

**AN EXPLORATION OF MENTORSHIP FOR EQUESTRIAN COACHES IN SOUTH AFRICA**

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## Declaration of Authenticity

I declare that the research project, *An exploration of mentorship for equestrian coaches in South Africa*, is my own work and that each source of information used has been acknowledged by means of a complete Harvard Referencing System. This dissertation has not been submitted before for any other research project, degree or examination at any university.



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15 May 2020

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## Abstract

Traditionally, equestrian sports coaching in South Africa has taken place in an unregulated environment. Research has shown that most equestrian coaches have graduated from being competitive riders and used this expertise to enter into self-employment opportunities as coaches. With the proposed establishment of a professional sport coach body and a nationally adopted coach education system, this study aims to explore the mentorship factors which could contribute to the professional development of equestrian coaches. Building on existing work on coach education and mentorship, it explores the critical factors that may contribute to effective mentorship for equestrian coaches in determining a strategy for the professional development of equestrian coaches. In this context, mentorship can be defined as the receiving of knowledge, guidance and support by a less experienced person, given by a more experienced person who is seen as a role model.

Based on the literature and social learning theories on the value of mentorship in coach education, a qualitative research design was used due to the exploratory nature of the question. Individual interviews were conducted with professional or more experienced coaches and non-professional or less experienced coaches, with the sample size determined by saturation. Analysis of the responses from both groups demonstrates that mentorship enhances the recognition of professional knowledge through improving intrapersonal and interpersonal skills, leading to career advancement as a coach. On this basis, it is recommended that sporting federations use mentorship as a key factor in developing equestrian sports coaches. Further research is needed to identify other factors that could strengthen the effectiveness of mentorship in facilitated mentorship programmes in sport coach education.

**Key words:** Equestrian sport; mentorship; coaching; learning; professional coaches; non-professional coaches

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# Chapter 1

## Introduction

### 1.1 Introduction and Research Context

Global research has shown that sports coach mentoring is considered to be integral to becoming a professional sports coach (Cassidy, Jones & Potrac, 2009). Research has shown that even though athletes may not have been aware of being mentored, upon reflection, they have attributed their sports career success to having been mentored during their training (Bloom, Durand-Bush, Schinke & Salmela, 1998). Learning from experience plays a leading role in coach development, thus mentoring can be viewed as an integrated process in making sense of an athlete's experiences, which would form the framework for mentoring skills in those athletes who subsequently became coaches (Leeder, 2018).

While studies indicate the value of mentorship in coach development, in particular the ability of the coach to self-reflect (Nash, 2003; Bloom *et al.*, 1998), it is important to note that many coaches in the past simply used the knowledge gained as athletes to further their coaching careers (SAQA, 2013). Now that the value of mentoring in coach development has been realised, mentorship has been considered an important criterion for sports coaches in South Africa (SASCOC, 2015). Hunter (1999) describes criteria as 'internalized rules' or norms with which to make and correct judgments regarding a particular belief or idea which is guided and characterised by a person's tacit knowledge and reasoning.

According to Cushion, Nelson, Lyle, Jones, Sandford and Callaghan (2010), the complex process of coach learning and development is achieved through formal, informal and non-formal means. In support of these findings, Crisp (2018) further asserts that coach mentoring, together with its provision of guidance, formative and advisory support, guides this collaborative social process.

In South Africa, sport coaching has been recognized as an essential element of sports development and success for the seventy-six (76) national sporting federations. National federations are members of the statutory body that governs sport in South Africa (The White Paper on Sport and Recreation for the Republic of South Africa, 2012). This sport governing body ensures alignment of national federations with global practices and promotes the participation of South Africans in multi-sport, international games such as the Olympics, Paralympics, All Africa Games, World Games, and Commonwealth Games (The White Paper on Sport and Recreation for the Republic of South Africa, 2012).

Equestrian sport affiliates to the sport governing body through the South African Equestrian Federation. Whose purpose is to govern its sporting code, through constituted rules, organize sports through competitions, license players to promote professionalism in the sports, and accredit role players such as administrators, coaches and other supporting personnel.

The motivation to improve sporting successes and development, has seen the implementation of the long term coach development framework, with the view to regulating the sports coaching industry (SASCOC, 2015). This model has been adopted as the official coach education framework reference for all sports coaches, and includes the training, licensing and continuous profession development for sports coaches in South Africa (Vardhan & Duffy, 2011). In light of this national strategy to standardise sport coaching, the onus is placed on the sports coach to improve their practice of set standards for coaching effectiveness (Crisp, 2018). The criteria set out in the national coaches framework requires the professional coach to show evidence of having mentored coach assistants within the required portfolio of evidence of the coach in addition to an underlying coaching qualification and practical learning competencies (SASCOC, 2015).

This has led to implications for equestrian sport as, traditionally, there has not been a formal career pathway specifically tailored for equestrian coaches ( Winfield, Williams & Dixon, 2013). The majority of practising equestrian coaches have “graduated” from being riders who have performed at a personal best (Lincoln, 2008) and have used this expertise to become self-employed coaches in the equine sporting industry (Morris-Eyton & Coopoo, 2014).

