an undergraduate psychology degree and are the core psychological theories. They provide coaches with an understanding of human psychology and the differences between these schools of psychology.

Component 2: Organizational psychology

- Role theory
- Group dynamics

- Inter-group dynamics
- Systems theory
- Nature of leadership and authority
- Change theory

Organizational psychology is a branch of psychology that focuses on how human psychology functions in organizations. The most important aspect of this component is how people function and work with each other as a system.

Component 3: Management theory and practice

- Organizational structures
- Organizational behavior
- Leadership models
- Strategic planning
- Financial management
- Marketing principles
- Human resources management
- Performance management

This component focuses on the business and management of an organization. It is important for an executive coach to understand how organizations function and the requirements for a leader to function well within an organization.

Component 4: Practice skills

- Contracting
- Interviewing
- Observation
- Individual and organizational assessment
- Feedback
- Individual and group interventions

- Individual and group facilitation
- Outcome evaluation
- Use of self as a tool

This component provides executive coaches with the details of coaching practice. Each step should be carefully followed to achieve the maximum positive outcome for clients and protect the clients and their coaches from malpractice.

Component 5: Research methodology

- Qualitative research
- Quantitative research
- Statistics
- Psychometrics

Executive coaches need to be able to understand and use research to back up their practice. This means that executive coaches should learn about different types of research methodologies; they should be able to employ research findings correctly, and use psychological assessments.

Component 6: Ethics

- APA ethical principles and guidelines
- "Do no harm"
- Confidentiality
- Differences between coaching and therapy

Executive coaches do not have formal ethical codes to follow, but being ethical in their practice is extremely important for the benefit of the coach and their clients. By following the psychologist ethics codes, executive coaches are able to protect their clients and themselves from malpractice.

Component 7: Supervised practice

- Step-by-step application of learning
- Supervised coaching cases
- Focused development of self as tool

Executive coaches should not practice in isolation. The nature of executive coaching is similar to that of psychotherapy, so it is best for executive coaches to also value supervised practice. Supervision can help executive coaches to practice more effectively and to self-develop in their job.

2.3.3. Personal and professional characteristics

The personal and professional characteristics of psychotherapists are mostly those of emotionally healthy people. However, the necessary characteristics of effective executive coaches are much more demanding. They need to have all the characteristics of an effective therapist and the ability to maneuver through interpersonal issues in a corporate setting, while still being sensitive to personal emotions.

2.3.3.1. Characteristics of psychotherapists

Other qualities of effective therapists are the same as what we value in a positive relationship. Most of these characteristics are those of an emotionally healthy person (**Bachelor,** 1995), as well as empathy skills, probing and challenging (Jinks, 1999). Effective clinicians are typically:

1. Strong in interpersonal skills such as patience, warmth, caring, humor, and friendliness
2. Genuine, sincere, and authentic
3. Emotionally stable, mature, and responsibleWell-adjusted and fulfilled, self-aware, with positive and realistic self-esteem, good relationships, a sense of direction, and a rewarding lifestyle

4. Willing to acknowledge mistakes and limits
5. Intelligent and conceptualizing
6. Able to offer insight into themselves and others
7. Aware of, sensitive to, and respectful of multicultural issues
8. Able to engage in and appreciate the value of personal and professional growth and learning
9. Ethical, objective, and fair
10. Flexible and open to change and new experiences, and willing to take reasonable risks
11. Affirmative and encouraging of others
12. With clear and effective oral and written communication

Negative characteristics of the therapist can also reduce the effectiveness of therapy; development can be impeded in both forming a positive alliance and in an established alliance. Therapists with poor alliance ratings are characterized as exploitive, critical, moralistic, tense, tired, bored, and defensive, as well as lacking warmth, respect, confidence, and unable to provide a supportive therapeutic environment. Other characteristics which lower the alliance rating are being distracted, aloof, distant, and have a difficult time engaging in the treatment process. Clients are likely to be less involved in the treatment process if the therapist shows disregard or is self-focused. Patients are likely to disengage if the therapist reminds them of someone that is hard to relate to (Ackerman & Hilsenroth, 2001).

2.3.3.2. Characteristics of executive coaches

Wasylyshyn (2003) identifies the top three personal characteristics of an effective executive coach: (1) the ability to form a strong bond with the executive; (2) professionalism; (3) a clear and sound coaching methodology.

Coaches who perceive the executive (opposed to the organization) as their client are likely to quickly form a strong bond in the coaching relationship; good coaches can find a way to satisfy both the organization and the executive. Other coach characteristics that improve the coach-client bond are empathy, warmth, trust, listening skills, and quick engagement (Wasylyshyn, 2003).

Coaches with psychological backgrounds are more professional regarding ethical standards, using psychometrics and other data, and managing the boundaries of coaching relationships. Intelligence, integrity/honesty, and objectivity also contribute to the professional characteristics of an effective coach (Wasylyshyn, 2003).

Effective coaches need a sound methodology. They should be able to use their knowledge to maximize impact, constructively deliver 'truth,' identify core issues, use psychometrics, and be grounded in context. Without a proven methodology, the coach is likely to flounder, be too ambiguous, or finish the coaching service prematurely (Wasylyshyn, 2003).

There are a number of core competencies that executive coaches must possess. These include (Brotman, Liberi & Wasylyshyn, 2000):

1. Approachability: being easy to talk to; making an effort to put others at ease; being warm, pleasant, gracious, sensitive, and patient; building rapport well; and being a good listener
2. Being comfortable around top management: being comfortable around senior executives; understanding how executives think and process information; using language familiar to executives; responding to executive needs; and using approaches that are likely to work
3. Compassion: genuine caring about people's work and non-work issues; being available and ready to help; and having genuine empathy with other people's emotions
4. Creativity: having creative ideas; and being able to connect previous notions with future problem solving
5. A customer focus: dedication to customer expectations; and being able to establish and maintain effective customer relationships
6. Integrity and trust: being well trusted, truthful, and confidential

7. Intellectual horsepower: being bright and intelligent; being able to deal with complexity; and being intellectually sharp, capable, and agile
8. Interpersonal savvy: relating to and valuing all kinds of people in the organization; and being able to use diplomacy and tact
9. Listening: being an attentive and active listener; having patience to listen; and being able to restate other people's opinions
10. Dealing with paradoxes: being flexible and adaptive, empathic and objective, and self-confident and humble; being balanced in a conflicting situation; and the ability to be both tough and compassionate
11. Political savvy: being able to effectively and quietly maneuver through complex political situations and anticipate land mines; and understanding the reality of corporate politics
12. Self-knowledge: knowing self strengths and weaknesses and opportunities and limits; seeking feedback and insights from mistakes; and being open to criticism

2.3.4. Ethical standards

Psychotherapists are well-known for the strict ethical standards of their profession. The ethical guidelines of psychotherapists are made to protect the confidentiality and integrity of clients. They also protect the therapist from law suites, as well as improve the strength and credibility of the profession. Executive coaches do not have formal ethical standards, but to be ethical in their practice is just as important as in any other helping profession. The most important issue in executive coaching is confidentiality.

2.3.4.1. Ethical guidelines and standards of psychotherapy

Therapists must obey ethical guidelines and standards of psychotherapy. All professional associations for therapists have a set of formal ethical guidelines and standards for practice. These standards are made to help the therapists in the following ways (Seligman, 2004):

1. To add strength and credibility to the profession
2. To help clinicians make sound decisions
3. To allow clients to give informed consent for treatment regarding confidentiality, processes and outcomes
4. To protect therapists in the event of malpractice suits that challenge their competence
5. To demonstrate the ethical and legal standards of the profession

Most mental health professions have very similar ethical standards, which includes these general ethical and moral principles (Seligman, 2006):

1. Autonomy: it is the therapist's duty to help people develop the skills and strength to make wise choices for themselves; they should also understand, respect, and appreciate diversity
2. Nonmaleficence: therapists are to promote the well-being of clients and act in the best interests of their clients
3. Justice: it is essential for therapists to be fair in all their professional relationships, such as with clients, colleagues, students
4. Fidelity: therapists need to maintain, protect, and nurture the trust in their therapeutic alliance; they need to be reliable and responsible to their profession

The American Psychological Association publishes a set of guidelines called *Ethical Principles of Psychologists and Code of Conduct* for its members and other bodies, including other psychological associations, professional groups, and psychology boards. It has a *Preamble and General Principles* section to guide psychologists towards the highest ideals of psychology. The principles are guidelines for the actions of psychologists, and the ethical standards are enforced but variable rules for their actions (APA, 2002).

The Code of Conduct applies in all professional activities of psychologists. Some of the standards can be modified to (1) allow professional judgment of the part of psychologists, (2) eliminate injustice or inequality that would occur without the modifier, (3) ensure applicability across the broad range of activities conducted by psychologists, and (4) guard against a set of rigid rules that might be quickly outdated (APA, 2002).

The Ethical Codes have a higher standard of conduct than the law; if a psychologist's ethical responsibilities conflict with the law, they are to resolve this conflict in a reasonable manner. If the conflict cannot be resolved, a psychologist may adhere to the law to meet the basic principles of human rights (APA, 2002).

When complaints of unethical conduct are made, the APA may terminate the membership of the unethical member, notify other authorities of its action, and take further action after the expulsion. Other bodies such as psychological associations, professional groups, psychology boards, and agencies may also use the APA Code of Conduct for judging the conduct of their members (APA, 2002).

Therapists working together should be responsible for not only their own, but also for each other's actions in practice. When unethical standards are suspected in a colleague, therapists should raise the suspicion with the colleague first, and help them with a resolution. If no improvements are made, therapists should consider reporting the matter to the professional association or licensing board (APA, 2002).

Here is a set of important ethical guidelines from the headings of The American Counseling Association Code of Ethics (1995, p. 1):

1. The counseling relationship: therapists should always act in the best interest of their clients. Treatment processes and outcomes are developed with the intention to help the clients. Therapists should know when and how to make appropriate referrals for their clients when their interventions can no longer benefit the client. Potentially harmful relationships such as client and student, and client and family

member, are avoided. Therapists in their professional interactions are to respect and appreciate diversity, human rights and dignity.

2. Confidentiality: therapists are to inform their clients about issues in confidentiality (obligations and exceptions). They are to maintain their obligations to confidentiality in therapeutic relationships and among colleagues. In special circumstances, therapists can break confidentiality with care. These circumstances include: when working with minors or people who are dangerous to others or themselves; when engaging cases of abuse; when the client requests; and when ordered by the court.
3. Professional responsibility: therapists are to present their credentials accurately, and practice within their areas. They are active and developing within their profession to maintain and improve their practices. They should have strong relationships and never exploit their colleagues or clients.
4. Evaluation, assessment, and interpretation: therapists are knowledgeable of diagnoses and assessments; they use their skills and tools appropriately with the client and with consideration of multicultural issues.
5. Teaching, training, and supervision: educators and supervisors have similar standards to therapists. They follow and inform students of policies and procedures. They teach and give useful feedbacks on student performance, and offer support and referrals for educational and emotional difficulties. They have resources for dealing with unfair or erroneous decisions relating to the professional development of students, and ensure that they follow the ethical standards of the profession.
6. Research and publication: writers and researchers in mental health fields also follow ethical guidelines. No research participants should be harmed in the research process, voluntary consent should be obtained when possible, and researchers should provide clear information on their work to participants and colleagues, follow guidelines when submitting their work for publication, and acknowledge help received from students and colleagues.

2.3.4.2. Ethical guidelines for executive coaching

Ethical standards

Most helping professions such as doctors, lawyers, and psychologists have a rigid set of ethical codes to guide their practice. Coaches are not bound by a formal code of ethics for their professional actions. However, ethical standards of executive coaching are equally important in the coaching profession. Coaches with a psychological background often follow the ethical codes of the psychology profession; other coaches make every effort to act ethically in their practice (Valerio & Lee, 2005).

Confidentiality

Trust in the coaching relationship is most important to the outcome. Trust in the relationship is based on the privileged information that is exchanged within the relationship. This privileged information can be and often is potentially damaging. Thus, confidentiality is crucial to coaching. If the client does not have trust in the coach, there will not be a strong bond in the coaching relationship and the coaching process will be less likely to succeed (Valerio & Lee, 2005).

The information shared in the coaching relationship can impact the client's promotion or salary; naturally, the client will want to know who will have access to the information and have the right to disclose any information or report. However, the client's confidentiality is not privileged under law. There should be at least one verbal report of the coaching process and results for the sponsor, with the coach in the room. The report typically includes the client's discovery of their strength and weaknesses, if there were any developments, and their future work-related development goals (Kiel, Rimmer, Williams & Doyle,1996).

The coach will often face a conflict of sharing coaching information as they are often paid by the client's organization, usually by human resources, the client's supervisor or the client's boss. However, it is more important to preserve client confidentiality than to report progress to the organization.

Best practice

It is best practice to discuss and come to a mutual agreement before the coaching contract is made. Agreements should be made between the client, coach, and the organization about: who will have access to the information shared in the coaching process; what information needs to be kept confidential; and the goals for progress. When a mutual agreement is reached between the parties, unnecessary conflicts of interest can be avoided. The coach can also encourage their client to talk to the stakeholders about their development progress with or without the presence of the coach to keep the sponsors informed (Valerio & Lee, 2005).

2.3.5. Working alliances

The working alliances of psychotherapists and executive coaches are very similar. Both require a strong working alliance for a positive therapeutic or coaching outcome. Contracting in executive coaching is more formal: the alliance is made to protect all of the stakeholders (the executive, the coach, family members of the executive, and the organization) in the coaching process and to help build trust between the coach and executive. In psychotherapy, contracting is less important and more emphasis is put on the therapeutic alliance between the therapist and the client.

2.3.5.1. The therapeutic alliance

Research across many therapeutic orientations has found that the strength of therapeutic relationships is extremely important to the outcome of therapy (Kirsh, 2006; Zuroff, 2006). Therapists need to develop the skills to build strong, positive therapeutic alliances, with adaptation of their treatment style for individual clients to maximize positive outcomes.

Client perception of therapists plays a large role in the formation of positive therapeutic relationships (Singer, 2005). Therapists who were perceived as empathic, caring, credible, and understanding are likely to have clients continue in treatment. Negative perceptions of the therapist will mean that the client is less likely to make progress, even if the perceptions are ungrounded (Seligman, 2006).

Being realistic and having good coordination are major aspects of positive therapeutic force. Mutual feelings of warmth, affection, affirmation, and respect all contribute to positive therapeutic outcomes. A clear mutual vision of the treatment process and goals are also important to the success of the treatment (Seligman, 2006).

Therapists can examine the nature of the therapeutic relationship to work towards being more intentional and thoughtful in the process. Most therapists adopt more than one type of the five therapeutic alliances that have been classified (Seligman, 2006):

1. Working alliances: therapists share focused mutual goals for agreed upon tasks
2. Transferential/counter-transferential relationships: therapists foster and analyze transference relationships but do not talk about their own lives
3. Reparative/developmentally needed relationships: therapists reparent and nurture clients to compensate for earlier deprivation; often used on severely damaged clients
4. I-you relationships: therapists serve as a healing instrument and role model, with an emphasis on mutuality in the therapeutic relationship
5. Transpersonal relationships: therapists take the client through the healing process; therapy is a shared journey toward personal growth

2.3.5.2. The coaching alliance

Forming a coaching alliance is essential to the coaching process and the success of its outcomes. Two important assets of coaching are partnership and contract.

Partnership

Trust and understanding are important in coaching. A partnership can be formed as coaches earn their client's trust. A good partnership requires the coach to provide the right amount of challenge and support, and to know how their clients view the world and what they care about. Essential requirements for this strategy are effective listening skills, patience, commitment, and an understanding of human behavior dynamics (Killberg & Diedrich, 2007)

Contract

Mutuality in coaching is often in the form of a contract. A contract is often the first step in informing the client, the boss, and and human resources professionals about the process of coaching. It can be formal (usually with the HR professional and the organization), or informal (usually with the client). A contract gives the coaching process predictability, structure, and trust. Coaching should only begin with a mutual agreement (Valerio & Lee, 2005).

A strong bond between the client and the coach is also important to successful coaching outcomes. Both coach and client need to be positive about the foreseeable outcome. Other than a good coaching relationship, there should also be a written agreement relating to (Valerio & Lee, 2005):

1. The frequency and duration of the sessions
2. The length of the service
3. The focus of the sessions, such as leadership skills, interpersonal styles, time management, and work/family issues
4. A measurable outcome and evaluation procedure
5. Confidentiality and reporting
6. The cost of the service

The suitability of the coach for the client should be determined before the contract. Information should be gathered on the coach and his/her methodology, and the coaching process and outcome. The following are some of the questions that should be asked (Orenstein, 2007).

- Who is the person making the contract and what organization do they belong to?
- What is the form of the first contact (e.g. telephone, email, in person)?
- Who in what position hired the service, and what was the client's readiness and willingness to receive the service?
- What is the state of the client before coaching, and what is the desired outcome?
- What are the coach's methodology and fees?
- What is the personal gain for the client?
- What is the client's attitude towards this service and the consultant?
- What is the consultant's reaction to the first contact?

2.3.6. Phases of service process

The phases of both psychotherapy and executive coaching follow the process of personal change. The first phases of psychotherapy and executive coaching are similar in the way that they engage in building the working alliance and assess the client's current status. Both therapist and coaches look for the client's dysfunctional patterns that are preventing them from changing. In executive coaching, pattern change and skill building are the key focuses of their intervention, but psychotherapy contains a wide range of other interventions (Sperry, 2004).

2.3.6.1. Phases of the psychotherapeutic process

Psychotherapy is a form of help for clients to change. The change process has six important stages: precontemplation, contemplation, preparation, action, maintenance, and termination. Psychotherapy should be designed to match the therapeutic process to the perspective change stage to achieve optimum results. The therapeutic relationship also changes when a client moves from one change stage to another (Prochaska & Norcross, 2007).

There are numerous therapeutic processes, but they can be categorized into beginning, middle and end points. Sperry (2004) identifies four phases of the therapeutic process that are common to most well-developed therapeutic orientations, that we will now discuss separately

Phase 1: Engagement

Engagement is the most important stage of the therapeutic process. It is where the client makes effort and commitment that are required for therapeutic change to occur. Clients are engaged when they turn up for therapy sessions, talk to the therapist about their concerns, and make an effort to do their homework. Typically, client engagement should be determined before the formal therapeutic process begins. Engagement before therapy is determined by: the client's willingness to involve in negotiating their realistic therapeutic goals; the client and therapist roles in the process; client willingness to follow ground rules in the therapy; and client motivation and readiness for change (Sperry, 2004). The client's role in this phase is to talk to the therapist about the nature of their concerns, including content, affect, and context; the therapist's role is to provide therapeutic conditions that will build up a trusting and working relationship (Patterson & Welfel, 2000). Strategies used by the therapist include: empathic listening; triggering the placebo effect; reversing client demoralizations; and providing suggestions and socialization in therapy (Sperry, 2004). Other therapist qualities which support client engagement can be empathy, congruence or genuineness, a positive regard, unconditional acceptance, and concreteness (Patterson & Welfel, 2000).

Phase 2: Pattern identification

A pattern is a behavior or manner of the client which is predictable and consistent. It has physical, psychological, and social features, such as leg trembling. Client patterns are consistent with the way that they think, feel, act, cope, and defend themselves in stressful situations. Focused assessments are used to determine a client's maladaptive patterns. These patterns determine the client's baseline functioning and maladaptive actions that can be detrimental or harmful to the client and others. Maladaptive actions are also predictable: for example, the DSM-IV Axis II gives personality traits and disorder terms as ways of specifying the behavioral component of a pattern. The thinking component of the pattern is called the schema (Sperry, 2004).