This trend is in contrast with studies undertaken by Collins (2014) and referred to by Lester (2009), suggesting that the norms for a transition from a non-professional to professional status is attained through the completion of a required degree or formal training programme, culminating in national registration.

In consideration of the criteria set out by the newly created professional coaching body (SASCOC, 2015), if an equestrian coach cannot gain access to mentorship, this would further hinder the progression from non-professional to professional coaching. While this study focuses on mentorship, the regulatory context first needs to be understood, in that the professional coaching body grants licences and regulates the sport coaching profession. Therefore if an equestrian coach is not registered, they are not recognized as professional coaches even if they have practiced as an equestrian coach for decades before the adoption of these regulations (South African Qualif. Auth., 2016).

For the sake of this study, a professional coach in equestrian sport, is seen as a more experienced coach who may or may not be registered with a professional body and a non-professional coach in equestrian sport, is considered to be a less experienced coach who may or may not be registered with a professional body. The limitations of non-registered coaches is that they do not subscribe to the requirements of legislation that defines the roles and responsibilities of the stakeholders; therefore organisations cannot ensure legitimate or ethical practice in accordance with recognised guidelines (Adams & Tower, 1994).

According to studies, an unregulated environment is characterised by small groups of a limited market who will engage in regulation only if the economic benefit outweighs the costs (Adams & Tower, 1994). In consideration of the above, a professional body for sports coaches, including equestrian coaches, will give coaches access to various economic benefits such as insurance and liability protection (Radebe, 2015). In addition to the economic benefits, the importance of a regulated industry for equestrian coaches is further expressed in research undertaken, regarding a moral obligation and duty of care towards those who cannot speak for themselves (Collins, Hanlon, More &

Duggan, 2008). This duty of care is informed by legislative provisions and codes of practice, which are aimed at safeguarding the health and welfare of animals (Webster, 2016).

Within the context of an adopted long term development model referenced as the official coach education framework (Spencer & Zembani, 2011), Duffy (2011) contends that mentorship by professional coaches is key to the development of non-professional coaches. Notwithstanding the above, this pending legislation (Minister of Sport and Recreation South Africa, 2012) presents a challenge for professional equestrian coaches if they are unable to show evidence of having mentored other non-professional coaches, even if they have been coaches for decades before the adoption of the professional coaching regulations (South African Qualif. Auth., 2016).

In summary, the requirements of professional registration creates challenges for coaches without the support of mentorship (Lincoln, 2008). In particular, the embedded criteria set out by a proposed professional body (Minister of Sport and Recreation South Africa, 2012), which identifies mentorship as a requirement of an underlying coaching qualification (SASCOC, 2015).

Besides mentorship being seen as one of the registration criteria for coaches (Radebe, 2015), studies attest to mentorship as a valuable and preferred learning method (Cushion *et al.*, 2010). In consideration, further research is needed to determine a case for mentorship in sports coaching in South Africa (Lincoln, 2008).

To promote and support the professional development of equestrian coaches, this study has sought to understand the real life experiences of both, more and less experienced sports coaches in equestrian sport (Hall & Gray, 2017), with a particular focus on an exploration of mentorship for equestrian coaches in South Africa.

The context in which this study sought to explore mentorship for equestrian coaches in South Africa is grounded in the theoretical framework of the Social Learning Theory (Bandura, 1969). Social Learning Theory studies have determined that people learn and develop in response to interaction with others and the environment through observation and modelling (Ehrich & Hansford, 2001), with studies further suggesting that this response brings about a change in mind set and therefore, behaviour (Mearns, 2009).

It is recognised that ontology is more complex than a personal or subjective positioning. As a researcher, the author will adopt an interpretivism position, which holds that knowing about the world relies not only on direct observation but includes our perceptions and interpretations of the world around us. Thus knowledge of the world is produced by exploring and understanding the social world of those being studied, focusing on their meaning and interpretations (Snape & Spencer, 2003). From her ontological perspective, the researcher is well positioned to understand the journey of other coaches who typically follow the same pathway from non-professional to professional coach.

From her ontological perspective of social reality, interpretivism has allowed the researcher to become immersed in a qualitative research study, using an inductive approach to explore and understand the behaviour and experience of each coach in their own journey of coaching development (Tierney, 2008).

## **1.2 Aim and Objectives of Study**

If non-professional coaches are not able to fulfil the mentorship criteria as set out by the professional body, they cannot be registered (Duffy, 2010). As an interpretivist and from an ontologically social constructivist stance, the researcher sought to explore potential contributions to the improvement of mentorship for equestrian coaches.

The aim of the study is:

To explore the mentorship factors which could contribute to the professional development of equestrian coaches found in the literature review.

The specific objectives of the study are to:

- I. Analyse the potential mentoring needs of equestrian coaches, as evident in the results of the data collection and the findings.
- II. Analyse the data and determine whether mentorship can be used as a strategy for the professional development of equestrian coaches.
- III. Explore the critical factors that will contribute to effective mentorship for equestrian coaches in the results of the data garnered and the findings thereof; and
- IV. Determine whether mentorship can be used as a strategy for the professional development of equestrian coaches.

## **1.3 Research Questions**

### **1.3.1 Primary Research Question**

Literature in the area of equestrian coaching is not well documented (Hall, 2016), which is an important hurdle in the system because much of the current research refers to the training and managing of horses and aspects of riding, rather than the specifics of 'how' to coach, in equestrian the context.

This study therefore sought to add further insight and definition regarding effective mentorship and to establish the link between this and effective coaching. Importantly, to do so, the factors necessary for effective mentorship need to be articulated.

The primary research question is: What are the critical factors required for the successful mentoring of equestrian coaches in South Africa?

### **1.3.2 Secondary Research Question**

As described above, there is a distinction between professional and non-professional coaches. The professional coach is recognised for their level of expertise at producing riders at national and international levels, and whose experience is confirmed by ten or more years in an equestrian coaching capacity, while the non-professional coach is acknowledged as being less experienced and

may still be in training. It is important to understand whether the factors necessary for effective mentorship similarly change with the professional level of the coach. Therefore, two sub-research questions were identified.

Secondary research question one: Can mentorship can be used as a strategy for the professional development of equestrian coaches in South Africa?

Secondary research question two: What are the potential mentoring needs of equestrian coaches in South Africa?

#### **1.4 Problem Statement**

In view of the professional body requirement for sports coaches to receive mentorship in order to progress from non-professional to professional status, the equestrian coach who does not fulfil this criterion will remain non-professional. The key problem, however, is that a common understanding of what leads to effective mentorship is missing. Thus, the requirement for coaches to be mentored without understanding what this entails is highly problematic.

The research will contribute to the body of knowledge in exploring factors which result in effective mentorship. This manifests practically in the risk that any national requirement for professional coaches requires the activity of mentoring without fully understanding what the mentoring model needs to look like for a unified coaching system (Kubayi, Coopoo & Morris-Eyton, 2016).

The problem statement therefore is to determine mentorship for equestrian coaches in South Africa.

#### **1.5 Research Philosophy: Ontology, Epistemology, Axiology**

The researcher's journey as an equestrian has been a solitary endeavour with few opportunities to engage with other riders, except at competition events when they were competing against one another. Riders and coaches did not readily share their experiences for fear of giving away their competitive advantage.

Determined to improve her own performance, her knowledge came from two external sources, observing more experienced riders and poring over largely foreign equestrian coaching reference books. However, she found that one of the most effective ways to improve her knowledge was to study and discuss her experiences with other equestrians. This helped her to become self-aware of her own shortcomings and reflect on how she could improve her equestrian capabilities. Long before the researcher became aware of the concept of experiential and reflective learning, she was unwittingly applying this learning philosophy on a daily basis; practising what she already knew, interacting with and observing others to see how to do it better, and working out how to apply the new practice and experimenting with the new skill to obtain a better result.

The researcher completed her formal coach training in Europe and spent a year with an Olympic rider and coach who became her mentor. Being able to engage in dialogue with a third person, in a trusting relationship highlighted the importance of mentorship in being challenged and guided by someone else with an active interest in supporting one's professional development. Mentorship consciously increased the researcher's feelings of self-awareness within the learning process, which has been a

cornerstone in her personal journey of ongoing development. The researcher's progress to date has been achieved through self-motivation and a passion for equestrian activities.

At this time, with the National Coaches Framework in place and the need for equestrian coaches to undertake mentorship as part of the criteria for registration as a professional coach, the researcher has been inspired to undertake the current study, which is aimed at exploring mentorship for the equestrian coach on their path from non-professional to professional coach.

With reference to the context of the ontological stance of the author, the epistemological perspective is evident through subjectivism since qualitative research does not draw on solid facts but, rather, assumptions, which are subjective. Subjectivism allows for events being understood through engagement with, in this case, other equestrian coaches while the interpretation of these events occurs through social understanding (Gray, 2004). If knowledge and assumptions are understood in the manner in which the world is understood are subjective, and the basic belief of the epistemology paradigm suggests that our world is socially constructed and subjective, the observer, through her ontological lens, becomes engaged with and fully immersed in that which is being observed rather than standing on the outside (Jack & Kholeif, 2007).

## **1.6 Research Methodology**

A qualitative research design was adopted for this study. Qualitative methods, to a larger degree, rely on personal opinions, various perceptions, and the subjectivity of each respondent (Koch, 1994). Thus, the researcher aimed to explore and understand human behaviour through the social learning theory. The epistemological lens of subjectivism allows for the data collection to reflect the opinions, perceptions and subjectivity of the expert and experienced coaches and their understanding of mentorship in sports coaching (Flick, *et al.*, 2004). The data garnered through this qualitative design was analysed by employing the principles of inductivism, as the use of the theory underpinning this research is inductive reasoning. The qualitative analysis and thus the findings, which would either establish that which is already known or still needs to be known through inductive reasoning, is part of the construct of the theoretical framework of the Social Learning Theory of Bandura in which this study is grounded (Egan, 2002).

## **1.7 Theoretical & Conceptual Frameworks**

The research design is exploratory, and the research approach is grounded in a qualitative study. As part of the theoretical construct underpinning the research, inductive approach was used to form general principles and draw an overall conclusion by examining the particular facts through the study of mentorship for equestrian coaches in South Africa (Gioia *et al.*, 2013). In this manner, the researcher identifies meanings and constructs theories and models from the data, using an inductive approach (Gray, 2004).