The identification phase is important as it determines the client's maladaptive patterns both behaviorally, cognitively and effectively. By determining maladaptive patterns, the therapist can make better choices on the therapeutic process for the client to change to more adaptive functioning. Methods used by therapists to assess patterns are diagnostic questioning, interventive questioning, and psychological inventories. Therapist role-playing or enactments are also used in addition to these assessments to clarify patterns (Sperry, 2004).

The client role in the phase is to build a deeper understanding of his/her concerns and help the therapist to assess his/her problems. The therapist in this phase should extend the client's ability to understand themselves and others by teaching the client empathy, immediacy, confrontation, interpretation through using role playing. The therapist should also work to develop a mutually agreeable assessment of the problems (Patterson & Welfel, 2000).

Phase 3: Pattern change interventions

The goal of the intervention stage is to change the maladaptive patterns that lead to client distress and impairment. The change is towards an increase in life functioning and a decrease in symptoms. The first goal of the intervention is usually a relief of symptoms with medication or behavioral treatments. If the symptoms are not relieved, functional capacity will be less likely to increase. All therapeutic interventions are designed for therapeutic change (Sperry, 2004); for example, these include Eye Movement

Desensitization and Reprocessing, Relaxation Training, Rational Emotional Behavioral Therapy, and many more (Corey, 2001).

The client's role in the third phase is to develop specific outcome goals from the assessments, to muster commitment to reach those goals, and to engage in carrying out actions to accomplish those goals. The therapist's role is to involve the client in understanding information, to formulate goals, and to make independent and realistic choices. They are also to re-evaluate any unsuccessful actions and reward clients for success (Patterson & Welfel, 2000).

Phase 4: Pattern maintenance and termination
Newly acquired changes are subject to relapse; the goal of this phase is to maintain the change made so therapy can be terminated. In this phase, the therapist assesses how likely the client is to relapse and uses appropriate preventions such as setting or negotiating a termination date, or scheduling weaning sessions. The other goal of this phase is to reduce the patient's reliance on the therapist and therapy (Sperry, 2004).

2.3.6.2. Phases of the coaching process

The coaching process

Although executive coaching does not have a rigid guideline for the coaching process, the coaching process is similar to that of psychotherapy, which contains five important steps (Valerio, & Lee, 2005):

1. Contracting
2. Initial goal setting
3. Assessment
4. Implementation and action planning
5. Evaluation

Orenstein (2007) simplifies these five steps into three phases: entry, facilitating change, and concluding coaching. He also illustrates further processes within these phases:

Phase 1: Entry

1. Initial contract
2. Preliminary meeting
3. Joint goal setting
4. The coaching contract

Phase 2: Facilitating change

1. Assessment
2. Feedback
3. Objectives setting
4. Formal coaching

Phase 3: Concluding coaching

1. Outcome evaluation
2. Concluding the coaching process

Illustration of coaching phases

The phases and processes of executive coaching are often manipulated to suit the coach's coaching style. Sperry (2004) illustrates an example of phases in executive coaching in the case of an executive who was productive but had low employee morale. The executive was hard driving, overbearing, somewhat arrogant, and took excessive leave. An executive coach was hired to groom him for a promotion.

Phase 1.

The executive was introduced to the coach by his superior, and then met for another thirty minutes to discuss the coaching process. The executive was willing to commit to the coaching process in order to be a more desirable candidate for the promotion. The executive was given a 12 page questionnaire to be completed before the next session. The coach analyzed the answers before the second session to determine the executive's readiness for change, focused work issues, and previous successes in other planned change efforts.

Phase 2.

The second phase of coaching was data collection and assessment. Often used are: the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI), the emotional Competency Inventory (ECI), and 360-degree feedback instruments. In this case, the coach used all of these inventories to collect valuable data from the executive, his superior, his peers, and his employees. The information collected was then analyzed and used to conceptualize the case.

Phase 3.

The third phase was to set desired goals for the executive and to discuss the counseling plan to achieve the goals. Three goals were set for the executive: (1) improving employee morale and reducing turn over; (2) reducing the amount of his leave by improving his personal health; and (3) assessing and fostering the executive's likeliness for promotion. Then the coach specified five coaching targets: (1) improving listening and communication skills; 2) increasing health status and stamina; (3) increasing awareness of insensitivity and arrogance; 4) improving relational sensitivity, particularly with an engineer in his unit; and 5) enrolling in a corporate leadership development program. The coaching session would be in three forms: (1) two-way coaching including coaching on the phone; (2) team coaching to improve the executive's interpersonal skills; and (3) a referral by the coach for personal health recommendations. Apart from these three forms of coaching session, there are regular meetings and assignments.

Coaching started with two-way sessions for 4 weeks, with four team coaching sessions incorporated into the process. The focus of the coaching for the first three month was (1) improving employee morale and reducing turn over, and (2) reducing the amount of leave by improving personal health. As for assessing and fostering the executive's likeliness for promotion and improving relational sensitivity, they were long term goals and were left until the second section of the coaching process. The coaching targets were also monitored on a 1-10 scale rating.

Phase 4.

After three month of coaching, the executive took the 360-degree feedback again and reviewed his progress rating with the coach. All targets were improved, with the greatest improvements in the areas of personal health and interpersonal relationships. Less but significant improvement was made on the target of sensitivity. The executive also made progress on the long terms goals. It was decided that the coaching would continue for another three months with the frequency of the coaching sessions cut to half, to monitor, progress, and sustain the changes already made.

2.3.7. Methods and techniques of psychotherapy and coaching

There are a wide range of methods and techniques employed by both psychotherapists and executive coaches. Psychotherapists work according to therapeutic orientation and closely follow the guidelines of their profession. Executive coaches often use techniques from psychotherapy, including many from the behavioral (Berman & Bradt, 2006; Orenstein, 2007), cognitive, psychodynamic, and organizational methods (Orenstein, 2007), as well as any other methods that lead to fast personal developments. Executive coaches are not restricted by assumptions and procedures; they often formulate their own intervention methods that will best fit the particular executive. Even though assumptions and procedures can be limiting, it takes great skill and experience to be able to select the most effective intervention from the vast number of techniques available.

2.3.7.1. Psychotherapeutic methods and techniques

Psychoanalytic techniques and procedures

Psychoanalytic therapy has the goal of increasing client awareness, fostering insights into client behavior, and relating client symptoms to their meanings. The therapist works to gain insights from the client's talk to uncover unconscious material. The six basic techniques used in psychoanalytic therapy are 1) maintaining the analytic framework, 2) free association, 3) interpretation, 4) dream analysis, 5) analysis of resistance, and 6) analysis of transference. Psychoanalytic therapy differs form traditional psychoanalysis as:

1. The therapeutic goal is not to restructure a client's personality, but to reach objectives
2. The couch is less likely to be used
3. There are fewer sessions
4. The therapist often uses supportive interventions such as reassurance, expressions of empathy and support, and suggestions
5. There is a focus on practical issues

Adlerian therapeutic techniques and procedures

Adlerian therapy has four stages:

1. Establishing therapeutic relationships exploring client psychological dynamics
2. Encouraging clients to develop self-understanding
3. Re-orientating and reeducating clients to make new choices

The stages are not linear and do not proceed in rigid steps.

Existential therapeutic techniques and procedures

Existential therapists have a set of assumptions and attitudes to guide their intervention; they use techniques from many other orientations but do not integrate techniques.

In existential therapy, there is a de-emphasis on techniques and it is important for the therapist to be open about their own lives so that the client will do the same. Both therapist and client are subject to change in the therapeutic process.

There are three phases of existential therapy: initial, middle and final. The initial phase is for the client to examine their own values, beliefs, and assumptions about life. The middle phase is therapy, where clients are to explore the source and authority of their value system, and to gain new insights about the life that they consider worth living. In the final phase, the therapist helps the client to put their new value system into action. The therapeutic outcome is to enable the client to self-evaluate and implement their values in a concrete way. Typically, existential clients discover ways to use their strength to live a purposeful life.

Person-centered therapeutic techniques and procedures

Person-centered therapists do not get ahead of the client by making interpretations. The therapeutic condition is genuineness, empathic understanding, and unconditional positive regard. The therapist encourages the client to locate power within themselves and to not foster authoritarian structures. With this style of therapy, the therapist needs to have good communication skills or they will not be able to effectively carry out the treatment program for the client.

The techniques of person-centered therapy can benefit most people in the helping professions. The techniques consist of sensitive listening and hearing and understanding, which help the client to be open to receiving help later. Genuine support, caring and nonpossessive warmth from the therapist will motivate a client in crisis to recover and to work through their issues.

Gestalt therapy therapeutic techniques and procedures

Gestalt therapists use experiments as a tool to help the client gain a fuller awareness of internal conflicts, and to work through impasses that prevent the completion of unfinished business. There are a number of interventions used by the gestalt therapist to elicit emotion, produce action, or achieve goals:

1. The internal dialogue exercise: the therapist attends to the client's split in personality. The "top dog" and "underdog" are the main divisions of this split. This exercise is to make client become aware of the introjects that could be preventing their personality integration.
2. The empty-chair technique: this technique is built on the internal dialogue technique, and makes the client fully experience their internal conflicts. It is done by using two chairs; the client is asked to sit in one chair and to act as the top dog, and then sit in the other chair and act as the underdog. This technique is to promote integration between existing conflicts within the client and to help the client learn to accept and live with the polarities.
3. Making the rounds: in a group therapy situation, each client is asked to go up to another person and speak or do something with that person. This technique is designed for the client to confront, risk, and disclose their selves, to allow th client to experiment with new behavior, and to encourage the client to grow and change.
4. The reversal technique: the client is encouraged to rehearse their fears: when the client comes in contact with their denial in this way, they are be able to recognize and accept their anxiety.
5. The rehearsal exercise: clients share their rehearsals with the therapist and discover preparatory means that they use in bolstering their social roles. Clients will be made more aware of their efforts to meet the expectations of others.

6. The exaggeration exercise: clients are asked to exaggerate movements or gestures to intensify the feelings attached to them, so that they can discover the real meanings behind their emotions.
7. Staying with the feeling: a client is encouraged to face, confront, and experience fearful stimuli and the unpleasant feelings attached to them. The client's willingness to endure the pain associated with this technique can make way for new levels of growth.
8. Dream work: clients are encouraged to relive their dreams by acting out all parts of it. All parts of the dream are assumed to be a projection of the client's self: by acting out all the parts of the dream, the client gradually becomes more aware of the range of their feelings.

Other techniques used by the gestalt therapist are:

1. "It" talk: clients are asked to use "I" instead of "it" to increase their sense of responsibility. "You" talk: the client is asked to use "I" instead of "you" in describing their situation. The use of "you" in place of "I" tends to keep the first person hidden.
2. Questions: clients are asked to change their questions into statements so that the client assumes responsibility for what they say.
3. Language that denies power: the client is asked to change words such as "but," "maybe," "perhaps," "sort of," "I guess," and "possibly," into more assertive words so that they feel more in control of their lives.
4. Listening to client metaphors: the therapist listens for the metaphors used in the client's statements. The metaphors may be hiding suppressed internal dialogue that represents critical unfinished business or reactions to an interaction.

Reality therapy therapeutic techniques and procedures

Two major components of reality therapy are: (1) creating a counseling environment, and (2) implementing specific procedures which lead to behavior change.

The therapeutic environment should be coercion-free so that clients can feel free to be creative in trying out different behaviors. The therapist is to resist a client's destructive attempts to go back to the behavior that they are used to. The therapist needs to have a style that is confronting but not critical, blaming, or complaining, so that the client can create a satisfying therapeutic environment that leads to successful relationships.

Reality therapy often starts with the therapist asking the client about what they want from the therapy, and then inquiring about the client's relationships. Reality therapists believe that there is usually an unsatisfying relationship present, even though the client might deny it at the beginning. When the client accepts their problem, the therapist will question the client to make them realize that they can only control their own behavior. The therapist then explores different behaviors that the client can adopt to satisfy their needs. Through this process, the client learns to plan for control over their lives.

The WDEP system is used to describe key procedures used in reality therapy (Wubbolding, 2000); we will now examine the components of the WDEP system.

1. Wants: the therapist explores the client's wants, needs and perceptions by skillfully questioning the client. The therapist encourages clients to recognize, define, and refine how they want to meet their needs. Examples of these questions are: "if you were the person that you wish you were, what kind of person would you be? What would you be doing if you were living as you want to? What would your family be like if your wants and their wants matched? Do you really want to change your life? What do you think stops you from making the changes you would like?" This line of questioning sets the stage for applying other procedures in reality therapy.

2. Direction and doing: the therapist explores the client's desired direction in life and encourages the client to make reflections on these directions. The therapist asks the client questions such as: "What do you see for yourself now and in the future? What are you doing now? What did you actually do this past week? What did you want to do

differently this past week? What stopped you from doing what you say you want to do? What will you do tomorrow?" When clients talk about their problematic feelings, the therapist will encourage them to make changes in what they are doing and thinking.

3. Evaluation: the therapist asks the client to evaluate each component of their behavior by asking questions such as: "Does your present behavior have a reasonable chance of getting you what you want now, and will it take you in the direction you want to go? Is what you are doing helping or hurting you? Is what you are doing now what you want to be doing? Is your behavior working for you? Is there a healthy congruence between what you are doing and what you believe? Is what you are doing against the rules? Is what you want realistic or attainable? Does it help you to look at it that way? How committed are you to the therapeutic process and to changing your life? After you examine what you want carefully, does it appear to be in your best interests and in the best interest of others?" By asking the client these questions, clients can be made to confront the consequences of their behavior.

4. Planning and commitment: when the client has determined what they want to change, the therapist can help them to formulate a plan. The plan can be adjusted throughout its implementation: its main purpose is to give the client a starting point and a toehold on life. The essence of a good plan is that it is simple, attainable, measurable, immediate, involved, controlled by the planner, committed to, and continuously done (Wubbolding, 2000).

Behavior therapy therapeutic techniques and procedures

Assessment is an important element of behavior therapy. The therapist keeps a record of the frequency and intensity of the client's complaints, and uses the record as a tool in formulating therapeutic plans and assessing the success of therapeutic outcomes. Assessment instruments used in behavior therapy include self-report inventories, behavior rating scales, self-monitoring forms, and simple observational techniques.

Behavioral techniques have the strength of being objective and scientific in their approaches. All behavioral techniques are developed scientifically and there is a constant effort to improve them. Therapists also need to assess the client throughout the therapy to make improvements.

Contemporary behavior therapy employs any technique that can be used to change behavior. Using an extensive range of therapy techniques can also improve the effectiveness of the therapy, so behavioral therapists do not restrict themselves to the methods derived from learning theory. The therapeutic procedures of behavior therapy are specifically designed for a particular client from a selection of techniques. There are a range of techniques used by behavior therapists which include:

1. Relaxation training and related methods: using muscle and mental relaxation to cope with the stress of daily living.

2. Systematic desensitization: clients imagine increasingly anxious situations until they gradually become less sensitive to the situation. It is one form of exposure therapy.

3. Exposure therapies: other exposure therapies include in vivo desensitization and flooding. In vivo desensitization is to gradually expose the client to the actual feared situation. Flooding is to expose the client to the feared situation either by imagining it or being in the actual situation for a long period of time

4. Eye movement desensitization and reprocessing: using rhythmic eye movements and other bilateral stimulations to treat traumatic stress and memories of clients.

5. Assertion training: used for people who (1) cannot express anger or irritation, (2) have difficulty saying no, (3) are overly polite and allow others to take advantage of them, (4) have difficulty expressing affection and other positive responses, or 5) feel that they do not have a right to express their thoughts, beliefs, and feelings. This technique is to help clients to gain important social skills.

6. Self-management programs and self-directed behavior training: these use strategies such as self-monitoring, self-rewarding, self-contracting, and stimulus control to teach clients how to cope with problematic situations. These strategies should be carried out in daily life to enhance therapeutic outcomes. Effective self management programs have these characteristics:

1. They include a combination of self-management strategies
2. They regularly employ self-management efforts
3. They set realistic goals and evaluate the degree to which they are met
4. They use self-reinforcement
5. They incorporate environmental support

Multimodal therapy:

Multimodal therapy is an approach to behavioral therapy that encourages technical eclecticism. It is an open system in which new techniques are always being introduced and existing techniques are refined. Multimodal therapists attempt to determine the relationship between clients and treatment strategies, and seek treatments that will best fit specific clients. The flexibility and versatility of multimodal therapy are becoming more popular among therapists. One of the most popular multimodal therapies is rational emotive behavior therapy.

Rational emotive behavior therapists use a variety of cognitive, affective and behavioral techniques to fit individual clients. The techniques that they use are applied to the treatment of common clinical problems such as anxiety, depression, anger, marital difficulties, poor interpersonal skills, parenting failures, personality disorders, addictions, and psychotic disorders.

REBT practitioners use cognitive methodologies forcefully in their therapeutic process. The therapist challenges the client's self-defeating beliefs and teaches the clients how to combat these beliefs on their own. The methods of REBT rely on thinking, disputing, debating, challenging, interpreting, explaining, and teaching. Some commonly used REBT methods are:

1. Disputing irrational beliefs: the most common REBT method is to dispute the client's irrational beliefs and to teach them how to do this by themselves. Clients go over their irrational beliefs that contain the use of "must," "should," and "ought" until they no longer hold the belief. Some questions and statements that clients learn to tell themselves are: "Why must people treat me fairly? How do I become a total flop if I don't succeed at important tasks I try? If I don't get the job I want, it may be disappointing, but I can certainly stand it. If life doesn't always go the way I would like it to, it isn't awful, just inconvenient."
2. Doing cognitive homework: REBT therapy always contains homework assignments. The clients are expected to list their problems and absolute beliefs, and to dispute these beliefs. Homework often consists of: applying the A-B-C theory to problems in daily life; filling out REBT self-help forms; reading REBT self-help books; listening to and criticizing tapes of their own therapy sessions; and participating in risk-taking situations that allow clients to challenge their self-limiting beliefs. The homework is designed to help clients gradually learn to deal with irrational thinking and anxiety.
3. Changing one's language: clients are taught to replace imprecise language such as "musts," "oughts," and "shoulds" by preferences such as "it would be inconvenient if…" By doing so, the client can change their thinking and behavior according to their language.
4. Using humor: clients are taught not to take themselves too seriously and lose perspective of life events. Therapists use humor to attack the seriousness that clients place on themselves.
5. Emotive techniques: REBT therapists teach clients the value of unconditional acceptance. They use emotive procedures including unconditional acceptance, rational-emotive role playing, modeling, rational-emotive imagery, and shame-attack exercises. Even though the client's behavior may be difficult to accept, the

therapists must know that it is destructive for the client to think negatively about themselves.

6. Rational-emotive imagery: clients imagine themselves thinking, feeling, and behaving in exactly the way that they would like to think, feel, and behave in real life. They are also asked to imagine a worst case scenario, and how to think, feel, and behave appropriately in this situation.
7. Role playing: clients rehearse certain behaviors attached to their irrational thoughts and feelings. While role playing, the therapist interrupts to show the clients how what they are thinking is disruptive, and what an appropriate feeling is. The goal of this method is to work through the irrational beliefs that are related to unpleasant feelings.
8. Shame-attacking exercises. The therapist attacks the client's irrational shame over behaving in certain ways. This is sometimes done by setting up homework assignment for clients which involves doing something they would normally be too afraid to do. The clients are asked to repeat these exercises until their self-created shame is reduced and they behave in less inhibited ways so that the clients can do things the way they wish to.
9. Use of force and vigor: clients are taught how to strongly dispute their irrational beliefs. Therapists sometimes use reversed role-plays in this method to make the client dispute with the therapist to persuade the therapist to give up their irrational beliefs. The basic part of this method is to have force and energy.
10. Behavioral techniques: REBT therapists use most of the behavior therapy methods, especially operant conditioning, self-management principles, systematic desensitization, relaxation techniques, and modeling.

2.3.7.2. Coaching methods and techniques

Coaching methods are chosen to give the fastest and most effective results for the executive. The methods used vary from simple behavior changing techniques to complex psychological interventions. Most of the coaching methods are drawn from the most recognized psychological traditions. The mostly used methods are behavioral, cognitive, psychodynamic, and organizational methods (Orenstein, 2007):

Behavioral method techniques

- Testing desired behaviors in the workplace
- Modeling the desired behaviors
- Positively reinforcing desired behaviors when displayed
- Simulating desired behavior by role playing
- Self-monitoring the behavior in particular settings to control and adjust behaviors
- Self-rewarding when desired behavior is displayed
- Visualizing the desired behavior in an appropriate setting

Cognitive methods

- Challenging thoughts that undermine positive change
- Writing down one's experience
- Positive self-talk to support desired change
- Learning by reading books and articles on the subject
- Reframing situations to think about them differently
- Self-reflecting on relevant past events

Psychodynamic methods

- Examining the coach's emotions towards the client
- Analyzing the relationships between subsystems and supersystems
- Examining the executive's feelings towards the coach
- Controlling the psychological boundary between the coach and the executive
- Using higher order defenses to deal with anxiety
- Comparing and analyzing family-of-origin dynamics with work setting patterns

- Examining the dynamics at the moment at which problems occur
- Identifying the defense mechanisms that protect the executive from anxiety
- Identifying unconscious responses that hinder change
- Examining the use of symbols such as metaphors, myths, and fantasies
- Respecting the weakening resistance and recognizing the need to refrain from these defense mechanisms

Organizational methods

- Examining the relationships of two people
- Examining the intra-group dynamic
- Examining inter-group dynamics
- Examining system dynamics

2.4. The unique profession of executive coaching

The previous sections have explained the differences between executive coaching, mentoring and psychotherapy. This section concludes the previous sections in the literature review by providing a set of tables to illustrate that psychotherapy, coaching and mentoring are concepts in a continuum, and to summarize the similarities and differences between the three professions. There are seven tables that illustrate the differences, similarities and commonalities between the three professions relating to:

1. Professional functions and roles
2. Skills, training and experience requirements
3. Personal and professional characteristics
4. Ethical standards
5. Working alliances
6. Processes for change
7. Methods and techniques

In each table, the top row of the table is the list of the three professions: psychotherapy, coaching, and mentoring. Coaching is placed between the other two professions because it is the profession that this thesis is focusing on, and because it shares some characteristics of the other two professions. In the same column, under each profession, the tables list the characteristics of this profession that are different from the others. This is tabulated as the differences between these professions. The next row illustrates the similarities between psychotherapy and coaching, and coaching and mentoring. The last row illustrates the commonalities between all three professions.

2.4.1. Psychotherapy, coaching and mentoring compared

A set of tables comparing the professions of psychotherapy, executive coaching and business mentoring.

Table 1. Comparison of the professional roles and functions between psychotherapy, coaching and mentoring.

Professional roles and functions

	Psychotherapy	**Coaching**	**Mentoring**
Differences	The role and function of psychotherapists are well defined and have a rigid structure	Executive coaches do not have well defined roles and functions	Give guidance and advice, and influence and teach by being a role model
Similarities	Lead personal change		Improve performance Give advice and motivate
Commonalities	Help clients achieve agreed upon goals		

Table 2. Comparison of the skills, training and experience requirements between psychotherapy, coaching and mentoring.

Skills, training and experience requirements

	Psychotherapy	**Coaching**	**Mentoring**
Differences	Compulsory requirement for psychotherapists to be educated and trained in their area of profession	Executive coaching requires sound business knowledge and more effective interpersonal skills	Mentor must be experienced in the same field as their protégé; they are usually are an advocate in their area
Similarities	Require sound psychological knowledge	No formal training required	
Commonalities	Skills, training and experience makes a difference to the outcome		

Table 3. Comparison of the personal and professional characteristics between psychotherapy, coaching and mentoring.

Personal and professional characteristics

	Psychotherapy	**Coaching**	**Mentoring**
Differences	Engage and appreciate the value of personal and professional growth and learning	Executive coaches need to have the ability to maneuver through interpersonal issues in a corporate setting, while still being sensitive to personal emotions.	Wiser and usually older act as a role model
Similarities	Characters are emotionally healthy	Need to be confrontational	
Commonalities	Are empathetic and trustworthy Able to listen and encourage		

Table 4. Comparison of the ethical standards between psychotherapy, coaching and mentoring.

Ethical standards

	Psychotherapy	**Coaching**	**Mentoring**
Differences	Strict ethical standards; ethical guidelines are also used to improve the strength and credibility of the profession	Executive coaches do not have formal ethical standards, but use psychologists ethical guidelines as best practice	No formal ethical standards required
Similarities	Both emphasize issues of confidentiality		No formal ethical standards required
Commonalities	Need to be trusted to achieve positive outcomes for clients		

Table 5. Comparison of the working alliances between psychotherapy, coaching and mentoring.

Working alliances

	Psychotherapy	**Coaching**	**Mentoring**
Differences	In psychotherapy formal contracting is less important; more emphasis is put on the therapeutic alliance between the therapist and client.	Contracting in executive coaching is more formal Contracting helps build trust between the coach and the executive	Mentor-protégé relationships could form spontaneously
Similarities	Both require a strong working alliance for better outcome		Working alliances improve work related issues
Commonalities	Deliberate pairings and agreed upon goals		

Table 6. Comparison of the process for change between psychotherapy, coaching and mentoring.

Process for change

	Psychotherapy	**Coaching**	**Mentoring**
Differences	Designed to match the therapeutic process to the perspective change stage to achieve optimum results	In executive coaching, pattern change and skill building are the key focuses of their intervention.	No formal process is used
Similarities	Follow the process of personal change. Both therapist and coaches look for the client's dysfunctional		Issue focused End result is to improve performance
Commonalities	Engage in building working alliances and assess the client's current status End result is positive personal change for clients		

Table 7. Comparison of the methods and techniques between psychotherapy, coaching and mentoring.

Methods and techniques

	Psychotherapy	Coaching	Mentoring
Differences	Psychotherapists work by their therapeutic orientation and closely follow the guidelines of their profession.	Executive coaches often use techniques from psychotherapy and any other methods which lead to fast personal development; they are not restricted by assumptions and procedures and often formulate their own intervention methods that will best fit the particular executive	The mentoring relationship acts as the respected authority for protégé to initiate positive change
Similarities	There are a wide range of psychological methods and techniques employed by both psychotherapists and executive coaches	No formal guidelines, and often formulate their own intervention methods that will best fit the client	
Commonalities	Employ a wide range of interventions for client change		

2.5. Issues in the profession of executive coaching

This section presents different views relating to integrating psychotherapeutic techniques into executive coaching. Section 2.5.1 provides some strong arguments on the need to use psychotherapeutic techniques in executive coaching. Section 2.5.2 presents some recent proposals on the possibilities and hopes for the integration of the two professions.

2.5.1. The need to use psychotherapy in executive coaching

Organizations are often complex, resistant, and emotionally charged. It is important to use psychology in management. Murphy (2000) emphasizes that the most important skill in the workplace is always going to be interpersonal skills and if one does not possess this skill, success will only be temporary.

Organizational development practitioners and coaches have found the psychodynamic theory provides them with insights and methods that are useful for their understanding of organizational situations. However, little is mentioned about psychodynamic issues and approaches in standard organizational development text books. A number of scholars and practitioners have started to cross the boundaries of the psychodynamic theory and organizational practice (Kilberg, 2000).

By the late 1990s, coaching was already accepted as a behavioral intervention tool for psychologists, and other professionals used it to help people and organizations to change (Diedrich & Kilburg, 2001). Quick and Macik-Frey (2004) say that executive coaching demands a deep level of clinical and therapeutic intervention, skills derived from psychotherapy literature that can improve the effectiveness of executives (Peltier, 2001). Psychologists have long recognized the influence of the workplace on one's mental health, and management coaching is a way of bringing the positive potential of psychology into an organization.

Wasylyshyn's outcome study on executive coaching (2003) found that executives perceive effective coaches to have the following features:

- Doctoral degrees in psychology
- Experience in business and/or general management
- Personal characteristics that abet rapid and authentic connections with executives
- They are guided by a strong set of professional ethical principles

The ability of psychologists to gather data, change behaviors and teach clients are also perceived as effective tools for success in executive coaching. Also, the intense scrutiny of using the appropriate coaching style for the referred executive has been found to give high sustainability rates of learning and behavior change. The result of the research highlights the importance of the assets of psychologists to executive coaching. Thus psychologists are urged to conduct further outcome research to examine the value of executive coaching as a development resource; this should explore whether or not psychologists that understand business are well equipped to be executive coaches.

Stevens (2005) also found that executives are in favor of their coach having a psychological background. His study of *Executive Coaching from the Executive's Perspective* asked management executives their views and perspectives regarding executive coaching and found a number of shared themes. One of the agreed answers from a number of executives was that executive coaches need a theoretically sound foundation in human psychology and social systems.

Mental health professionals are willing to give their expertise in the field of executive coaching too, because apparently executive coaching does increase performance and well being with many clients. However, the ineffective cases are often because of co-morbid psychological problems. This shows the importance of having formal psychological training and experience while being an executive coach. In this case, mental health professionals have training and experience in assessment and diagnosis to offer the field of executive coaching, along with the ability to select the appropriate candidates for coaching and refer the others to psychotherapy. As executive coaching is based on the developmental model, it appeals to mental health professionals as an alternative to the pathology-orientated, medical model. This allows the mental health professional to focus beyond symptoms and problem solving in assisting healthy and productive individuals to boost their performance (Sperry, 2004).

Even though many scholars and practitioners have that recognized coaching is important to management, there are few professional development programs and no qualifications that are internationally recognized, and no codes of professional standards (Gray, 2006). The two part special issue on executive coaching published in the *Consulting Psychology*

Journal written by Lowman (2005) identifies common themes and areas for executive coaching development. The author argues that "practice has greatly exceeded research in this area" and advised that the next step should be "creating a psychology of coaching that is more than a collection of advice and techniques." Thus, the importance of empirical evaluation and restructuring of theories and practices on this topic cannot be over emphasized.

2.5.2. Proposals for integrating psychotherapeutic techniques in executive coaching

There had not been much research on psychological executive coaching in recent years. In 2003, Richard proposed deliberately emphasizing rational, creative problem-solving techniques in psychological executive coaching. This problem-centered process can be important for psychologists with a clinical/counseling background to add executive coaching to their services. He includes innovation fostering in expanding the role of psychological executive coaching and suggests that this can be a significant marketing feature.

In 2004, Ducharme attempted to evaluate the appropriateness of the cognitive-behavioral approach for use in executive coaching. He reviewed the basic theories of cognitive-behavior therapy and its conceptual underpinnings, and discussed the goals of executive coaching from a cognitive-behavioral perspective. Whereas cognitive-behavioral coaching is recommended for stress management and skill development and is likely to be highly effective, it is inappropriate for coaching situations that require more in-depth analysis of unconscious motives and conflicts. In the same year, Kilberg supplemented Ducharme's shortcomings with a psychodynamic approach. He suggests that events, feelings, thoughts, and unconscious patterns of behavior in the executives can heavily influence their decisions and behavior. He argues that when working with executives, it is appropriate to use both the conflict and objective approaches to understand psychodynamics because of their relevance. As executives are always in conflict and use people as resources, understanding conflict in human relationships is considered central to improving leader performance. Also, many psychotherapy methods can be used in coaching, and coaches should know when, why and how to use them appropriately. However, Kilberg raises the issue of the competency of coaches to do this type of work because of the professional judgments required. Also in 2004, another author examined the use of A. Ellis's rational-emotive behavior therapy (REBT) as a tool to help with client issues such as perfectionism, anger management, low frustration tolerance, and difficulty breaking challenges into small, attainable, sequential steps. This therapy also allows coaches to look at different interventions with the possibility of integrating certain techniques into their already existing models of change (Sherin & Caiger, 2004).

In 2006, Jones and Spooner investigated the common characteristics of high achievers and the implementations of this for coaching high achievers. The research used semi-structured interviews with coaches and high achievers from business and sports. It was found that it may be inappropriate to use a single technique when coaching because a number of factors need to be considered when coaching high achievers. Establishing a coaching relationship with trust and mutual respect and the impact of the coaching depends on the all important characteristics of coaches.

2.6. The problem of crossboundary executive coaching services

Even though academics have warned against about the implications of job related psychological problems in organizational leaders, there has been limited research done to illustrate the lack of professional ability in solving these problems. The professions of executive coaching need to use psychological interventions in their services, but unfortunately many executive coaches are unable to provide such a service. Despite the inability of many coaches, they are often expected to perform beyond their professional abilities and roles to solve the psychological problems of executives. Furthermore, there are no formal requirements that limit unqualified executive coaches from providing services, no formal training programs are offered to qualify executive coaches, and no boundaries are defined as to what executive coaching services can provide.

To date, there have been many executive coaches that were not qualified in using psychotherapy who have actively employed psychotherapeutic techniques in their services. They use the blurred boundary of the profession as a justification to provide psychotherapy for their clients. The author of this thesis believes that this could cause many problems in the practice of executive coaching, such as:

1. Misuse of psychotherapeutic techniques that may be harmful or ineffective for executives
2. The unique condition of coaching relationship may cause many ethical dilemmas
3. A lack of formal guidelines for practice and complaint procedures if problems in coaching do arise
4. A lack of formal ethical guidelines for coaches, who are always at risk of law suits if confidentiality is breached
5. Breaches of confidentiality may have serious consequences for executives, their organizations, and their coaches

For these reasons, executive coaches need to be aware of the degree to which their services engage psychotherapy and the consequences of providing these services. Therefore, the purpose of this thesis is to explore the degree to which executive coaching engages psychotherapy. In addition, Chapter 3 of this thesis explores the phenomenon of these cross-boundary services using social theories.

3. Executive coaching as a social phenomenon

The fact that there is no fast solution to integrate the professions of executive coaching and psychotherapy makes the whole argument around this topic come full circle. The author of this thesis views the problem from another perspective. Using postmodern social theories, the author believes that this problem is created by societal pressure on business executives to achieve and succeed. The profession of executive coaching not only takes advantage of the need of executives to fulfill this demand, but it uses the social discourse of being a business executive to market and sell its services.

3.1. Social construction

Social constructionism is a school of thought developed from sociology about how social phenomena develop in social contexts. Social constructionists believe that realities are invented or created by our definitions (Cheung, 1997), and that there is no universal truth. Furthermore, not only are these realities or truths created, but they are also changing as we influence each other.

Peter L. Berger and Thomas Luckmann developed social constructivism in the 1960s, and this school of thought became prominent with their book – *The Social Construction of Reality*. In this book, Berger and Luckmann argue that human beings in interactions create the rules of human conduct. They suggest that human biology alone could not have determined our existence in the context of order, direction and stability of society. Thus, the environment we live in must largely influence our existence in that context, and this environment is our interactions with other human beings (Berger & Luckmann, 1966). For example, if in reality a 1.90 meter person is perceived as tall, this reality of being tall only exists if we know that most people are shorter than this height; therefore the reality of tallness is constructed when people of different heights interact with each other.

Any taken-for-granted truth or common sense knowledge is part of this constructed reality. Social interactions are how we create, maintain, pass on, or adjust our beliefs of what is truth or knowledge. Therefore, a social construct is a belief created or invented by people of a particular group, such as with a culture, or a society in interaction. In other words, a social construct is a belief that is agreed upon by the majority of the people in a society at a certain point in time. A good example of this socially agreed upon belief is the concept of 'beauty'. Since the media has illustrated beauty differently throughout history, we believe that those illustrated and those similar to the illustrated at any given time are beautiful.

Social constructionist theories are a part of the postmodern movement. In this strand of postmodernism, reality is constantly constructed and multiple realities exist at any point in time. New realities become rigid by interaction through language (e.g. everyday talk, text, etc.), they become legitimized by forming new schools of thought and philosophies (e.g. the school of science, the school of philosophies, etc.), they are maintained by socialization (e.g. globalization, generalizations, etc.), and they are passed on by education (e.g. upbringing, schooling, etc.). This is the process of how we identify ourselves as a member of our society, and unquestionably takes on these constructed realities as 'Truth' with a capital 'T'.

3.2. Social power

The concept of power is absolutely central to all social studies (Beland, 2006). Since social studies are the study of human behavior and interactions, the concept of power is fundamental to all humans in action. Brian Fay (1987) defines power in this way:

Power = a force that makes B do y when A does/has x, where B would not have done y if A did not do/have x. (Both A and B can be collective or individual.)

In an organization, power mostly comes from two sources (Yukl & Falbe, 1991):

1. Organizational power: people who exert the power are from high positions within organizations, who control organizational resources
2. Individual power: the power that comes from individual characteristics (e.g. expertise and leadership) that are valuable to the organization

People at different levels of an organization also possess different sources of power, which can be specified into five power bases (French & Raven, 1959, cited from Riggio, 2003):

1. Coercive power: A uses punishment or threats to make B do y
2. Reward power: A uses rewards to make B do y
3. Legitimate power: A is at a higher position than B in the organization, so B does what A tells B to do, because A has authority over B
4. Expert power: A has more knowledge than B in a certain area in the organization, so B does what A tells B to do, because A holds the knowledge
5. Referent power: A is respected, admired and liked by B, so B does what A tells B to do, because B wants to please A

Fay (1987) identifies power as coming from another two sources: force and manipulation. He defines force power as A removing the choice to act from B, so that B has no other option except to do y. Manipulation power is defined as A causing B to do y when A does x, without that B knowing A is doing x.

Different theories on social power

Humans are social animals that like to live in social structures and have a sense of order in their society. Power is used to impose structure and order within the society, although academics can have very different views on power and the nature of power.

Lukes

According to Lukes (2005), there are three forms of power. The first is a one-dimensional view, also known as the pluralist's view, which focuses on how A affects the behavior, decision making, issues, conflicts and interests of B. This view of power is intentional and active. Conflict between interests can be observed as being overt (Lorenzi, 2006). Non-decision-making in the pluralist view is to empower the decision maker, namely A.

The second form of power is the two-dimensional view, which criticizes pluralism. This view focuses on the power of A to make decisions, to control agendas and policy preferences, and to hold issues and potential issues under cover. This view of power can be observed as both overt and covert. The limitations of this view are that it stems from behaviorism and ignores socially or culturally patterned collective behaviors. For Lukes (2005), this view is limited because it only focuses on observable conflicts. He argues that the power of A can also be held in the form of influencing, shaping, or determining B's preferences. In his view, power can be exercised by shaping perceptions, cognition and preferences because there are no alternatives that exist, or it can be perceived as natural, unchangeable, or beneficial in order to be accepted within a specific status quo (Lorenzi, 2006).