The research method is descriptive and explores the relationship between the participants and the events taking place in their contexts. Phenomenology is the philosophical study of structures of experience and consciousness assisting the researcher in revealing the lived experiences inherent in the lives of the participants.

Three composite steps are identified and include observing, the recording of thick descriptions, and the use of phenomenological reductions in the exploration for that which is at the core of the topic under discussion (Gioia *et al.*, 2013). In giving a thick description of meanings emanating from the topic, the researcher is able to evaluate which of the meanings may be used in other environmental and situational settings, times and individuals (Guba & Lincoln, 1994).

The researcher used the data from a particular sample of coaches chosen for their expertise and experience to arrive at general findings. Inductive reasoning also means that the researcher may discover that the findings which emerge from the research data have already been researched and in this manner, the reader understands that inductive theory involves a degree of uncertainty. This process can be compared with learning that is seen as a dynamic process that leads to action (Jones, 2006). In order to be meaningful, learning needs to be tested in reality (Kelly, 1997) and from the world view of each learner.

Social learning theory is used as a framework to describe the way equestrian coaches learn, engage and interact with each other and their athletes. Within this framework opportunities must be created for cognitive learning which involve psychological factors and behavioural learning in response to the environment. In integrating these learning theories Bandura, (2001) determined four criteria needed for learning to take place; attention in observing which aligns with the environment. Retention and reproduction of learning which is a cognitive function, and motivation as being both psychological and behavioural learning (Bandura, 2001). The significance of participation in support of learning is unambiguous, and places mentorship as a worthy vehicle for this support.

This study aimed to advance research in mentorship and therefore it should identify with a theoretical framework underpinned by academic theories or models with respect to mentoring. However, it appears that, historically, mentorship has lacked a clear definition (Bloom *et al.*, 1998). In fact, research has shown that mentoring does not reside within a clear theoretical base (Ehrich & Hansford, 2001) and while it is widely accepted that social learning takes place when people learn from as well interact and identify (Bandura, 1969) with one another, Cushion, as cited in Jones (2015), has placed mentorship and its potential benefits within a socio-educational theoretical framework, whilst Ehrich and Hansford (2001) found that research on mentoring lacked a clear theoretical and conceptual base. In as much as there appears to be a lack of consensus by certain researchers in the development of a theoretical perspective for their research on mentorship (Jones, Harris & Miles, 2009), it appears that the social learning theory could well be 'the right fit' for the placing of mentorship within its framework. In support of this assumption, the academic literature refers to the pillars of mentorship, as it recognises the significance of participation in order to support learning (Subramaniam, Silong, Uli & Ismail, 2015). Furthermore, it is noteworthy that the four components predicting behaviour, as advanced by Rotter in his paper on social learning theory research, are to be found in the core competencies of mentoring (Mearns, 2009).

By providing a conceptual philosophical frame within the theoretical framework of Social Learning Theory (Enfield, 2001; Ord, 2012) the study of mentorship for the equestrian coach in South Africa is placed within a social learning perspective.



## **1.8 Chapter Overview**

This dissertation consists of six chapters, including the current one. Chapter 2 establishes the research question based on the identified research gap of the critical success factors of mentorship and defines the objectives of the study in relation to these. An in-depth review of existing literature is undertaken and discussed in this chapter. This chapter considers aspects of professional and non-professional sport coaching and effectiveness, the social learning theory and the impact of mentorship for equestrian coaches.

In Chapter 3, the researcher discusses and describes the research design and methodology in detail and provides the overall framework for the research and its findings.

Chapter 4 follows with presenting the research findings after determining the significant themes, which are drawn from the interviews and the literature.

In Chapter 5, the researcher considers the research findings while Chapter 6 makes suggestions concerning the implications thereof and possible future research. Limitations to the research are also detailed alongside focused insights into possible implementation flowing from the research.

## **1.9 Conclusion**

This chapter has outlined the structure of the research study, beginning with the review of the existing literature which focuses on sport coaching, its professionalisation and mentorship as a support to coach education. The chapter included an explanation of the research design which is qualitative and uses the Social Learning Theory as its theoretical framework. The results and conclusions highlight the critical success factors for the mentorship of equestrian coaches.

In the following chapter there will be a detailed analysis of the existing literature pertaining to the Social Learning Theory, which provides a conceptual framework for the study. The researcher underpins literature relevant to coaching in sport, with a focus on procedural and declarative knowledge and coach learning. Furthermore, the various styles of coaching are considered as well as mentorship models and the mentoring process. The chapter concludes with a discussion on effective mentoring in equestrian coaching.

## Chapter 2

### Literature Review

#### 2.1 Introduction

This chapter focuses on the literature review and discusses prevailing studies regarding mentorship and its merits within sports coaching education. Studies have been considered from a broad perspective of the social learning theory of Bandura (1969), an integrative sports coach effectiveness theory as supported by Côté & Gilbert (2009), and coach learning and development theory by Cushion *et al.* (2010). The study brings these components together with mentorship as the bridge between theory and practice, as discussed by Cropley, Miles and Peel (2012), and provides a theoretical framework for the study.