The third form of power is the three-dimensional view. This power is the power to change perceptions and is the most effective form of power. In this form of power, A has the power to define and shape B's perceptions of issues and potential issues, so B accepts A's decisions without even being aware of any grievances. Lukes (2005) argues that this view of power is how people accept their particular role in society and how issues can be deliberately omitted in politics, through social forces. The concept of latent conflict is emphasized in this view; it is the conflict between the interests of B (subject to power) and A (the power holder). However, B is unaware of their own interests and thus cannot recognize or express them (Lorenzi, 2006).

Parsons

Talcott Parsons defines power as "the capacity of a social system to mobilize resources to realize collective goals' (Parsons, 1967, p. 193).

Parsons' view of social power is that: "power of A over B is, in its legitimized form, the "right" of A as a decision-making unit involved in the collective process, to make decisions which take precedence over those of B, in the interests of the collective operation as a whole" (Parsons 1967, p. 318).

For Parsons, power is a way to achieve collective goals (Mann, 1993). It is legitimized by support from society, and is facilitative (Stewart, 2001). Furthermore, the collective nature of power means that joint forces of power can be exercised over a third party or nature (Mann, 1993).

Giddens

In a broad sense, power as defined by Anthony Giddens as the transformative capacity of human agency; it is the capacity to intervene with a course of events (Giddens, 1976, cited from Stewart, 2001). Giddens also defines power in a narrow sense as "the capability to secure outcomes where the realization of these outcomes depends upon the agency of others" (Giddens, 1976, p. 111), and the 'transformative capacity' is dependent on the agency of others (Stewart, 2001).

Giddens emphasizes the importance of human interactions and relations and sees power over others as domination. It can be acquired and used as resources or abilities, and only exists when exercised. The possess-able property of power means that power can be stored for future use (Giddens, 1976).

Giddens' definition of power is strategic, preoccupied with power acquisition and utilization (Stewart, 2001). However, Giddens does not see power as a resource, but sees resources as media for exercising power (Mann, 1993). Thus, power functions as the distribution of resources and only affects people's ability to use these resources (Stewart, 2001). Giddens also opposes the zero-sum property of power; he believes that all people can exercise power in the form of control over the resources that they possess. In addition, the dialectical control and shifting balances of resources changes the power distribution over society (Giddens, 1982).

Foucault

Foucault (1985) says, "The individual delimits that part of himself that will form the object of his moral practice, defines his position relative to the precept he will follow, and decides on a certain mode of being that will serve as his moral goals and this requires him to act upon himself, to monitor, test, improve, and transform himself" (p. 28).

This form of power is in one's everyday life where people are attached to their own identities, and recognize that they have to impose a law of truth on them that others will recognize in them. Foucault seeks to establish a direct unequivocal relation between "subjectification" and "subjection"' (Dews, 1984). Foucault's view of power is that it is a form of force, which makes people subject to social power, dependent on and controlled by society, and adhere to their own identity by self-knowledge (Stewart, 2001).

This form of power is the basic force that forms society and it is an essential element of every social relationship. To view power in this form means that every relationship is a power relationship, with variable forces from all directions from both inside and outside of the relationship. Foucault described power in terms of physical force, which is operational in nature and can affect, influence, or change (Andersen & Kaspersen, 2000).

Andersen and Kaspersen (2000) identify the most important aspects of power proposed by Foucault as power, institutions, and knowledge, which they say are inseparable. Foucault believes that institutions do not produce power but represent it, in which it integrates and reproduces existing power relationships. Where there is a socialization of people, such as the state, the family, religion, science, and markets is where power is absorbed, coordinated, and dispersed. Foucault also believes that power and knowledge are interdependent. Human beings are constantly searching for truth and generating new experiences and insights that can be converted into knowledge. It is this knowledge that has the ability to affect and operate on entities of social endeavor such as individuals, groups, organizations, and systems. Thus, power and knowledge are inseparable in the dynamics of social situations. The authors describe power in Foucault's model as:

1. Exercised rather than possessed
2. Analyzed as coming from the bottom up
3. Not primarily repressive, but productive

One of the criticisms of Foucault's analysis of power is the issue of resistance. Critics (Habermas, 1987; McNay, 1992) point out that Foucault's subjects of power are too predetermined, compliant, and passive to resist this form of power. Foucault argues that there is always resistance where there is power (Foucault, 1975). However, there is no resistance with a capital 'R'. There are many forms of resistance, such as spontaneous, concerted, solitary, violent, selfish, altruistic, compromising, and unrelated, but there is no one pattern of resistance or specific rebellion center (Andersen & Kaspersen, 2000).

Power as Foucault describes it seems to give resistance no chance to rise, but Foucault sees power as relational and not asymmetrical or hierarchical in advance. Foucault views the dominant conditions of power as examples of power constellations but not of power in general (Andersen & Kaspersen, 2000).

3.3. The power of discourse

Foucault's concept of power comes from the "discourse of normality" (Richardson, 2004). This form of power comes from the rules and guidelines that it sets for ways of being and acting. There is enormous pressure to conform to this discourse, but the discourse of normality is always changing and social actors need to be constantly changing to adapt to it. People who are quick to comply with this discourse will be quicker to move up the ladder.

The 'normative gaze' that comes from this discourse is the modern form of power, and social actors do it to each other despite the negative effects it can cause. It operates between all people we know, as we please one another and ourselves constantly. However, people who fit into the dominant discourse are less affected by the normative gaze. People cannot escape from this learned consciousness of how they should be and act (Matheson, 2005), and are unaware of the implications brought by what they do. This can be viewed as a web of effects caused by a set of discourse.

3.4. Discourse

There have been many concepts of discourse throughout history, and these can be grouped into three categories:

- Discourse in linguistic features
- Discourse in psychological effects
- Discourse in social construction

One way of distinguishing them is to think of discourse (with a small 'd') as linguistic features and psychological effects, and Discourse (with a capital 'D') as the construction of knowledge (Yates, 2004). Each concept of discourse sees language as a tool for social actors to meet their intentions, and different discourse analyses are used to examine each of these discursive tools.

Discourse in the linguistic sense consists of units that are larger than a sentence, and the semantic aspects of spoken or written text are the focus of the study (Howarth & Torfing, 2005). It is considered to be made up of acts of language that are used purely for communication (Yates & Orlikowski, 2002). In this generation, socio-linguistics looks for the use of words, word classes and word combinations between the speaker's socioeconomic statuses (Howarth & Torfing, 2005). Conversation analysis (CA) is used to study the nature of talk as humans interact (Molder & Potter, 2005), and analysts look for evidence of turning points in each stage of the interaction as leading to the next stage (Yates, 2004).

Discourse psychology studies the purpose of the speaker in relation to the use of language as a strategy to meet their intentions; it was found that language is used as a tool to misrepresent reality (Howarth & Torfing, 2005). It is believed that human interaction is heavily influenced by the way that people communicate with each other, and how people see the world and discuss it (Yates, 2004). It focuses on categorical and constructive language use in different contexts (Molder & Potter, 2005), and analyzes the way that timing is organized in speech and how speakers uses particular conventions and rhetoric to achieve effects (Crossley, 2005).

The third type of discourse is Discourse with a capital 'D'. Here discourse is defined as a wider set of social practices, and includes all linguistically mediated practices such as speech, writing, images, and gestures that people use to produce and interpret meanings (Crossley, 2005). It can be defined as a socially or culturally defined system of knowledge, which shapes the set of ideas, concepts and rules for how people perceive a topic (Yates, 2004). Michel Foucault inspired this generation of discourse by focusing on rules that govern what, who, and how things can be said. He saw practices as shaped by discursive rules that vary in time and space (Howarth & Torfing, 2005).

Foucault moved the traditional sense of discourse as language towards discourse as discipline. Discipline in this sense refers to bodies of knowledge and exists in two forms: scholarly disciplines (e.g. science, medicine, psychiatry, sociology, etc.), and disciplinary institutions (e.g. prisons, schools, hospitals, etc.). Therefore, Foucault's idea of discourse defines the relationship between disciplines and social phenomena (McHoul & Grace, 1993). In this generation, the power effects of discourse are studied with critical discourse analysis (CDA) (Howarth & Torfing, 2005).

Critical discourse analysis uses Foucault's idea of discourse and examines the specific ways that people speak about things in a taken-for-granted manner. For example, to examine a 'medical discourse' is to identify particular vocabulary and sets of norms and rules for defining and making sense of objects, and to examine the conventions and rhetorical techniques used for settling disputes, making claims, researching issues and so on. The key assumption behind this analysis is that the people who operate within their discourses are unaware of it because it has become a habit, and they are unaware of the consequences of using their discourses (Crossley, 2005). CDA examines mainly 'material' texts such as TV programs, films, books, and historical and contemporary documents. Its focus is on identifying specific representations of people, events, or concepts that are caused by systems of power and knowledge. The assumption is that texts and practices are defined by, products of, and support systems for power and knowledge (Yates, 2004). CDA is used to deconstruct this type of discourse and liberate people caught up within these discourses, so that they can recognize and be flexible about their ways of seeing the world, as well as themselves (Crossley, 2005). This can be done through constructing and understanding specific concepts (Yates, 2004).

3.5. Identity

Identity is a concept of perception of self, studied in both social sciences and psychology. In developmental psychology, self-concept models of adult personality study how people view themselves. These models have found that people have a tendency to regulate themselves by adaptation to their environment, which shapes their self-concept, their sense of self. According to these models, our perception of ourselves is the core of our personality, but this sense of self is a social phenomenon that occurs with social interactions. We consistently check ourselves against our social world and reconstruct what we perceive as our identity (Papalia, Sterns, Feldman & Camp, 2002).

Matheson (2005) assumes that identity is a social and cultural phenomenon, and is something that stems from a person's relationship with others and social structures. Social psychologists Taifel and Turner (cited from Myers, 2000) propose the social identity theory which assumes that we categorize people, including ourselves, and label them according to their religion, job title, and nationality etc., and that we also identify and compare ourselves with certain groups. Having a membership strengthens our self-concept and gives us a sense of pride and superiority (Smith & Taylor, 1997), which makes us feel better (Myers, 2000). Our self-esteem is largely dependent on this sense of positive personal identity (Myers, 2000).

In cognitive psychology, the self-concept is about what people think about who they are. The self-concept is constructed by one's schemas of reality, and in turn, organizes one's behavior. However, schemas are ever changing because we are constantly revising them according to new experiences (Bowlby, 1973; Epstein, 1990, Tomkins, 1986). Thus, our self-understanding of what we have been and done guides our self-regulation in decisions of what to be and do in the future (Markus & Cross, 1990; Markus & Nurious, 1986).

Postmodernists also have a similar idea of the self; it emphasizes the force of society on the creation of one's identity. Russell and Carey (2004) suggest that our past, beliefs, and future shape how we look and what we will find: our identities are continually created by our experiences, relationships with others, institutions, and relations of power. Our ideas, problems, and qualities are all products of culture and history, shaped by language that creates meaning from stories.

Marx (cited from Matheson, 2005) argues that our sense of self takes shape within the economic and political context of our society, and a 'false consciousness' of self is constructed as people learn to see themselves in the way that the dominant society wants them to see themselves. Thus, the identity of a 'business executive' is a phenomenon that emerges from a person's relationship with her/his colleagues and the work place. Business executives are constantly adapting to their social environment, checking their membership with the term 'business executive', and regulating their behavior to fit their schema of being a 'business executive', all of which are shaped by the language of their social world.

3.6. The power of discourse on 'executive' identity

From the above explanations of these postmodern social theories, it is clear that social discourse is a form of power acting on an individual's personal identity. Discourses are present in everyday language and the ones affected by it are the ones least aware of its powers. People who are fluent in serving the discourse of their profession will be able to achieve success in their area, but they will also be the ones who are most pressured by their discourses. Business executives who are at the top of their game are often the ones who serve the discourse of being an executive. They comfortably fit into the executive role and do everything that executives do. Others see them as successful leaders and as having great executive abilities. To fulfill the demands of being a good executive they have to play by the rules of the game and serve the discourse of being a business executive. However, this demand puts great pressure on the person individually, and poses the perpetual questions: "Who are they, and who should they be?"

3.7. The creation of 'executive coaching'

Executive coaches offer identity alternatives for executives by providing expert advice' to reorientate their client's current self to the desired self within the discourse. This is done through buying and using the executive coaching service. Like many services, they offer 'consumer attitude' (Bauman, 1992), which includes:

1. Individualism: a focus on individual identity and not group identity
2. Personal responsibility: consumers solve problems themselves and should feel personal shame when failing to do so
3. Solutions: these are available, prepared by experts, and can be found
4. Recipes: which can be bought to construct a new self

The art of being 'perfect' is, therefore, a skill that can be purchased (Lury, 1996).

3.8. Advertising as discourse

Discourse focuses on language, but it is also concerned with all forms and contexts of communication: who is communicating with whom; why and what they are communicating; in what society and situation are they communicating; using what medium do they communicate; what are the types and acts of communication; and how they are related. Over the years, advertising has developed into one of the most influential forms of mass communication in contemporary society (Cook, 2001). Advertisements are not only influential, but they are also an inescapable part of our lives. They communicate through many forms of media and create a reality of their own (Pajnik & Lesjak-Tušek, 2002). Thus, they are rich in information about our society and our psychology (Cook, 2001).

Advertisements are typically believed to function 'to sell'. However, this is not the only function of ads. In fact, they are rarely used only to sell because then they would be of no interest to people who do not buy the products advertised. Other functions of advertisements are to plead, warn, or seek support; some are to persuade, amuse, inform, misinform, worry or warn. Furthermore, the function of ads is complicated because they do not necessarily have the same effect as advertisers intend. Thus, discourse analysts need to be aware of differences in ad functions from all perspectives (Cook, 2001).

In a world obsessed with economic growth, advertisements can be manipulative. They magnify people's desires by urging them to consume by making them feel dissatisfied, inadequate, greedy, fearful, or ambitious. However, when skillfully designed, information presented in advertisements is absorbed without any controversy. Peoples' attitudes towards advertisements can be viewed as a reflection of their personality or social and ideological position, and their acceptance of the political and social status quo. On the other hand, it is possible for advertisements to influence society because they reflect states and changes in society, and magnify social concerns (Cook, 2001).

3.9. Meeting 'executive' demands

Theorists of consumer culture have found that people are becoming reliant on collecting information and using products and services to shape themselves (Matheson, 2005). Lury (1996) also argues that advertisements shape people into trying to achieve better selves by consuming the right products. Identity then becomes something that is seen as something to be owned, and 'expert knowledge' is always available for purchase. Business executives who are very familiar with the availability of expert knowledge in their workplace are likely to turn to more expert knowledge when in need of self-alteration. As a result, the profession of 'executive coaches' has been created and their practice constantly adjusted to meet the demand of executive needs to conform to the discourse of being business executives.

4. Research rationale and objectives

The rationale for this research is to illuminate the degree to which executive coaching engages psychotherapy by exploring the discourse of being a business executive, as illustrated in executive coaching advertisements.

Executive coaches provide services that help executives meet the expectations of their organization, society and themselves. The discourse of being a business executive can be used in executive coaching advertisements to promote their services. These discourses are also a reflection of the degree to which executive coaching services engage particular techniques. Thus, the rationale for this research is to use discourse analysis of executive coaching advertisements to illuminate the degree to which executive coaching engages psychotherapy.

The results of this study can be used for executive coaches to examine the boundaryies of their services and to help business executives and their organizations to examine executive competency on the job.

4.1. Research questions

The research questions developed from the research objective are:

1. What is the discourse of being a 'business executive' as illustrated in the offer of executive coaching services?
2. What is the degree to which executive coaching engages psychotherapy?

5. Research methodology

This research used a combination of quantitative and qualitative research methodologies to answer the research questions. Advertisements of executive coaching services were used as data to identify the discourse of being a business executive. Content analysis was used as the quantitative methodology to isolate the themes of the discourse of being a business executive in the advertisements, which in turn answers the first research question. The second research question was answered using discourse analysis. Discourse analysis of the themes discovered in the first question explain how rhetoric devices were used in these advertisements to persuade executives to pay for executive coaching services, and to explain the degree to which executive coaching engages psychotherapy.

5.1. Quantitative methodology

Content analysis was used as the quantitative method in the analysis. There are several benefits of using content analysis as the research method:

1. Transparency: the coding and sampling procedures are clear, so replications and follow-ups are possible
2. Unobtrusiveness: this method does not entail participants in the study accounting to the researcher, so the data used is unlikely to be influenced by the research
3. Flexibility: it is possible to use content analysis on a wide variety of unstructured information such as mass media and advertising
4. Access: content analysis allows the generation of information about people who otherwise may be difficult to gain access to

As this research was focused on executives and their coaches, who may not have been willing to participate in the research, and since the outcome of this study was likely to be influenced by their responses, content analysis of advertisements of executive coaching was a desirable alternative research method. The transparency and flexibility of the coding and sampling method were also desirable features for this study.

In this study, content analysis is used to isolate the expectations (discourses) of being a business executive. This was done by finding and collecting the advertised content of executive coaching services such as leadership, management skills, and communication skills.

5.2. Qualitative methodology

This research also used qualitative research methods to examine how the discourse of being a business executive was delivered in executive coaching advertisements, and the degree to which executive coaching engages psychotherapy.

A quantitative research method was undesirable for this part of the research because of six issues:

1) The positivist philosophy of science does not allow a true reflection of social problems
2) The manipulation of variables in laboratory experimentation can cause too many biases
3) The theories in psychology of measurement and error are limiting
4) Claims of objectivity are not always objective
5) A focus on micro-level directional, mechanical-causal hypotheses ignores natural context-situated processes
6) There can be an overemphasis on linear relationships among variables

Critics have argued that the problems with quantitative research methods have limited and distorted our view of human behavior phenomena, and research on behavior is shifting towards a postmodernist view of research possibilities. However, qualitative research does not attempt to produce an objective description of a phenomenon, because the researcher is assigned to interpret through 'taken for granted' meanings or by applying theoretical knowledge to the topic. Freedom from the constraints of meeting statistical assumptions also allows the researcher to consider fine distractions, exceptions, and complex patterns of interrelationships. Another benefit of using a qualitative research method is that small amounts of detailed data of a phenomenon allow analysis of multiple aspects of a topic. Through these detailed data, the qualitative researcher can gain a rich and detailed understanding of a subject. This can be especially useful for relatively new topics with fewer resources because it allows the researcher to gain deep understanding from a small amount of data.

In this study, discourse analysis was used as the qualitative method of analysis. Rhetoric devices used in the advertisements were collected and analyzed to find out the effect of using these devices. As advertisements are famous for using rhetoric devices to persuade their audiences, the discourse analysis on these rhetoric devices would reveal the coaches' intentions in using these devices, and how these devices act to persuade executives.

The second research question ("What is the degree to which executive coaching engages psychotherapy?") was answered by looking at which advertised services could be promoted by psychotherapy instead of executive coaching. The themes in the discourse of being a business executive were going to reveal discourses that are personal and emotional in nature, such as anger management, work-life balance, and interpersonal relationships. Such themes are usually explored by psychotherapists to help their clients make personal changes. If these themes were promoted in executive coaching services, then it means that executive coaches are providing services that are psychotherapeutic in nature. Thus, the amount of the themes that could be dealt with by psychotherapists would be the degree to which executive coaching engages psychotherapy.

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5.3. Data collection and analysis

Advertisements on executive coaching services were used as data in this study. The data was collected through the Google's search engine and the analysis process was completed in five steps:

- Preparation
- Pilot test testing
- Stage one
- Stage two
- Stage three

The details of the data collection and analysis process are explained in this chapter.

5.3.1. Data collection

Websites of executive coaching services were collected by searching www.google.com on the 2nd of December, 2007, using Google's advanced search. Google was used as the search engine because it is the largest and most popular search engine in the world, and thus could be assumed to contain more executive coaching service advertisements than any other search engine. The exact phrase "executive coaching services" was used as the search term. This phrase was used as it is specific and eliminated many websites that do not fall into the category of interest. A filter was set to only return pages in English. The search first resulted in 39,200 websites: the Google search engine then omitted entries that were similar and reduced the original 39,200 websites to 828 websites.

All 828 search results were saved in their original form in Microsoft Word. The list of websites was then opened by the researcher to determine if the websites were usable for analysis. Websites that were unrelated to the search topic, only gave links to other websites, or did not provide details of an executive coaching process were not selected. Websites which were identified by Norton Internet Security as unsafe and websites that could not be opened were all deleted. 185 websites were selected as analyzable data.

5.3.2. Data analysis

The purpose of the analysis was to highlight the dominant discourse of being an executive, as illustrated by executive coaching advertisements. Yates (2004) illustrates three features of discourse that are important for discourse research:

1. Content: paying close attention to the linguistic content (meanings and topic) and the linguistic features (grammar and cohesion) of the content. When adopting a discursive approach to analyzing the content, it can be seen to develop out of the features of the discourse and vice versa. The analysis is to answer sociological questions within the content (Yates, 2004).
2. Rhetoric: to highlight the way discourse counters real or potential alternatives. The rhetorical or argumentative organization of talk and text are analyzed to ask how the discourses have been designed to successfully compete with alternative ways of thinking and acting (Yates, 2004).
3. Construction: to reveal the constructional operation of discourse. Discourse analysis sees the style, linguistic resources, and rhetoric devices of language as closely linked with the actions of the author. People accomplish the nature of their

> acts differently through their talk and writing by constructing their discourse. The analyst thinks of discourse functions in this way and variations in acting will become clear (Yates, 2004).

Metaphorically, the rhetoric features are the adjectives in the content of the discourse, and the combined effect of these two features shows how a discourse is constructed.

The first research question ("What is the discourse of being a 'business executive' as illustrated in the offer of executive coaching services?") was answered by firstly finding the content features of the discourse. The content features were the topic and meanings of the advertisements, and were the core of the discourse. It was the main theme advertised, and most importantly, what it meant to receive those services. Personal attributions and personality traits that emerged were noted down.

The first research question was answered by examining the constructive operation of the discourse in the advertisements. Firstly, the content of the advertisement was examined to reveal the meanings and topic of the advertisements. The content showed some patterns in the ads such as the focus of their services and what it means to receive these services. Secondly, the rhetoric features of the advertisement were analyzed to discover how the rhetoric features (words, phrases, behaviors, gestures, etc.) act on (instruct, inform, convince, persuade) their audience. The combined effects of the two analyses revealed how the discourse of an ideal business executive is constructed through an executive coach's advertisements.

5.3.2.1. Preparation

Collecting analyzable data in a single Word file

The websites collected in the data collection process were opened and saved into a single Word file by copying and pasting the contents of the advertisement into a Word file. Most of the advertisements had a large number of web pages and links on their websites, but many were not useful for this research. This was because the websites collected usually contained other forms of coaching that this research was not interested in. The web pages that were collected for data analysis were pages promoting executive coaching services. Web pages considered as executive coaching service promotions included references to the problems that executives face, the benefits of receiving the service, and details of the service provided. This process generated 207 pages of analyzable raw data.

Researcher education

The data analysis consisted of identifying and isolating the three features of discourse: the content, the rhetoric features and the constructive features in the advertisement. As the constructive features are the combined effect of the content and the rhetoric features, they were ignored at this stage of the analysis.

The content features of the advertisements were the advertised results for receiving the service, such as behavior changes, work-life balance, effective leadership skills, and effective interpersonal communication. The content features were relatively easy to spot. For practice, a random section of the data was read and used to practice spotting and highlighting these content features; then what was highlighted as content features was to see if any were left out or miss-highlighted. There were no missed content features, content features continued to be highlighted in this fashion.

However, a few problems arose when trying to identify the rhetoric features. Rhetoric features are commonly understood to be the manifest characteristics of a text such as metaphors, argument structure, choice of words, and how sentences were constructed. Before the data analysis process, the researcher read three books on the topic of advertising discourse: *Analyzing Media Texts* by Andrew Burn and David Parker, *The Language of Advertising-Written Texts* by Angela Goddard, and *The Discourse of Advertising* by Guy Cook. These books addressed how advertising language works to persuade, inform, and sell. *The Language of Advertising* has an index and a glossary of terms used to describe different types of rhetoric features used in advertising. This book was used as a guide to identify the rhetoric features that appeared in the collected data.

5.3.2.2. Pilot test

After these three books had been read and notes taken on identifying rhetoric features, I felt ready to start a pilot study on a small piece of the data. Five pages of data from the Word file were randomly selected, and at attempt was made to identify and highlight content with their matching rhetoric features, using knowledge from the three books about advertising language. Ideally, these highlighted features were to be put into a table of two columns: the first column would hold the content feature, in the same row; and the second column would hold the rhetoric feature that followed the content feature in the first column. When all the content-rhetoric features were collected in the table, similar content-rhetoric rows would be grouped together to see how frequent certain content features appeared in the advertisements and how different rhetoric features acted on them.

It was found in this pilot test that there were some content features that did not have any rhetoric features. Some rhetoric features did not go with any content features, and some devices that were clearly used to enhance the credibility of the advertisement could not be identified as content or rhetoric. For this reason, the data could not be placed neatly into matching content-rhetoric sets and another way needed to be found to sort these data.

The section in Yates' *Doing Social Science Research* (2004), on discourse analysis was re-read to gain a better understanding of features in discourses. After this, it was decided that the content features were the most important because they make up the core of the discourse. Thus, all the content features were kept for analysis even if they did not have any identifiable rhetoric features. The rhetoric features that did not follow any content features were also important because they increased the overall attractiveness and credibility of the service advertised. Therefore, the odd rhetoric features were kept in a separate category for analysis at a later stage. The devices that could not be identified as content or rhetoric were:

- Methods of assessments used in the coaching process, such as 360-degree feedback
- Personality tests etc.
- The use of jargon and acronyms

Redefining rhetoric features for the purpose of this research

After the pilot test, it was found that there were more features employed to enhance the attractiveness of the service than just rhetoric devices. Due to this variation, Yates' (2004) second feature of discourse was redefined. Yates (2004) illustrates three features in discourse: content features, rhetoric features, and constructive features. "Rhetoric features" were redefined as rhetoric devices, assessments, jargon and acronyms. Using this new set of features it was possible to extract all the useful features for analysis.

5.3.2.3. Stage one

Highlighting features

The first stage of the data analysis was to highlight features in the advertisements that could be used in the analysis. This process was started from the first page of the word file, highlighting all the content and enhancement features that were identified. Content features were defined as details of the service, such as "improving time management," "developing interpersonal relationships," and "increasing employee morale." These content features were highlighted in yellow. Rhetoric features were identified as rhetoric devices, assessments, jargon and acronyms used to promote the details of the service, and were highlighted in green. The highlighted features ranged from one word to a whole sentence, to include all varieties. The highlighting process continued page by page; a half an hour break was taken for every two hours of highlighting. The break times were set to ensure that work continued without undue tiredness so that the process would be consistent. The highlighting process lasted for three days, working six hours a day. This process ended when the end of the document as reached.

Extracting features

After all the highlighting was done, all the features were extracted and arranged into Table 1, which looks like:

Content features	Rhetoric features	Other rhetoric features

The purpose of putting the highlighted features into a table was to make the grouping of the content features easier. This was because having all the features matched up in a table creates visual clarity, thus reducing any confusion caused by grouping similar content features.

Each content feature was copied and pasted under a content feature column, with only one content feature per row. The rhetoric features for each content feature were copied and pasted onto the middle column in the same row. Content features without any enhancement features had their middle column left blank. Other rhetoric features that did not have any matching content features were copied and pasted into the third column. Each occupied one row. This process was done within two days, working six hours a day with a half hour break every two hours.

5.3.2.4. Stage two

Grouping similar features

With all the features isolated and matched, the first step of grouping similar content features began. Table 2 was used for this process to gain further clarity and grouping of features. Table 2 looks like:

Theme of content	Rhetoric features for theme

The first column was the theme of the content, and each cell under this column had a common theme. The second column was for the matching rhetoric features to content features. The matching rhetoric features were pooled in the same row under the second column because examining the combined effect of these rhetoric features would better illustrate a discourse than examining the individual effects of them.

As there were a large number of content features with varied themes, there was a need to identify keywords for categorizing these features. A list of keywords that appeared often was brain stormed while I was highlighting the features. These included: work-life balance, satisfactory life, leadership, teamwork, management, motivating others, goal achievement, career advancement, success, communication skills, interpersonal skills, personal development, behavior change, personal change, decision making, stress management, self motivation, conflict resolution, organizational change, productivity, problem solving, personal effectiveness, self-awareness, time management, anger management, and recognition. A thesaurus was used to look for other words that have similar meanings; these were used as keywords for the search. For example, three keywords were used to search for "leadership": "lead," "leader," and "leadership." The 'find' function in Microsoft Word was used to search for content themes using these keywords, and then cut and pasted into the same cell. The collected theme was numbered down the page for easier counting; he 'cut' function was used instead of the 'copy' function because this would allow the left over features to be seen.

After a search was completed for all keywords, there were still a large number of content features left in Table 1. These left over themes were read through again to spot common themes, and some more keywords were noted: employee retention, authority, emotional quotient, confidence, political savvy, improvement, personal change, reach potential, competency, ability, performance, strategic, business skills, challenge, planning, organizational growth, creative, and resource management. The same search method was used to find content features using this new set of keywords, and Table 2 was extended according to the number of new keywords.

The second step of grouping features was to categorize the grouped contents into main themes that included similar categories. This step was to keep the number of themes to a minimum for greater clarity. Before this process began, each keyword needed to be defined to allow accurate categorization. The dictionary *A dictionary of business and management* (2006) was used to note down the meaning of each keyword, and then keywords were pooled into groups of similar meanings under one theme. For example: skills advertised that were related to business areas such as problem solving, managing resources, business planning, and being strategic were pooled under business skills; and leadership skills such as motivating others, employee retention, and having authority were pooled under leadership skills. Microsoft Excel was used to tabulate this process. On the spreadsheet, the keyword was used for each group under column A, and the collected content features were used for column B. All groups of content features were sorted by cutting and pasting the rows formed by the two columns into a second spreadsheet. According to the meaning of each keyword, all of the groups fell into six themes:

- Business skills
- Leadership skills
- Self-development
- Professional development
- Success
- Work-life balance

5.3.2.5. Stage three

Recording results

The themes found were formed into a pie graph to showed the frequency of content features within each theme. Furthermore, each theme formed a pie graph of its own to show the number of categories grouped under the theme and the frequency of content features within the categories. This graphing method allows the reader to examine each theme in an exploded view to show further details.

The content features that were pooled together under each theme were then analyzed to show their effect on each theme. These were analyzed by examining and reporting the number of rhetoric devices used, their purposes, and their effects. Notes taken on rhetoric devices were used for this analysis, and any unidentifiable devices were studied using the Massey Library article database as a reference tool.

The degree to which executive coaching engages psychotherapy was examined by comparing the content themes of the advertisements to the literature review on psychotherapy in this thesis, which gives a detailed account of the differences between the two professions. Themes that are mentioned as being functions and roles of psychotherapists, or are an important area of psychotherapist training, were considered to be themes that could be promoted by psychotherapy instead of executive coaching. These themes were isolated; refer to the literature review on executive coaching vs. psychotherapy to understand why they should be promoted by psychotherapists. These themes were then added together and compared to the total themes promoted in executive coaching services to see the percentage of themes that could be promoted by psychotherapy. This percentage of themes that could be promoted by psychotherapy was the degree to which executive coaching engages psychotherapy.

There were also a small number of advertisements that promoted using psychological assessments and behavioral techniques in executive coaching. They were highlighted in the analysis but not included in the degree to which executive coaching engages psychotherapy. This is because it was not possible to use advertisements to identify all psychological assessments and psychotherapeutic techniques employed in executive coaching. These data will need to be gathered using executive coaching services. Thus this thesis only identifies the service contents advertised that could be promoted in psychotherapy.

6. Results

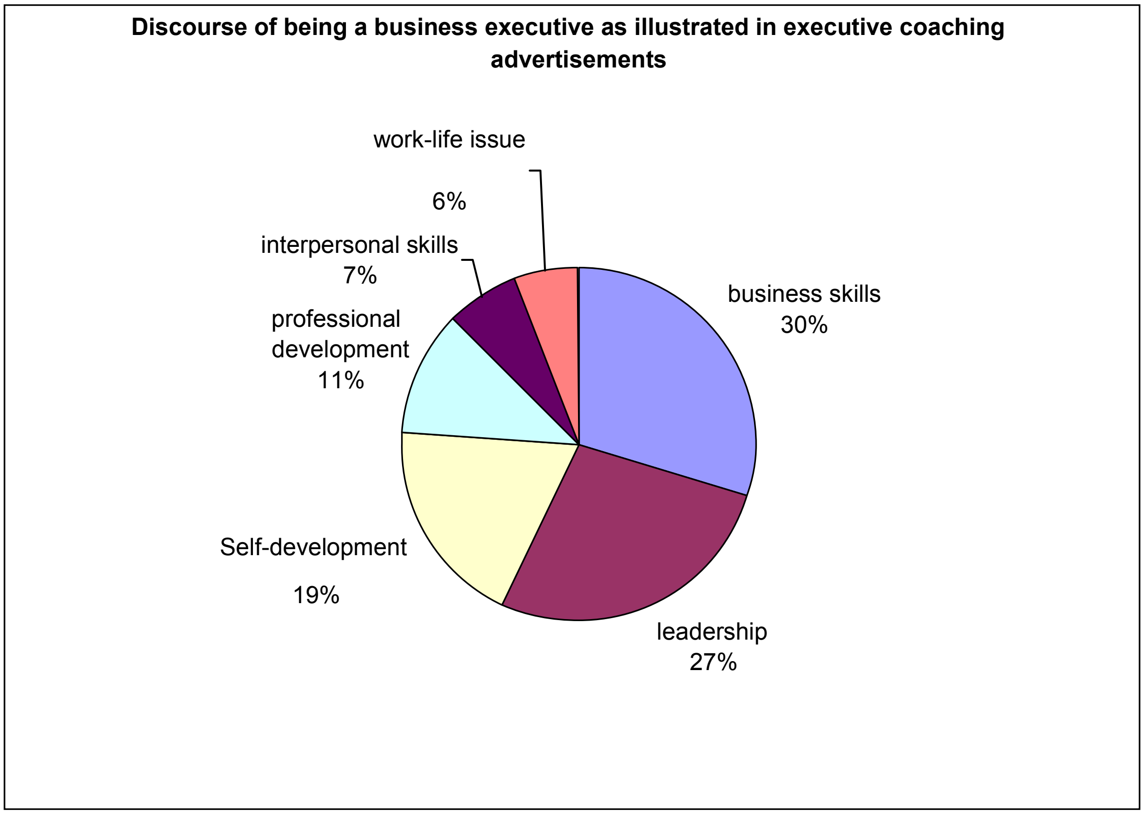
The results of this research are organized in pie graphs to show the frequency of each theme within the data. Each theme is broken down into smaller categories of specific skills mentioned in the advertisements. These smaller categories are illustrated as percentages within each theme and are also presented with pie graphs.

The identified rhetoric devices used in each main theme are listed and presented after the details of each theme. Their purpose in the advertisements is explained according to the reflections of this author.

The results also illustrated the degree to which executive coaching engages psychotherapy by identifying the percentage of contents within the themes of executive coaching services that could be promoted by psychotherapy.

6.1. Main themes of the discourse

Figure 1. Discourse of being a business executive as illustrated in executive coaching advertisements.



The main theme in the discourse of being a business executive illustrated by executive coaching service advertisements are: have business skills, leadership, constant self-development, be successful in their profession, have good interpersonal skills, and achieve work-life balance. This is a rather broad view of the discourse, as there are much more detailed categories within each theme.

To have good business skills is the most common theme within executive coach advertisements, thirty-two percent of the content advertised were under this theme. Leadership is also a valued characteristic of being a business executive, twenty-nine percent of the content features advertised on improving leadership skills. From the statistical view of the discourse, executives are also keen on self-development, as twenty-one percent of the coaches promoted their service as encouraging executive's self-development. Professional success appeared in eleven percent of the advertised content, reflecting the executive's desire towards success. There were also many advertised content on improving interpersonal skills, which may be a common problem executives face. Work-life balance was the least advertised content. However, it still occupied six percent of the advertised content, illustrating the struggle of achieving this balance by executives.

Comparing the details of each theme to psychotherapist functions, roles, and professional training, some of these services could be promoted by psychotherapists. In total it was found that 21.26% of the total number of services promoted in executive coaching advertisements could be provided by psychotherapists.

6.2. Themes in detail

There were many small categories of skills advertised in the main themes. These are the specific skills that executives can acquire through executive coaching. The percentage presented for certain skills is the frequency of this skill's appearance in the data within its theme.

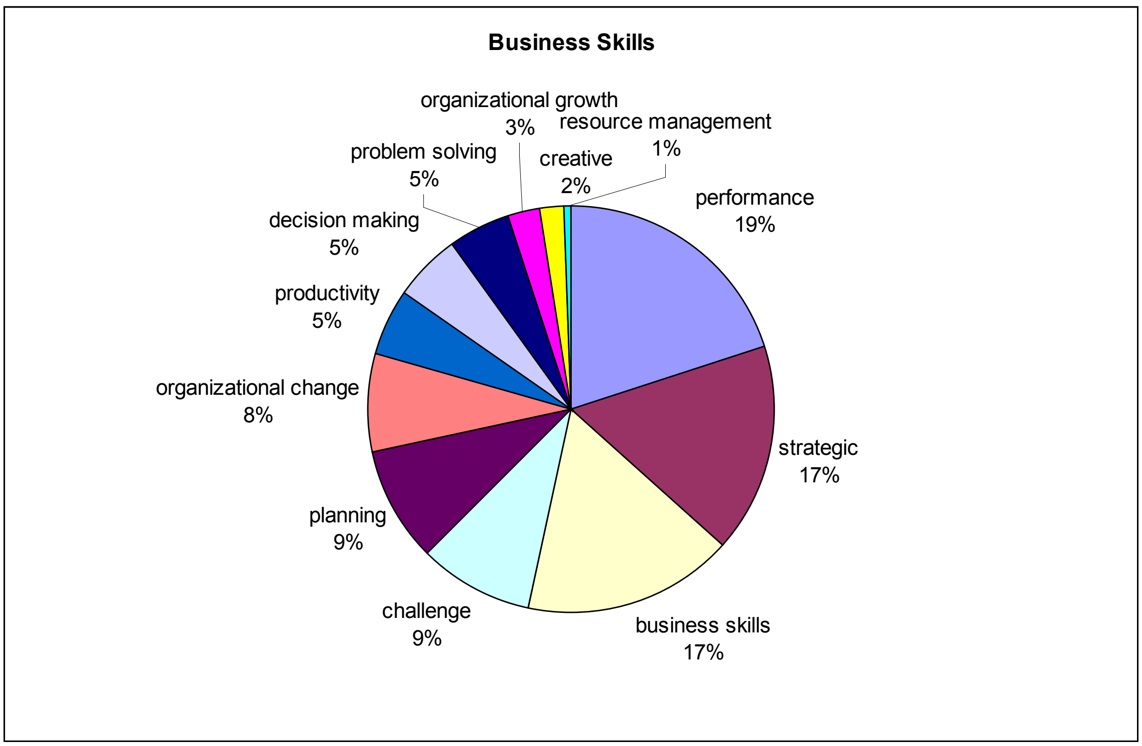
6.2.1. Business skills

Improving business skills were the most advertised content in these analyzed advertisements, occupying 30% of the content. It also had the most categories within the theme. Nineteen percent of the content in this theme fell into the category of enhancing performance; content relating to increasing strategic and business skills were both advertised seventeen percent of the time. These three categories dominated the theme.