The literature review underpins an exploration of mentorship as a contribution to coach education. It brings relevance to the leadership construct and context of the study with respect to how more experienced coaches felt their coaching approaches affected the learning practices of athletes and less experienced coaches. The discussions described above place the literature review within the constructs of the research question and provide further context to the study. The researcher used the literature review studies to enrich and give perspective to the research problem, the aim, objectives and gaps in the body of knowledge as they relate to mentorship and at the heart, the research questions of the study.

#### 2.2 Social Learning Theory

Social learning theory explains how people learn in a social context as part of a complex social system. Within social contexts, humans develop certain patterns of behaviour through social modelling, and is passed on to future generations. Social modelling, also termed the social learning theory, states that behaviour is learnt by watching and interacting with others (Bandura & Walters, 1977). Furthermore by observing the choices and actions from the mix of social modelling, an individual will construct their own moral standards for making moral judgements (Bandura, 2001). However for learning to have taken place as a result of observed behaviour, the principles of attention, retention, reproduction and motivation are discussed as critical factors (Bandura, 2006).

##### 2.2.1 Attention

The focus of paying attention in order to watch and observe, requires content that is context specific, understandable and engaging for learning to take place. In paying attention through observing the behaviour of others, the basis for determining one's own behaviour is developed. This in turn aligns to an individual's own sense of personal identity, moral standards and the self-regulation of one's own behaviour (Bandura, 2001). Engaging one's attention on the positive consequences of certain behaviours, creates the desire to repeat this behaviour, whilst giving attention to the consequences

of negative behaviour, increases the likelihood of rejecting the behaviour. In accepting one behaviour and rejecting another, it can be determined that learning has taken place.

### **2.2.2 Retention**

For meaningful learning to take place, observed behaviour must be recognised and remembered so that it can be performed later by the observer. In retaining the information in memory, it is able to be recalled in response to a circumstance, which is recognised as similar to the way in which the information was first learnt (Bandura, 2001).

### **2.2.3 Reproduction**

Whilst previously learned information can be recalled, in reproducing this information an improved response to problem solving and decision making is provided. This improved response relies on the attention to, and retention of the observed behaviour as part of the learning process, in becoming proficient in what has been learned (Kurt, 2019).

### **2.2.4 Motivation**

Learnt behaviour in observing and interacting with others, provides the construct for individual moral standards (Bandura, 2001). This is a key factor which determines personal behaviour and the belief in one's own ability for personal development and change (Bandura, 1998). This belief provides the focus for motivation and its impact on goals and aspirations, influenced by either an optimistic or pessimistic view. Through social modelling, the motivation to attain goals depends on whether there is personal gain or loss in the process (Bandura, 2006).

In support of the critical factors underpinning learning, Kurt (2019) cites Bandura and the Social learning Theory, by stating that the belief in one's ability to succeed, is determined by observing behaviour as information obtained through focus and forethought. Observing others develops knowledge and skills to recall and reproduce this information, and builds self-determination to improve on outcomes and achieve goals (Kurt, 2019).

## **2.3 Coaching**

Coaching has a variety of applications. Côté (2006) argues that coaches are seen in a variety of different roles. Some of its applications are found in the domains of business, health care, education, and sport (Côté, 2006) and the role of the coach is one of diversity and complexity. Coaching roles in different domains depend on understanding the nature of the differences between approaches and which one is more appropriate as a coaching model for a specific context (Ives, 2008).

Berger and Fitzgerald (2002) state that coaching creates the bridge between the world people live in and their perception of this lived world. In the absence of a clear definition on coaching, various studies do agree that learning is a central element in the coaching process (Cassidy *et al.*, 2009). Whilst

Ives (2008) elaborates on the diversity of coaching, many studies agree that coaching takes place within a complex socio-cultural process, and the coaching process needs to take into account many interactive variables (Cushion, 2007; Lyle, 2002; Mallett, Trudel, Lyle & Rynne, 2009). A sense of what it means to coach, a coaching philosophy and an identity that is grounded in personal reality begins to emerge as part of the complex reality of coaching in sport and throughout coaching studies (Cassidy *et al.*, 2009). Other studies support the view that personal reality in the way people make sense of the world around them, determines that individuals will grow and evolve throughout the process (Taylor & Garratt, 2008). However, the specific focus of this study is sports coaching.

### **2.3.1 Coaching in Sport**

Sport in modern day society permeates the lives of most people in one way or another and can bring significant benefits. Some of the obvious benefits of high-performance sport competitions can be seen in the boosted international economy each year (Gratton *et al.*, 2006), along with the sense of national pride (Hallmann *et al.*, 2013) which is well documented. However, while some live their lives for sport, others use sport to live their lives (Wankel & Berger, 2018).

Thus, sport contributes to the wellbeing of a nation's people and the bringing together of communities and cultures (Kavetsos & Szymanski, 2010), and in providing communities with a sense of purpose. Teaching fundamental life skills, sport also enables those who may not aspire to sporting greatness but may seek to enhance their physical and emotional wellbeing through active participation (Eime, Young, Harvey, Charity & Payne, 2013). In these roles, a sports coach is able to offer guidance and support, whatever the motivation or goal for taking part in sport (Ryan *et al.*, 1997). Therefore, effective sports coach tutoring could help participants to achieve mental toughness, physical conditioning and a personal best (Connaughton, Hanton & Jones, 2010).