To take on challenges and to plan for the future both made up nine percent of the advertisements in this theme, followed by organizational change, which was advertised eight percent of the time. Productivity, decision making, and problem solving were all advertised five percent of the time in this theme.

The last six percent of this theme was related to creating organization growth (3%), the use of creativity (2%), and resource management (1%).

Figure 2. The contents within the theme of business skills.



Under this theme, the rhetoric devices used were: personal narratives, metaphors, unique selling prepositions, and comparative references.

The personal narratives used in this theme were varied. There was abundant use of the second person pronoun "you" to gain attention from the audience. For example, some advertisements stated "you'd like to…," "you want to…," "create a compelling future for yourself and your organization," and "show you where you should begin…." The use of “you” in an advertisement has the effect of attracting the audience’s attention and making them feel like the advertisements are talking directly at them, thus connecting the advertisements with audience at a personal level. There were also many uses of the first person pronoun “we” in reference to coaches, such as “the depth of our resources means that we are also…,” and “we work…to identify your…” This creates an alliance between the audience and the coach, as there is a we-you connection.

The metaphors used in this theme were: comparing the coaches to “catalysts” for change, executives to “fast trackers,” problems to “blind spots,” and business environment to “turbulent.” These metaphors were used to make the service of executive coaching easy to comprehend as they vividly describe the situations that executives are in. The audience of the advertisements is likely to relate to these metaphors because executives would have experienced situations where they could not see what was coming, been caught up in complicated issues, and have needed someone to speed things up for them.

The unique selling prepositions used in this theme were mainly findings from research studies and statistics. For example, some prepositions included: “numerous studies strongly support business coaching as a key driver of development”; “research has documented improvements in executive performance…”; and “a 1997 case study…when followed with coaching productivity increased 88.%.” The use of research findings in advertisements makes the ads more believable and convincing. It also makes the coaching service seem scientific and reliable, thus making their service attractive to the audience. There was also the use of “behavioral techniques and methods to achieve agreed upon goals” in one advertisement as their unique selling preposition. This was also used to make the coaching service seem reliable as it uses established psychological interventions.

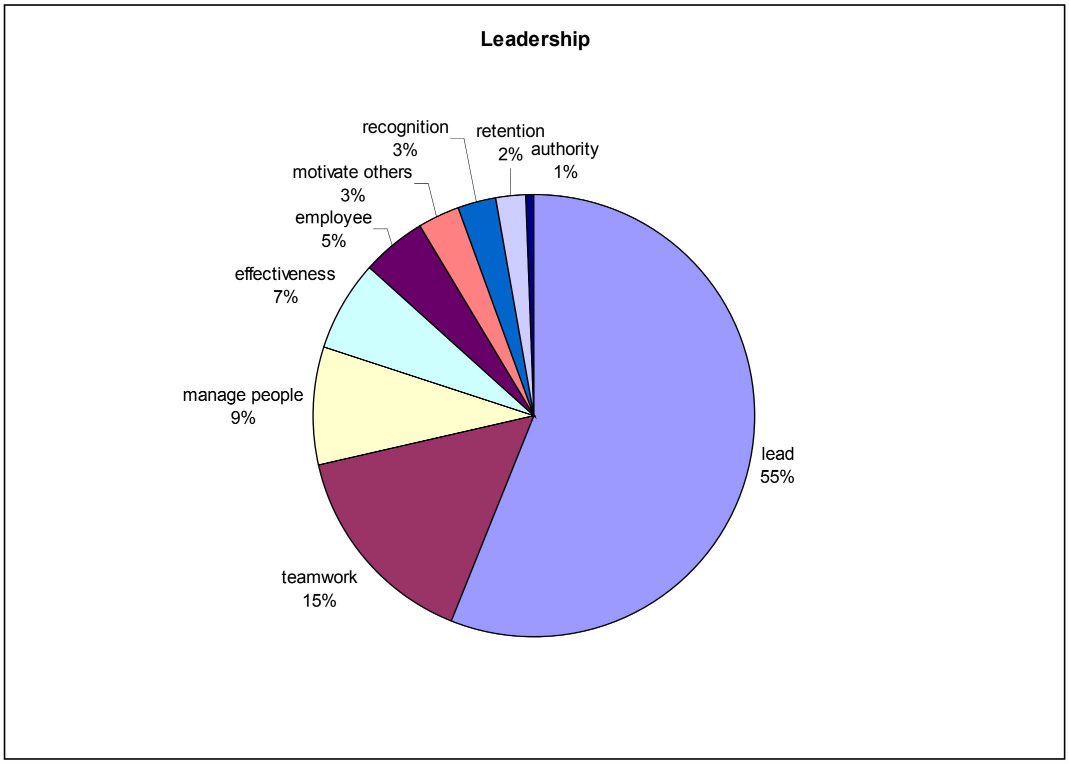
There was one use of comparative references found in this theme, which was to “separate the wood from the trees.” This not only compares people with objects, but also makes a comparison between people. It tells the audience that people with greater abilities will stand out from the rest and encourages competitiveness in its audience.

Under this theme, some advertised content used the phrase “behavioral techniques and methods to achieve agreed upon goals” as a unique selling preposition. Behavioral techniques and methods should be used by behavioral therapists as it is their function and role to change client behavior. Behavioral therapists are trained to have the ability to recognize healthy and pathological behavior (see p. 19), whereas executive coaches are not required to be trained in this area. Thus, behavioral therapists can provide clients with more accurate diagnoses of specific behaviors to change.

6.2.2. Leadership

Leadership was also a dominant theme in the discourse: twenty-seven percent of the advertised content was on the theme of improving leadership skills. Within this theme, fifty-five percent of the advertised content was about how to lead people within an organization. This was also the most advertised content in the entire data. Fifteen percent of this theme advertised improving teamwork, nine percent managing people, and seven percent effective leadership. Five percent of this theme advertised how to look after employees. Both motivating others and receiving recognition made up three percent of the theme. Employee retention and authority over others were the least advertised in this theme, which were advertised two percent and one percent respectively.

Figure 3. The contents within the theme of leadership



There were four rhetoric devices found under this theme: personal narratives, metaphor, cliché, and unique selling preposition.

The use of personal pronouns was the most abundant form of rhetoric devices employed in this theme. The second person pronoun "you" was used to make direct connections with the audience. Some examples included: "now here is your perfect chance"; "help you turn the good ideas you have into…"; and "…that are meaningful to you." This is to make executives feel like the ads are talking directly to them. There were also many uses of "we" for describing coaches, which gives an audience the sense that the whole coaching company will be behind the executives to give support. These two forms of personal pronouns were also used together to show a close relationship between the coach and executives. Some examples included: "we help you to protect your…"; "we can take you" and "how our executive team coaching process could help your executive leadership team."

The metaphors used in this theme were used to describe business situations in terms of sports play. Some examples included “on the playing field of business” and “like having a personal trainer.” These metaphors compare the corporate environment to a “playing field,” which lessens the seriousness of the difficult situations that executives facing. By describing the work environment as a “playing field” the audience is made to feel that failures in this field are just part of the game and that there is no need to be stressed about it. The phrase “like having a personal trainer” compares coaches to a personal trainer to make the audience feel familiar with the concepts of coaching and how coaching will work for them. It also makes the audience feel that executive coaches will act like a personal trainer to encourage and help executives to reach higher potentials.

The cliché that was used was “it can be lonely at the top”: this cliché was used several times throughout the data and it vividly describes the working environment of executives. This cliché was used to describe the singled-out feeling of a person that has achieved more than all of their peers, and the sense of loneliness that comes with this success. Executives who are in top positions in companies often feel this way because they have much more power and authority than other employees; it may be hard for them to find someone who is willing to be their friend or confidant.

The unique selling prepositions used in this theme were: using research findings to make the advertisements more convincing; and special tools used in their coaching services. For example, referring to research results in advertising phrases such as “recent research indicates that executive coaching process and its associated on-the-job learning assignments are the preferred methods…” and “research-based model…” makes the audience feel that the promoted services are reliable and professional because they use scientific facts and methods to design their service. “Baldrine Business Model – 360 Assessments DiSC” was another unique selling proposition in one advertisement. This assessment tool may not be understood by the audience, which in turn makes the advertisement seem professional and makes the coaches appear to lack expertise.

The theme of improving leadership skills is one that an executive coach should provide. This theme involves the use of organizational psychology methods of assessment such as the 360 assessment to promote the reliability of services. Assessments like this are best administered by psychotherapists for more accurate results as they are professionally trained in this area (see pp. 22-23). Thus, this is an example of how executive coaches provide services that they are not trained for.

6.2.3. Professional development

The theme of personal development occupied nineteen percent of the discourse, but it only had three categories within the theme. Forty-four percent of this theme advertised achieving goals, which dominated the theme. Career advancement was also a popular category in the advertisements, with thirty-three percent of the theme promoting this category. To have success was the least advertised category, but still occupied twenty-three percent of the contents.

Figure 4. Contents within the theme of professional development.

The theme of professional development employed a range of rhetoric devices to sell coaching services. Narrative point of view was used differently from in other themes, but was still the most used rhetoric device. Other rhetoric devices included: metaphors that were used to make problems seem mechanic; rhetorical questions that were used to make the audience think; unique selling propositions to promote the uniqueness of a service; and ellipsis that was used to establish closeness with the audience.

Narrative point of view was used differently in this theme: there were many uses of the first person pronoun “I” and “us” when referring to coaches. Some examples were “use our energy most wisely,” “I support the client,” and “our sole focus.” This was very different from in other themes, where first person pronouns were used to include the audience. The effect of excluding the audience in promoting professional development was to show the reader that the coaches act as a third eye, independent from their client, so clients can have a fresh perspective from a third person. Apart from this difference in the use of first person pronouns, “we” was still used to describe the relationship between coaches and clients. The examples of this were: “together we will design a coaching plan”; “we have all the trappings of…yet are discouraged because it doesn’t seem to satisfy us”; and “we all have these blind spots and defenses.” This way of using the word “we” creates a sense of alliance for the reader and shows the reader that coaches are no different from clients: they can empathize with clients because they have felt the same way. This is a good way to eliminate the negative effects of using first person pronouns to distance coaches from clients.

The use of metaphors in this theme was mainly to describe problems that executives face when developing professionally. Metaphors used were: “equip people with tools”; “turn Jeff Wolf to become the catalyst”; and “can quickly identify pertinent issues and obstacles, see through defense mechanisms and more effectively determine a strategy for overcoming these barriers.” These metaphors were similar as they compare problems with physical objects such as “obstacles” and “barriers,” and compare the paths to solutions with “tools” and “catalysts.” These comparisons make the problems that executives face seem mechanical in nature, and thus much simpler to solve.

There were a small number of rhetorical questions used in this theme. A typical one was that: “the world’s greatest all have their own coaches, mentors or wise counselors, why shouldn’t you?” This type of rhetorical question first makes a connection between the most successful people in the world and the reader, and then gives the reader information about how these great people succeeded. The real question was at the end of the sentence: “why shouldn’t you?” This question evokes the reader’s desire to be someone great and makes the reader feel that they should be treated to the same opportunities.

Unique selling propositions were also used in this theme: advertisements for a service that “customizes each program,” and would have “focused, tailored sessions” demonstrate the predominate use of this device. When services are described as "customized" and "tailored," it gives the audience a sense of being special to coaches and different from the other clients. They are made to feel that they are the center of attention and are well cared for, and thus feel more attracted to the service promoted.

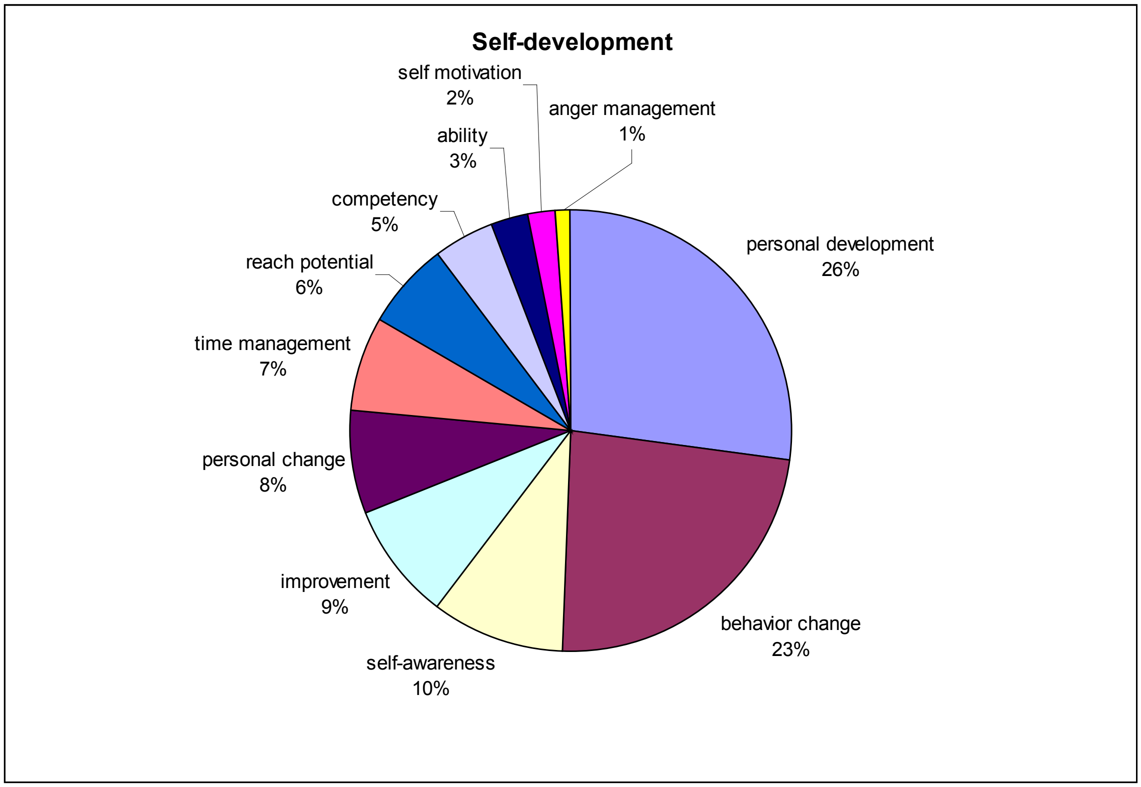
In this theme, there was one use of ellipsis to create a sense of informality: the ellipsis was "you have enormous latent potential. Find it. Release it." This ellipsis was used to make the advertisement feel like it was talking directly at the audience, which makes the audience feel like it is personal. It is also suggestive to the audience that they have great potential that needs to be discovered, which gives a sense of power and hope to the audience.

Under this theme of professional development, executive coaching advertisements talk about how executive's defenses could prevent them from achieving professional development. For example, phrases were used like "we all have these blind spots and defenses" and "see through defense mechanisms and more effectively determine a strategy for overcoming these barriers." However, it is one of a person-centered therapist's functions and roles to "provide genuine caring, respect, acceptance, and understanding for the client to loosen their defenses and perceptions so the clients can move to a higher level of personal functioning" (see p. 17). It may not be significant for a few executive coaching services to use psychological constructs in their services, but it shows the degree to which executive coaching employs psychological theories.

6.2.4. Self-development

The theme of self-development made up nineteen percent of the discourse; much of the advertised content was related to personal development (26%) and behavior change (23%). To gain self-awareness was advertised ten percent of the time within this theme. Self-improvement was advertised as being possible in many areas of life, occupying nine percent of the self-development theme. Personal change (8%), time management (7%), reaching potential (6%) and competency (5%) were advertised throughout the advertisements but were not dominant categories. The least advertised categories in this theme were to gain new abilities (3%), self-motivation (2%), and anger management (1%).

Figure 5. The contents within the theme of self-development.



The predominant rhetoric devices used in the theme of self-development were metaphor and narrative point of view. There were a few examples of rhetorical questions, comparative references, unique selling propositions, and cause-and-effect analyses. There was also some clever use of idiomatic language and cliché used to describe executives.

Some examples of the metaphors used in this theme were: "drives the solution through a rigorous process"; "when obstacles or roadblocks appear"; and "larger picture…clients see through." The phrase "drives the solution through a rigorous process" compares the solution to problems in cars that can be driven, which gives the audience a sense that by implementing a solution using their assessment process, the end result will be perfected. "When obstacles or roadblocks appear" is a metaphor that describes the problems that self-developing executives face as roadblocks. This is vivid imagery of forces that stop executives moving forward: the advertisement then explains how coaches will help executives to move forward in “concrete and positive steps” to show executives that they need a coach to help them walk past their problems. The metaphor “larger picture…clients see through” compares a situation that executives face to a picture: this analogy was used several times in the data. This comparison provides an easy way for coaches to explain why people do not understand the situation that they are in: by describing the situation as a picture, readers can easily recognize why a larger picture would show more dimensions of a situation than a focused small section of a picture.

Personal pronouns were used in most advertisements, but narrative point of view had the strongest effect on the audience in this theme. The first person pronoun “we” was used to describe executives and coaches working together: one example was “we work together,” which gives a sense of alliance and unity. For executives, this may trigger a sense of having someone by their side working for them, which may not be possible in their working environment. The word “you” was used often, as in all themes, to capture attention and to focus the advertised service on the audience. For example, several phrases included: “if you’re ready”; “you are highly competent” and “committed to you.” The phrase “you are highly competent” was also used to relate to and praise the audience, which makes a potential client feel good about themselves and that coaches know their strengths before they even meet. There was a distinctive use of the personal pronoun “them”: the use of the third person to describe stakeholders and bosses in companies makes these people sound removed and distant. This not only confirms how executives (and most people) feel about their superiors, but it also increases the closeness felt when “we” is used to describe the client-coach alliance.

There were many advertisements that used rhetorical questions to promote their service; these included: “Do you have the resources to invest in yourself?”; “who is the executive going to confide in?”; and “who will provide him honest feedback, develop him professionally and point out the blind spots?” These questions do not need an answer, but they make the audience think about their resources and people that they can turn to when they face difficulties. Even if executives have a good support system, they will start questioning whether their supporters are honest enough to help them develop professionally. These rhetorical questions are like a seed planted in the audience’s mind that grows with hindsight when the audience experiences confirming situations.