According to Côté and Gilbert (2009), the question of what constitutes effectiveness in sports coaching has previously lacked a definition underpinning the coaching processes, knowledge and behaviour in athlete development. However, the study agreed on three common variables which affect coaching; a coach's knowledge, the athlete's outcomes and coaching contexts (Côté & Gilbert, 2009).

As conceptual frameworks and models continue to inform coaching research (Riemer, 2007), in support of these findings, ongoing studies on coach leadership and behaviours (Smith & Smoll, 2007) include recent studies of the Coaching Model (Cote, Salmela, Trudel, Baria, & Russell, 1995; Wade, Gilbert & Rangeon (2011) furthering the identification and conceptualisation of coaching knowledge (Rangeon, Gilbert & Bruner, 2011) in relation to how elite coaches position their coaching knowledge and practice. However, studies show a consistency of themes across all the models which highlight the focus on coach knowledge, contribution of the coach to the outcome of the athlete, and the coaching context (Wade Gilbert & Rangeon, 2011).

### **2.3.2 Coach's Knowledge**

The knowledge of a coach in a sports coaching context represents the coach's declarative (knowing) and procedural (doing) knowledge comprising personal behaviour (Jowett & Chaundy, 2004), personal experiences, and strategies to achieve the demands of coaching (Nash & Collins, 2006).

While recent studies support the notion that both 'knowing' (technical) and 'doing' (practice) are needed to achieve success in sport coaching (Szabo, 2012a), further studies have cited experiential learning as an important element in the development of knowledge (Cropley *et al.*, 2012). Experiential learning is known as the process of learning through experience.

Research, however, has shown that experience alone does not create knowledge, rather, it is the process of learning to apply context to the experience that results in knowledge gained from the experience (Hanton, Cropley, Neil, Mellalieu & Miles, 2007). Thus, as coaches become aware of the social and educational value of creating knowledge from experiential learning, this informs the identity and philosophy of the coach (Cropley *et al.*, 2012).

Furthermore, studies suggest that experience informs knowledge only once it has been examined, analysed and considered (Criticos, 1993); thus the experience of learners will remain subjective, gaining meaning only when given meaning (Cushion *et al.*, 2010). Only once the coach develops this awareness, the ability to evaluate information from a variety of sources brings with it the confidence and courage a coach needs to take responsibility for decision making (Cassidy *et al.*, 2009).

### **2.3.3 Coaching Contribution to Athlete Outcomes**

Sports coaches fill a vital role in creating and maintaining the conditions for athletes to fulfil their potential, and studies reveal that the behaviour, attitude and performance of athletes are affected by individual coaching types (Cushion *et al.*, 2010). Therefore, an adopted coaching style that is unable to support, challenge and motivate an athlete is likely to lead to a lack of trust and respect and ultimately success, and therefore it would be ineffective coaching (Marcone, 2017).

Four key indicators describing sporting athlete outcomes have been identified (Côté & Gilbert, 2009). These key indicators, competence, confidence, connection and character of an athlete, summarise the effectiveness of a coach (Horn, 2002). Athlete competence grows from improving techniques and tactical skills that encourage healthy training habits and build fitness, which in turn leads to better performance. Better performance in turn promotes a sense of self-worth, thus building athlete confidence (Feltz, 1988). Increased confidence encourages interaction and therefore better social relationships with others, inside and outside of the sporting context (Côté & Gilbert, 2009). These bonds underpin an athlete's respect for the sport, affirm and build on personal attributes of integrity, empathy and responsibility (Côté & Gilbert, 2009).

### **2.3.4 Coaching Context**

The context in which sports coaching is set provides an understanding of how coaching knowledge can influence the four outcomes discussed above. Studies characterise this knowledge according to the stages of the physical and mental developmental stages of an athlete (Bailey *et al.*, 2013), placing it in the sport coaching context of recreational sport, development sport and elite sport (Cote *et al.*, 1995; Côté & Gilbert, 2009; Cote *et al.*, 1995).

Notwithstanding studies that state each of these sport coaching contexts should be viewed through a different lens (Evans *et al.*, 2015), some literature suggests the quality and scope of learning studies across the coaching domain need more definition (Cushion *et al.*, 2010). However, most studies do

agree that an understanding of the coaching context (Cajander *et al.*, 2010) remains an integral part of effective coaching; (Côté & Gilbert, 2009; Cushion *et al.*, 2010).

Studies on the integration of coach knowledge, athlete outcomes and coaching context, have resulted in the proposed definition of coaching effectiveness as “the consistent application of integrated professional, interpersonal and intrapersonal knowledge to improve athletes’ competence, confidence, connection and character in specific coaching contexts” (Côté & Gilbert, 2009). These and other studies thus confirm the variables found within the context of sports coaching (Cassidy *et al.*, 2009; Cooper & Allen, 2017; Szabo, 2012). Cassidy argues for the need in judging the quality of coaching, and furthermore supports the assessment of effective coaching through the gold standard of international best practice. International best practice relies on standards that evidence professional principles and values with which to make judgements, with the use of assessment criteria that provide the necessary context of shared meanings and values for fair, reliable and useful judgements to be made (Cassidy *et al.*, 2009).