There were some strong comparative references used in this theme to magnify opportunities for self-development; some examples included: “much more likely to occur,” and “opportunities have never been more abundant.” The use of strong comparisons such as “much more” and “never been more” puts great emphasis on the large chance of success. This makes the audience feel that this is the opportunity of a lifetime and it would almost be silly not to take on this opportunity. This makes the advertised service seem especially attractive.

The use of cause-and-effect analyses were to explain why executive coaching services are useful to executives. A typical example was: “Why is coaching a good tool for executive development? It’s the shortest distance between two points: where a person is, and where he wants to be.” This advertisement makes it very simple and clear why coaching helps executives develop: the language and analogy used was direct and to the point, and makes the audience feel that it is easy to develop skills. It makes the process of development seem as straightforward as drawing a line between two points.

Unique selling proposition is a device that many coaching advertisements use to promote their services. Some advertisements described their service as a “unique coaching process,” and many used coaching processes that were specifically developed or unique to their service. Several phrases that illustrate this include: “ECP-General”; “intuitive sense of what is needed”; and “only work on helping successful executives.” These examples all used unique selling propositions in a different way. The advertisements that used “unique coaching process” and “ECP-General” as their selling proposition describe their coaching process as developed by their coaches and used only for their clients. This is attractive because people may have seen coaching services that failed or did not reach their expectations; thus a one-of-a-kind service seems like it will be different from other services. The advertisements that used “intuitive sense of what is needed” made their service more attractive by promoting their unique intuition. This may be attractive for an audience that believes in intuition but does not have good intuition themselves. However, the advertisement that used "only work on helping successful executives" sold their service differently. By being unique in the way that they select clients, they give the audience the sense that they are a superior service that only the successful executive can receive. This makes the audience who believe that they are successful want to attend this service.

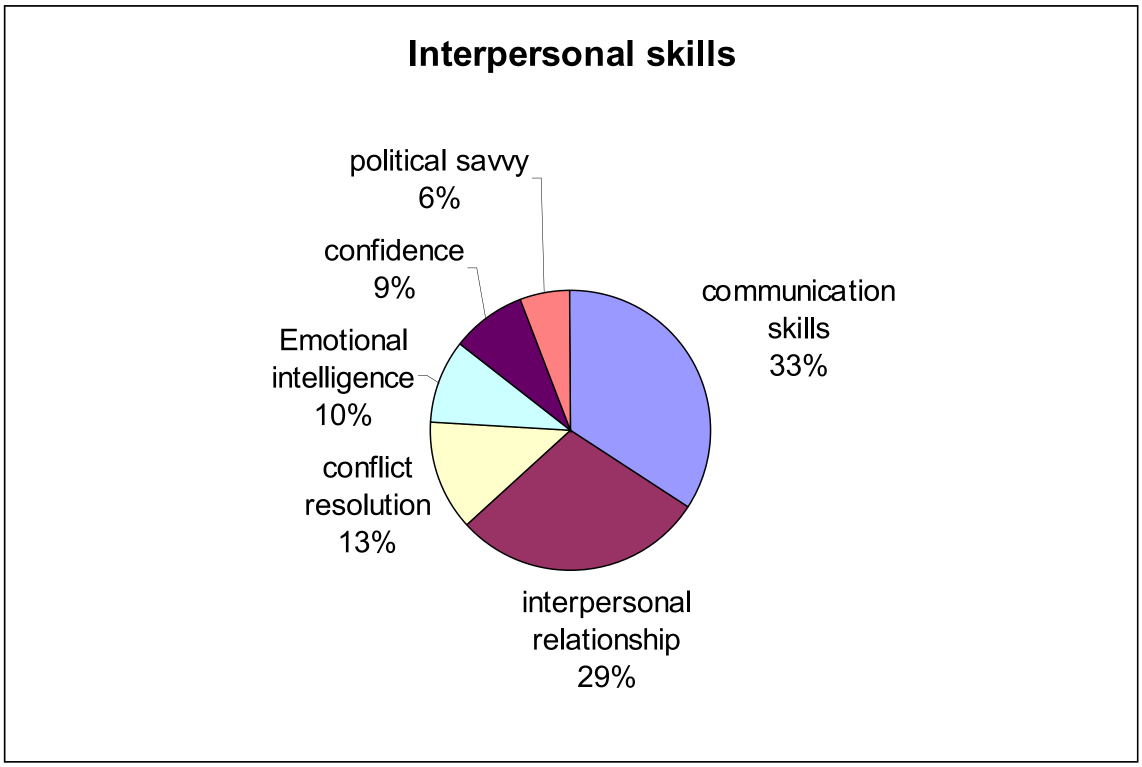
There were also examples of idiomatic language and cliché used to describe the position of a successful executive, such as "supports executives at the top of their game." This idiom cannot be explained literally, but gives the audience a good idea of who the clients are – executives who succeed above others. The cliché that was used is "it can be lonely at the top": this cliché was again used in this theme to describe the working environment of executives. As it was used in the theme of leadership, it is used here to describe the loneliness of being on the top of all the others.

Under the theme of self-development, there are many specific themes that could be promoted by psychotherapists. Psychoanalytic therapists can help clients achieve self-awareness and to gain control over irrational and impulsive behaviors such as anger (see p. 16). Behavioral therapists can assist executives with behavior change (see p. 19), cognitive-behavioral therapists can teach clients about how irrational beliefs can hinder personal development (see pp. 19-20), reality therapists can use their questions to help clients to make realistic personal changes (see p. 18), and Adlerian therapists can help correct dysfunctional beliefs, values, and goals so that clients can reach their true potentials (see p. 17). Thus, 64% of the services promoted in this theme, or 12.16% of the total services promoted, can be provided by psychotherapists.

6.2.5. Interpersonal skills

Interpersonal skills was not a dominant theme in the discourse but it appeared in most advertisements. Within the theme of interpersonal skills, the most advertised category was improvement on communication skills (33%). Improving interpersonal relationships was advertised twenty-nine percent of the time in this theme, which is likely a result of improved communication skills. Conflict resolution was advertised thirteen percent of the time within this theme, much more than improving emotional intelligence (10%), gaining confidence (9%), and being politically savvy (6%).

Figure 6. The contents within the theme of interpersonal skills.



Four types of rhetoric devices were used in advertising interpersonal skills content: metaphors, stereotyping, comparative references, and unique selling propositions.

The metaphors used were: “does not mesh with your colleagues”; “able to build stability” and “identified as key.” By describing difficult interpersonal relationships as “does not mesh,” the situation is described vividly but it sounds easy to solve. The phrase “able to build stability” makes a comparison between stability and building, which illustrates the idea that stability can be built. The metaphor that describes communication skills as “key” to better interpersonal relationships is used to underline how interpersonal relationships can be unlocked by having better communication skills.

Stereotyping was well used in this theme. Many advertisements used stereotyping to describe employees, owners, managers, and bosses. One example was: "owner's and manager's distinct and unique personalities…" This makes the audience feel that certain people can be dealt in certain ways, which makes complex interpersonal relationships seem simple.

Comparative references were used for comparing the audience's chance of success. One example was: "the more people who recognize the value you provide, the better your change…" This comparison with what the same audience would be like if it had a different recognition level makes success seem easier to achieve. The illustration of a direct positive relationship between the number of people who recognize an executive's value and his/her success makes the advice seem attractive to follow.

Unique selling proposition was not only used in this theme, but it did add attractiveness to the advertisements. One phrase that illustrates this was:"The Personal Coaching Styles Inventory (PCSI) is a tool for understanding…" This use of an inventory that is unique to the service shows professionalism and a specialized service, making the service much more credible.

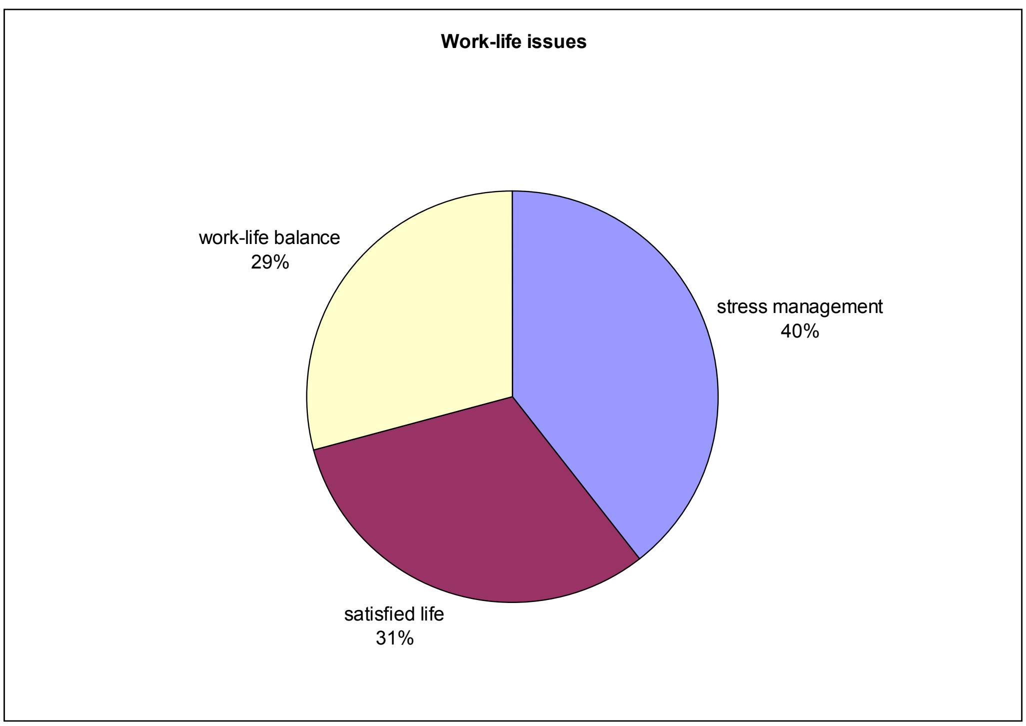
Interpersonal skills are a theme that psychotherapists can promote well. Gestalt therapists can increase client awareness of the degree to which their verbal language is congruent with their experienced emotions (see pp. 19-20), and this can effectively improve client communication skills. Cognitive-behavioral therapists can use cognitive, emotive, and behavioral methods to help clients work from their emotions to their behavior (see pp. 21-22), hence improving client emotional intelligence. Reality therapists, adlerian therapists and cognitive-behavioral therapists can help clients reflect on their self defeating thoughts (see pp. 18, 20-22) and improve client confidence. Thus, 43% of the services promoted under this theme, or 3.1% of the total services promoted, can be provided by psychotherapists.

6.2.6. Work-life issues

Work-life issues were the smallest part of the discourse: six percent of the contents advertised this theme. Three categories made up this theme: stress management, satisfied life, and work-life balance.

Even though this was the smallest theme in the discourse, its contents were often briefly advertised. Stress management was the dominant category within this theme, which was advertised forty percent of the time. Having a satisfied life was also often mentioned in the advertisements; thirty-one percent of the contents in this theme promoted a satisfying life. Work-life balance was the least advertised in this theme but was still promoted twenty-three percent of the time.

Figure 7. The contents within the theme of work-life issues.



In the theme of work-life balance, narrative point of view was the most used rhetoric device employed by the advertisements. For example, many advertisements used the personal pronoun “you” to address the reader and to include all of the audience in the communication. The main intension for using “you” specifically is to make the audience relate to the sentence. Several examples of this included: “you are struggling”; “your stress level is rising”; and “you have a desire to.” The advertisements were aimed at executives and it is likely that the executives will relate to the stress that the advertisements present, and feel that executive coaches understand their needs.

The second most used rhetoric device in this theme was metaphors. Phrases were used such as “attracting what you really want in your life,” and “identifies your triggers”. The phrase “attracting what you really want in your life” is metaphorical because you can not literally attract what you want in life, but this underlines the idea that what you want in life can be attracted. “Identifies your triggers” was also an interesting analogy which puts a picture of a gun in the reader’s mind. The trigger is a metaphor for bad consequences that will happen when it is pulled, and by identifying this trigger, the client is able to avoid the bad consequences.

The advertisements also describe how their coaching “acts as a catalyst” to a “more satisfying life”: this simile gives the audience the sense that coaches are like catalysts that can speed up the process of reaching a more satisfying life.

The use of slogan was also found in this theme, for example, “Deliver the results you need, when you need it.” The use of slogan was attached to the end of advertisements; it sends a catchy but strong message to the reader that is likely to be remembered and associated with the service. The use of “deliver the results” made receiving the service easy because the results were passed onto you – no mention was made of any effort that you have to put into it. Personal pronouns were used again to relate to the audience and show the specificity of services.

Epanaphora was used in one of the advertisements, using the personal pronoun “you” at the start of every sentence in a paragraph. Some examples of his included: “you desire”; “you need to”; and “you are struggling.” Repetition used in combination with personal pronouns has the combined effect of catching the audience’s attention by identifying with the audience, emphasizing the specificity of the service, and gaving impact to the reader. The combined effect impacts the reader like waves and is likely to magnify the audience's "desire," "need," and "struggle."

A large part of aspects of this theme can be promoted by psychotherapists, because they are trained to deal with such client issues. Psychotherapist training includes an understanding of careers and lifestyles and their meanings to individuals, families, and society. Psychotherapists also have the ability to use therapy skills to promote healthy lifestyles and career development (see pp. 22-23). Furthermore, psychotherapists have the ability to diagnose psychopathology, the tools to assess the degree of stress that their clients experience, awareness of risks in clients, and knowledge of when to refer these clients to other professionals (see p. 23). Thus, 100% of the services promoted in this theme, or 6% of the total services promoted, can be provided by psychotherapists.

7. Discussion

This chapter is an overview of the author's reflections on the research process, the limitations of this research, its implications and recommendations for future research, and its contribution to the field.

7.1. Reflections

On developing the research question

The topic of this thesis was originally meant to be about the problems of integrating psychotherapeutic techniques into executive coaching. It was an extremely ambitious topic that was chosen to satisfy an urge to jump into the professional worlds of psychotherapy and management development. Students such as the author, however, would never do well with this topic due to limited experience in the professional world. Despite this and many hints from the author's supervisor, the author was reluctant to give up on the topic that so many hopes and dreams had been invested in. It was not until 8 months into the original topic that developing a research strategy for that topic was considered too difficult. In desperation to succeed with this topic the author enrolled in a postgraduate course in counselling to learn more about psychotherapy and its limitations. The author's hopes for that course were to gain insights into how psychotherapy works and how it should be used appropriately. It was hoped that this knowledge could then be used to examine how executive coaches were unethically using psychotherapeutic techniques in their work. Unexpectedly, being on the counseling course gave the author some real insights into psychotherapy and made the author realize her incompetency as a student to take on such a topic. It was realized that without years of experience in counseling and coaching it would not be possible to produce reliable research on a topic that is not even well understood by professionals. On the other hand, the approach of the tutors to teaching counselling was to immerse the student with the idea of postmodernism and Foucault's ideas of discourse and narratives. From learning about discourses and their impact on people's ways of thinking about themselves and the world, it was realized that every type of profession has their own discourses about what it means to be a professional, and discourses about how others perceive professionals. It was also learnt that discourses are more obvious to people that are outside of the discourses. Marrying these ideas of postmodernism and executive coaching, an opportunity was seen to study the discourse of being a business executive. Furthermore, this would be a topic ideal for a student with no experience of the corporate world. A student who had a fresh pair of eyes to spot this discourse and enough knowledge about executive coaching and discourses could do well in exploring this specific topic. From there on, the author searched for data that could be used in this research and found that advertisements often use discourses to make their products or services more appealing to their audiences, and that there are hundreds of pages of executive coaching service advertisements on the World Wide Web. Putting all these ideas together, it was finally decided to change the topic of this thesis to "examining the discourse of being a business executive, illustrated by executive coaching advertisements." It was a hard decision to make. There was also a sense of relief when the topic and the research methods were finalized, because it was known at that time that this was a topic that the author was interested in and could do well in as a master's student.

On the learning process

The learning process was the most helpful part of the thesis writing experience for the author. Of course there was the learning from research on different subjects that was involved, but most important was learning about how to be a good researcher.

This research has been a huge challenge for the author to learn about different subjects simultaneously and to integrate these subjects into a single piece of work. Before the research proposal, the author started to research the topics of executive coaching, mentoring and psychotherapy. A difficulty became apparent when it was found that many books and articles were using different definitions for each of these three similar topics. It was only until when many articles were read and re-read that it was realized that these three concepts lay on a continuum of helping professions, with overlaps and distinctive differences. From here on it was learnt that many concepts in life have no absolutes and a continuum may by a better way to describe a concept and its relation to other concepts.

It was from the counseling course that the author realized the need to open up to new ideas and theories in psychotherapy. This was very different from the traditional training of the author's undergraduate degree in psychology. The ideas of postmodernism and discourse made the author aware that almost all of our sense of reality is socially constructed, and the impact of societal idealizations on individuals are invisible but strong. From there, the author started researching other theories of power in sociology. It was a difficult journey with many confusions and frustrations, but in the end, the author learnt how to understand these theories, and it was found that describing the differences between these theories was much easier when they were explained in the author's own style of writing.

Another topic that was important to this research was the discourse of advertising. It was not until the author began writing the research methods section that it was realized that this was the core of the research methodology for this thesis. The author's understanding of discourse from the counseling course only explained discourse in the greater sense and the other definitions of discourse that are also used in linguistics and psychology were not fully understood. More research was done to learn about discourses in these fields and how to identify them in advertisements. Hours of reading on this topic finally made the author feel competent to continue with the data collection and analysis process.

This proactive learning process was an awakening experience, because the author was used to being taught by teachers and learning things that were simply handed to students. This caused a lot of frustration for the author's supervisor, as the author would often ask for solutions and would not take on the responsibility of proactive learning. It was only when the author's supervisor shocked the author by suggesting that she might fail to get a good grade because of the lack of depth in her research and the lack of readiness to do research on her own that pushed her into trying new learning behaviors. As difficult as it seemed at the beginning, the frustration of not knowing was the biggest barrier that had to be overcome. In the end however, determination was the key to the author's confidence in exploring unknown grounds. Words fail the author to describe how much she have grown from this experience, because she is already starting to forget how her old self was holding her back from what she felt she could and could not achieve. The author can definitely describe this experience as life changing.

7.2. Research limitations

The limitations of this research are discussed in four sections:

- Limitations to the theory
- Quantitative methodology
- Qualitative methodology
- The author

Each of these sections has an account of the arguments around the theories employed in the research process, including the effect of using quantitative and qualitative research methodologies and the author's influence on the research question.

7.2.1. The theory

Referential materials

The most important validation for this research is the amount and trustworthiness of the referential materials that were used to produce the research question. There was a great amount of referential materials used for defining the construct 'executive coaching'. There were a good number of reliable materials available through the Massey University library and article databases that provided enough references to explain in detail what an 'executive coach' is.