## 2.4 Coaching Styles

Within the context of sports coaching, studies on effective coaching have revealed that learning is not merely determined by the transference of declarative (knowing) and procedural (doing) knowledge but is greatly influenced through the coaching style (Khalaj, Khabiri & Sajjadi, 2011) exhibited by the coach. A coaching style is defined by the manner in which a coach conducts him/herself during the coaching interaction (Marcone, 2017). According to Vallerand and Losier (1999), as cited by Rocchi, Pelletier and Couture (2013), a coach’s interpersonal style may influence an athlete’s motivation for playing sport either adversely or positively (Rocchi *et al.*, 2013).

Understanding the characteristics and behaviors exhibited by different coaching styles are critical factors in determining the effect on athlete motivation and performance. Learner centred coaches provide choices, a rationale for tasks and timelines with positive feedback, which engenders motivation for improved performance in their athletes.

In contrast, the coach centred or autocratic style of coaching, exhibits coaching behavior that is anti-social, and such coaches are often seen as unapproachable. Athletes become de-motivated by negative feedback from this type of controlling behaviour (Mageau & Vallerand, 2003).

The interpersonal style of an effective coach will evidence understanding of how people learn within the dynamic environment of sport (Rezania, 2014). Thus, an effective coach will have good communication skills to challenge, inspire, and provide the skills to solve problems and make decisions, all of which foster learning and development (Rezania, 2014), which contribute to an athlete’s performance.

Notwithstanding the positive influence an effective coach has on the athlete, Mageau (2003) cautions, factors such as the contractual demands on coaches to perform, places further pressure on the coach/athlete relationship which could have an impact on the interpersonal style of the coach (Mageau & Vallerand, 2003). The study goes on to suggest that, due to these contractual pressures, even coaches who are strongly athlete-centered in their coaching style may be pressured to exhibit a controlling behaviour which could be perceived to be coach-centred. Thus, studies corroborate on the premise that outside influences impact coaching behaviour and coaching style according to the

personal orientation of the coach, the coaching context, and the behaviour of the athlete (Mageau & Vallerand, 2003).

In determining the meaning of sports coaching, Szabo (2012a) proposes three coaching styles. These three coaching styles are described as democratic, liberal and autocratic and further studies include two further sub types as an extension of the autocratic style (Mengistu & Syam, 2012) which is briefly introduced below.

The 'telling and selling' sub types possess characteristics that are both authoritarian and controlling, in which training is directed through orders. The athletes are not involved in decision making, and the coach is concerned only with the training objectives and motivated by the goal (Mengistu & Syam, 2012).

This style limits interaction between the coach and athlete relating to the training and target objectives and precludes any support or responsibility on behalf of the coach with regards to any personal challenges the athlete may be experiencing off the field, which may affect his on-field performance (Szabo, 2012b) . This style thus lacks the motivation to support studies that show that to be an effective coach, the coach's primary objective is to develop both the physical and psychological aspects of an athlete's performance (Mengistu & Syam, 2012) .

#### **2.4.1 Autocratic Coaching Style**

The characteristics of an autocratic coaching style are described as authoritarian and controlling and can be seen as dictatorial (Szabo, 2012b) or coach-centred. Turman (2001) attests that the coach centred approach is a directive one way learning process during which the athlete is not involved in decision making and receives little feedback from the coach (Ahlberg, Mallett & Tinning, 2008). Therefore, while some studies have suggested an autocratic coaching style may have an instructional impact on athletes learning a new skill (Castillo, Balibay, Alarcón, Picar & Lampitoc, 2014) or engaging in goal orientation preparation, nonetheless, this style of coaching remains a one way learning process (Castillo *et al.*, 2014). The athlete's learning and development are thus limited by the authoritarian and controlling style of the autocratic coach (Szabo, 2012b). A style which is focused only on developing an athlete's physical, technical and strategic skills, rather the interpersonal dynamics found in an effective coach/athlete relationship (Rezania, 2014).

Used inappropriately an autocratic style may discourage creativity, or the sharing of experience (Castillo *et al.*, 2014), which in turn increases athlete stress (Nami, Mansouri, Dehnavi & Bandali, 2013). This may develop dependence in athletes, and an unwillingness to share responsibility (Szabo, 2012a) leading to dissatisfaction and de-motivation. These findings are in direct contrast to studies in mentorship, which supports a relationship built on trust and openness (Mearns, 2009) for the support of high achievers. Furthermore, the studies hold true to the core of mentoring, as being dependent on the relational aspect between mentee and mentor (Cassidy, Jones & Potrac, 2009).

#### **2.4.2 Liberal Coaching Style**

Studies define a liberal coaching style as permitting and non-interfering, and athletes who are coached in this style will be allowed the freedom of choice within an unstructured training process (Mageau &

Vallerand, 2003). This permitting style of coaching is ineffective as studies show that people need structure and guidelines in order to feel competent (Mageau & Vallerand, 2003). Furthermore, athletes may receive instructions that are weak and incomplete, resulting in an ineffective passive coach/athlete relationship (Szabo, 2012b). Some studies suggest a liberal coaching style encourages little collaboration between that athlete and coach (Szabo, 2012), which limits development of the physical and psychological aspects of an athlete's performance as determined by the role of an effective coach (Mengistu & Syam, 2012).