However, when the research question changed (to "what is the discourse of being a 'business executive' as illustrated in the offer of executive coaching services?"), the keyword for the research became 'discourse'. This became a problem because the author knew little about what a discourse was or how the theory of discourse came about. It was fortunate that the counseling course was based on the theory on postmodernist thinking, Foucault, and how discourses affect people's thoughts and actions. Thus discourse was defined based on what had been learnt in that class. Even though the teachers in the counseling class explained discourses well enough for to give a thorough understanding of its history, effects and applications, the problem with using this knowledge was referencing. There were few formal references to where the quotes the teachers used came from. Some excellent explanations of the concept were given by the teachers but were difficult to use as reference material in this research. Therefore, the author went back to the Massey library to learn about discourses from published books that were available in the library for formal referencing. This generated much confusion because there was such a great amount of controversy within these theories. At one point, the author could not decide on which or whose theory the research should be based on. After weeks of reading and trying to understand all the available social theories, there came more confusion and doubt about "Truth," and the due date was becoming very close. The author went back to her class notes from the counseling course, and tried again to understand the stance that they had taken. There was one quote that really enlightened me – "there is no truth with a capital T." This was the essence of Foucault's philosophy, and it was the basis of the research question for this thesis. it was realized that there was no need to dwell on the hundreds of books on social theory because everyone has their own definition of what they believe is the truth, and ultimately there is no single truth with a capital 'T'.

From there on in, a few books were hand picked that explained what had been learnt in the counseling course in language that could be understood. These books were used along with the author's comprehension of social construction in the second part of the literature review. It is probably obvious to the reader that the literature review explaining social construction, discourses and advertisements was in a different style to the previous section explaining the concept of executive coaching, and that there were not many references used to back up this section. This is a limitation of the referential materials used for this research. However, the author believes that the process of having learned, been confused by, and then enlightened by social theories was a valuable step for the progress of this research. The author wants to share the results of this learning process through her writing style and fully believes that the best language to explain a concept in is language that everyone can understand.

7.2.2. The quantitative methodology: content analysis

Disadvantages of content analysis

1. It is only as good as the data used. The credibility and authenticity of the data is related to the websites that the data was collected from. The representativeness of the data is questionable because there is no research on how representative advertisements of executive coaching on the Internet are of other forms of executive coaching advertising.
2. The coding method developed by the researcher may be biased due to the pressure of finding results. Also, the coding method has no doubt been influenced by the researcher's experience and knowledge of the world. There may be a better way to code the data.
3. Content analysis does not explain phenomena but only presents some insights about them.
4. Content analysis is sometimes criticized as being atheoretical because it is easy to put more importance on what is measurable than what is important. However, many studies have used content analysis as their research method and have generated convincing results.

7.2.3. The data

Virtual outputs

This research used Internet advertisements as a source of documents. There are four problems with this type of data (Richard, Grinnell, Yvonne & Unrau, 2005):

1. Authenticity: there are no limits to who can publish information on a website; a website can be set up by someone who is not an authority or a professional. Thus the quality of the information collected on the websites is questionable.
2. Credibility: there is the possibility that information presented on websites can be distorted to make the websites sound better. Some information may be exaggerated or ignored to encourage people to use their advertised services.
3. The perpetuated inconsistency of the Internet makes it reasonable to question the representativeness of websites on certain topics.
4. Webspeak is often used as a form of language in websites; considerable knowledge is necessary to understand webspeak. Although the author was not aware of incomprehensible webspeak in the data, there could be some webspeak that presented different meanings to what the author understood, which could distort the final results.

Other problems with using information on websites as data are (Richard, Grinnell, Yvonne & Unrau, 2005):

1. The search engine used in the research will affect the search results. It was found that any search engine only provides access to a portion of the web, and even the combined use of several search engines will only allow access to under half of the total number of websites. Therefore the information collected from only one search engine (Google) was used in this research, which may have resulted in a biased sample.
2. The information found from search engines can only be as good as the keywords used in the search. Even though several forms of the keyword were trialled, and only the ones that generated the most results were used, there could be other keywords that might have been used to generate more appropriate results.
3. Websites on the Internet are constantly appearing and disappearing. This research may be biased towards old websites that may no longer exist or have been replaced by newer websites that appeared after the data was collected.

4. Websites are constantly changing, so the collected websites on which the analysis was made may have been updated with newer information.

Reliability in unitizing

Neuendorf (2002) states that it is important to have a clear agreement on how to identify code-able units in the data pool. In this research, the researcher was the only person attending to the coding process and there were several threats to reliability in isolating usable units for analysis.

1. Coding scheme: the first set of instructions for isolating usable units for analysis was rather loose, using only one book's illustration of discourse features as a reference for extracting data. This was because there were a great number of methods for discourse analysis and Yates (2004) was found to give the best explanation of the features of discourse, which was also the most consistent with the author's understanding. To increase the reliability of the analysis, changes were made to Yates' (2004) three features of discourse to fit the data. However, the use of a single book to create the coding scheme was a threat to reliability.
2. Coder training: the author was the only coder in this research and there was no previous training for data coding. The author trained herself to complete the entire coding process, which involved several trial and error tests initially. Through trial and error, it was realized that the author needed to be equipped with adequate knowledge to identify rhetoric features in advertising language, so three books were read so that this knowledge could be acquired. However, much more professional training could be done to increase the accuracy of this process, so this was a limitation of the reliability of the data.
3. Coder fatigue: the coding schedule was designed to not be over-exhausting. However, due to the amount of raw data and the limited time available to complete the process, the process was very stressful. Even though the schedule was to work for six hours a day with half an hour break every two hours, the author was very tired by

the end of the day and this tiredness could have altered the consistency of the coding process.

4. Rogue coder: Neuendorf (2002) names coders who cannot achieve reliability 'rogue coders', who may need to be removed from the study. As only one coder performed the analysis, there was no other coder to compare results with or to examine the reliability of the coder's performance. Therefore, there may be a chance that the coder was a rogue coder. If this was the case, there would be poor reliability in the coding process and there may be serious problems with the data analysis. However, it is believed that the author achieved satisfactory reliability as the highlighted data was checked twice before the data analysis process began.

Neutrality of the data

The neutrality and objectivity of the data collected is important for most research, especially in the field of science. However, in the field of social science, especially in the eye of social constructionists, objectivity is not always favored. This research was done with a narrative point of view to express the perception of the author on the topic. Thus this research falls far to the subjective side of the objective-subjective continuum. Despite the strong subjectivity of the results, reasonable steps were taken to ensure that the data that was collected was neutral and objective. The data were all advertisements displayed by a Google search, and only websites that could not be opened were omitted from the data pool. Google is the largest internet search engine in the world and it displayed many more results than would have been found by searching on printed materials or any other means of advertising. However, it is realizes that the advertisements collected from websites may be different from those found in other forms of media. The difference could be in the use of rhetoric devices, images, or sounds etc. Therefore using only Internet websites as data was a limitation of this research.

As the results of the research were reported by the only author of this paper, the results were subjective to her perceptions of the data. Despite efforts to use a neutral tone while writing, limiting the use of strongly opinionated vocabulary and keeping a neutral view on the topic, it cannot be claimed that the results are completely neutral. It is impossible to have neutral results in research that is narratively reported because all who interact with others, through any form of communication, are not value-free or neutral; this is a limitation in the eyes of positivists but it is also the beauty of postmodern social research.

One problem with the data collected is that it is difficult to replicate at a later date. This is because the data collected was from the World Wide Web, and everything on the Internet is subject to change. Many websites are constantly under construction, and executive coaching services are no different from any other businesses. Every now and then, one will start up, close, merge and spilt. When the author went back to the original websites four months after the data collection was done, approximately ten percent of the websites were not accessible again. This is indeed a problem for people who want to replicate this research. Fortunately, this is not a problem of this research because discourses are ever changing due to changes in people's opinions, political views, environmental factors and time. Every discourse analysis is unique to its context and author, which means that they can never be perfectly replicated. Thus this problem of the data also contributes to the uniqueness of this research.

Negative case analysis

Newman and Benz (1998) suggested negative case analysis as a way of achieving validity. Validity may not be relevant to this research but negative case analysis could be a useful way to expand the results found in this research. Negative case analysis is to continuously revise the hypothesis of a study taking into account all known cases until the hypothesis is able to explain all known data (Newman & Benz, 1998). Even though there was no hypothesis in this study, the research question and results of the study could be revised using this method. As the data used in this research were advertisements on websites, there may be variations in the findings using other forms of advertisements as data. If I were to take into account all known executive coaching advertisements in all forms of media, the results may be different. Thus not using all media forms in data collection was a limitation this research.

7.2.4. Data analysis

Engagement on-site

There is value in social science research in observing on-site to get an accurate reflection of the context of the research. For this research, there was almost no observation on-site. To be on-site to understand the culture and history of this topic would mean to be immersed in the business world and to observe human interactions for a good deal of time. Engagement on-site may seem important to some research, but it was seen as a limitation for this research. Metaphorically, if discourse is the water that fish swim in, then it takes a non-fish to see the water. It may be obvious for a student at a university who has not been working in the business world to see the discourse of being an executive, but the same discourse may not be so obvious to a business executive. This is because the discourse of being an executive has already become the taken-for-granted truth that executives accept, in order to function normally in their environment. For this reason, the author did not engage in activities to observe the business culture so that she would have the ability to see the discourse that she wished to study.

Checking

The consistency of the interpretation of the data may be a limitation of this research. There was interpreter consistency because there was only one interpreter for the research. However, because no one was employed to check the consistency of the interpretation, there may have been small inconsistencies in those interpretations. The measures taken to ensure consistency included:

- Thorough self-learning on the purpose of each type of rhetoric devices
- Re-reading the notes for interpreting data for every new theme
- Checking for consistency after every ten themes
- Checking for consistency by selecting a random section of the interpretation after all interpretation was completed

With the constant assessment of consistency that was carried out, the author is confident that there is a satisfactory level of consistency in the interpretation of the data. Nevertheless it is believed that higher consistency could be achieved if a knowledgeable person was employed to convey this assessment.

Pilot and final reliabilities

Neuendorf (2002) suggests that both pilot and final reliability should be assessed using a randomly selected sample. If a pilot test shows serious problems with the coding scheme, changes should be made to the scheme and the pilot test data should be removed from the final data scheme. In this research, the pilot test was done early in the coding process and the author did not remove the section randomly chosen for the pilot test from the final data scheme. It was not felt that there was a need to exclude this section because there were no changes made to the original document when extracting sections for the pilot test. Also, it was felt that every section of the data was important to the results of the research.

A pilot test is important to the development of a valid, reliable and useful coding scheme. When problems are identified with the measures of variables, four remedies can be used (Neuendorf, 2002):

- Rechecking reliability
- Rewriting coding instructions
- Changing the categories of the variable
- Splitting the variables into simpler variables

In this research, the pilot test showed a problem with identifying usable units for analysis. Thus, the construct was redefined to clarify and include all useful units of analysis. However, none of the other remedies suggested by Neuendorf were attempted. At the time of the research, it was felt there was no need to attempt the other three remedies because it was obvious that redefining the construct was the only option. Now it is felt that if all four remedies were attempted, it would be possible to make further changes to the coding scheme and therefore increase the reliability of the coding scheme.

The final reliability was assessed by randomly selecting two sections of the data and comparing the two for any inconsistencies. As only one person performed the whole process of data analysis and assessment, there may be inconsistencies that were not noticed that may have been obvious to others. Thus, even though the reliability of the coding scheme was assessed for both the pilot and final tests, there could still be inconsistencies within the coding which could have caused distortions in the results.

Peer-debriefing

Peer-debriefing is said to be a control for researcher perspective. This was important to this research because to be an objective observer, the researcher should not get too attached to the environment as this can result in the researcher interpreting things from their own need base (Newman & Benz, 1998). To achieve objectivity to the observations, the author asked a colleague at the Problem Gambling Foundation who is a counselor to check if the observations in this research were objective. This colleague had never worked in a management role and was interested in debriefing this work and giving feedback. The feedback confirmed that the observations in this research were consistent with the colleague's interpretations and were objective. This method of peer debriefing could raise some issues:

- The peer was not a professional in the same field of study, so what he understood as correct interpretations in this research could be just a variation of the author's own interpretations in the research.
- Many of the peer's clients work in the business field, so there could have been a predetermined perception of what it means to be a business executive
- Only having one peer for debriefing is not sufficient for full feedback
- The fact that the peer was a colleague and friend of the author's may have prevented him disclosing what he really thought

7.2.5. Qualitative methodology: discourse analysis

Theoretical sampling

The final research question for this research was finalized after many trials and errors. To examine the discourse of being a business executive, academic articles were first chosen as data. However, it was found that academic articles are often very neutral and objective, which did not show the full picture of the discourse. From further learning about the topic of discourses, their history, and their pathways to society, it was learnt that advertisements are full of discourses in full force. Advertisements of executive coaching services were easily accessible and are embedded with a discourse on how to be a good business executive. Thus, the executive coaching service advertisements were used as data for the discourse analysis. However, if academic articles had been used as data, or if the data had come from any other source, the results may have been very different.

Relationship between data and analysis

This research theorized advertisements as being full of discourses, and that advertisements for different products and services uses a discourse around the product or service as a way to relate to the potential customer. Thus, advertisements for executive coaching services were used as data to analyze the discourse of being an executive. However, there may not be a relationship between advertisements and discourses. The discourse of being an executive may not reflect on the executive coaching advertisements, or the advertisements for coaching may not have a strong and accurate reflection on the discourse of being an executive. In that case, the discourse found in the executive coaching advertisements would not accurately reflect the discourse of being an executive.

For the second research question ("What is the degree to which executive coaching engages psychotherapy?") the literature review on psychotherapy was used to examine the themes that could be promoted by psychotherapists instead of executive coaching.

This assumes that the literature review was comprehensive enough to isolate all the themes found in this research that could be promoted by psychotherapy. It also assumes that these themes are best promoted by psychotherapists, but not executive coaches. The limitations of these assumptions are:

- The literature review may not have been comprehensive enough to isolate all the themes that could be promoted by psychotherapy
- The literature review may not have been accurate or detailed enough to account for what themes should be promoted by psychotherapy
- Executive coaches may have developed better interventions to deal with client needs in these areas, so that these themes may not be best promoted by psychotherapists
- Executives may not accept psychotherapy as a form of help, so executive coaching may be the only profession that could help these clients
- Some of these themes may be largely related to executive work issues, and would be best dealt with by professionals that understand the corporate environment

Thus, considering these limitations the accuracy of this part of the analysis is dependent on the accuracy of the literature review of this thesis, the capability of executive coaches, and the preferences of executives.

It was also found that executive coaches employ psychometric assessments and psychological techniques in their services. This was not included in the percentage of services that could be provided by psychotherapists. These data were not included because it is not possible to use advertisements to identify all techniques and assessments employed by executive coaches that are psychotherapeutic in nature. These data can only be found by using executive coaching services. For this reason, there may be more extensive uses of psychotherapeutic techniques and assessments in executive coaching that were not identified or included in results of the degree to which executive coaching engages psychotherapy.

7.2.6. The author

The author of such research cannot escape their own discourse of the world. The gender, cultural background, year of birth, country of origin, and educational environment of a researcher all have a huge impact on the research that they conduct, and are all clues for assessing the limitations of their research (Shipman, 1997).

The author of this research is a 25 year old female who was educated in New Zealand, studied psychology for a bachelor's degree, and to date has no experience in working in a corporate environment. One could argue that a person with such limited experience in the business world would know little about what it is like to be a business executive. However, one response to this criticism is that the study has been conducted from a third party perspective. It would be interesting to see the results of a study like this one done by an experienced professional who has many insights into executive coaching phenomena. However, even then the results of their study would also likely be biased because of the insights that they themselves hold. It is worth repeating the phrase that the author learnt from her counseling course, that "discourse is like the water fish swim in; they are immersed in it but cannot see it." A professional in the field may well be immersed in the discourse of being a business executive, but they cannot see this discourse. For the author, as an outsider this discourse was obvious simply because she was outside of the discourse.

7.3. Implications and recommendations for future research

The research question of this study was designed with interests in the social phenomena of discourses and business executives. The study used executive coaching advertisements as data to examine the discourse of being a business executive. The results of this study are an overview of executive coaching expectations of an executive's performance, and the degree to which executive coaching engages psychotherapy. These results are closely linked to the executive and organizational expectations on executives.

The implications of these results about executives and their coaches are:

1. The discourses found in this research can be used for executives to self examine their abilities and competencies in this position of power and leadership, to look for areas of improvement, and to understand the nature of this important position in organizations
2. These discourses can also be used by executive coaches to examine the extent of their services, to pay attention to the degree to which their services engage in psychotherapy, and to be aware of the effect of using these discourses to promote their services

For future research that is related to this discourse the author would recommend future research to:

1. Examine the value of the discourse of being a business executive, the implications of this discourse on executives, their coaches and their organizations, whether this discourse is useful in a work or life setting, and if there are different discourses acting on different executives depending on the nature of their job
2. Examine the reactions of executives, their coaches and their organizations to these discourses, as there may already be alternative discourses for executives to follow
3. Use qualitative methods such as case studies to examine executives who work outside of these discourses but are still successful in their role
4. Use other methods, such as interviews or questionnaires, to examine the degree to which executive coaching engages psychotherapy and to gain knowledge from the perspective of executive coaches about their practices

The results of this study can also be applied to human resource professionals who are seeking 'the perfect leader' for their organization. They could also be used as a scale for executive competency or for developing a test for executive work performance. The author would recommend future study in the area of human resources to:

1. Use other forms of data to examine the same phenomena, such as through observations in work places, other forms of media, or literature, to see if similar

results can be found and how they impact on organizational expectations of their leaders

2. Use other research methods to study the same phenomena, and use quantitative questionnaires and qualitative interviews to examine the perception of the discourse of being a business executive and whether this perception meets the expectations of organizations
3. Search for other factors that influence the change and stability of this discourse and other discourses present in the work place, which may be useful in changing organizational culture

So far as implications for the wider society are concerned, the results also imply that discourses are present in every detail of our lives – no one can escape the power of discourses, even when they are in a position of power. The pressure from these discourses has a great impact on the people affected by them and professions such as executive coaching are shaped by these discourses. For future research in the area of social science the author would recommend:

1. Studying other social discourses. There are infinite numbers of social discourses that can be studied: each would have unique implications for the understanding of humans as social beings. Research questions on such areas of study should arise from researcher interests in social dilemmas, human rights issues, and problematic social interactions etc.
2. Research discourses that are consequential for political, social, or economic life, so that the research results will have a significant impact on people's lives and to predict or prevent harmful events (such as revolutions or wars) that are caused by these discourses.
3. Research the evolution of discourses from time to time, which could explain people's changing attitudes towards other people, events, or phenomena. Such research would be helpful to clarify dilemmas and develop people's empathy towards others who are different.

7.4. Contribution to the field and conclusion

The author believes that this research has made some contributions to the fields of social science and business management. Firstly, the results of the study have provided data for the field of business management regarding the beliefs associated with being a business executive. These data have demonstrated that business executives are expected to have business skills, leadership, self-development skills, success in their profession, good interpersonal skills and a work-life balance. This study has brought awareness and clarification to society's perception of organizational expectations of executive roles, and has drawn attention to the exceptionally high demands from organizations of business executives. These results will also make people aware of the discourses affecting expectations of themselves. Secondly, the findings on the degree to which executive coaching engages psychotherapy has illuminated the cross professional boundary services that executive coaches are providing. It has revealed that 21.26% of the services that executive coaches provide could be provided by psychotherapists. This result may raise awareness for executive coaches on the dangers of providing such a wide range of services. In conclusion, this thesis has highlighted the discourse of being a business executive and illuminated the cross boundary services that executive coaches are providing. Nevertheless, the profession of executive coaching is to help executives fulfill the discourse of being a business executive.

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