### **2.4.3 Democratic Coaching Style**

In consideration of the importance placed on the role of the coach in the development of an athlete to encourage optimal performance (Mengistu & Syam, 2012), further literature points to the coach/athlete relationship as being one which greatly impacts the motivation and performance of the athlete (Mageau & Vallerand, 2003). Furthermore, the use of a democratic coaching style as being a learner centred coaching practice (Ahlberg *et al.*, 2008) is supported by studies that propose that the democratic style of coaching shows its positivity (Mengistu & Syam, 2012) as one that empowers the athlete to be the best version of themselves (Mageau & Vallerand, 2003).

Many studies concur that the development of the physical and psychological aspects of an athlete's performance, is a measure of an effective coach/athlete relationship, enabling structured practice and allowing the athlete to be involved in their own learning (Moen *et al.*, 2014).

These studies recognise the different ways in which coaching styles impact on the coach/athlete relationship (Cassidy *et al.*, 2009), and support the notion that an effective coach has the ability to use different coaching styles in the assessment of individual athlete personality types (Trzaskoma-Bicsérdy *et al.*, 2008). Therefore, a democratic coaching style is described as being the best approach for effective coaching (Cassidy *et al.*, 2009; West, 2016; Mageau & Vallerand, 2003). The effective coach is able to incorporate one or more aspects of the three coaching styles, depending on the situational factors and needs of individual athletes (West, 2016). Nevertheless it remains a challenge to find the right balance, in developing sporting skills (Moen *et al.*, 2014; Nash, Sproule, Callan, McDonald & Cassidy, 2009) or modeling the skills needed for successful living in society (Pilus & Saadan, 2009).

## **2.5 Professional/Non-Professional Sports Coaching and Equestrian Sport in South Africa**

Sport coaching has been recognised as an essential element of sports development (Nash *et al.*, 2009) and success for varying sporting codes in South Africa (Van Der Merwe, Willemse, & Malan, 2015; Kubayi *et al.*, 2016). Following extensive consultation among stakeholders within different sports federations (Kubayi *et al.*, 2016), the Long-Term Development Model (LTDM) was adopted in 2011 as the official Coach Education Framework reference for all Sports Coaches across all national federations in South Africa (Vardhan & Duffy, 2011). The sports federations are all members of the South African Sports Confederation and Olympic Committee (SASCOC) which governs sports.

The purpose of a sports federation is to govern the sports through constituted rules, organise the sports through competitions, license players to promote professionalism in the sports, and accredit role players such as administrators, coaches and other supporting personnel. The SASCOC ensures the alignment of the federations with global practices and promotes the participation of South Africa in



multi-sport international games such as the Olympics, Paralympics, and All Africa Games, World Games, and Commonwealth Games (The White Paper on Sport and Recreation for the Republic of South Africa, 2012). Equestrian sport is affiliated to the governing body through the South African Equestrian Federation (SAEF) and by 2016, SAEF was one of seventy-six federations affiliated to SASCOC (South African Sport Confederation and Olympic Committee, n.d.). Consequently, the SAEF needs to ensure compliance with all the national and international sports regulations, including the implementation of the Coach Education Framework.

In 2016, legislation was passed which requires the registration of all the sports coaches to practise within South Africa (The White Paper on Sport and Recreation for the Republic of South Africa, 2012). The laws were passed following extensive consultation with the seventy-six national sporting federations who are affiliated to SASCOC. The legislation is called The White Paper on Sports and Recreation for the Republic of South Africa (The White Paper on Sport and Recreation for the Republic of South Africa, 2012). The statutory body registering coaches is called the SASCOC Professional Body (South African Qualifications Authority, 2016). The statutory body grants licenses and regulates the sport coaching profession in the interests of the public. If a coach is not registered, they are not recognised as a professional coach, even if they have been a coach for decades prior to the adoption of 2016 regulations.

Global research has shown that sports coach mentoring is seen as integral to becoming a professional sports coach based on the fact that mentoring makes better coaches (Cassidy *et al.*, 2009). In agreement with this statement, research has shown that, even though athletes may not have been aware of being mentored and upon reflection, they have attributed their sports career success to having been mentored during their training (Bloom *et al.*, 1998).

Notwithstanding the value of mentorship in coach development, in particular, the ability of the coach to self-reflect (Nash, 2003; Bloom *et al.*, 1998). It is important to note that, as previously stated, coaches in the past simply used the knowledge gained as athletes to further their coaching careers (SAQA, 2013). Now that there is the realisation of the value of mentoring in coach development, mentorship has been included in the criteria set out by the professional body (SASCOC, 2015a).

Hunter (1999) describes criteria as 'internalized rules' or norms with which to make and correct, judgments on a particular belief or idea which is guided and characterised by a person's tacit knowledge and reasoning. Thus, in view of the criteria set out by the Professional Body, if a coach cannot gain access to mentorship, this will hinder the progression from non-professional to professional coaching (SASCOC, 2015).

In 2015, SASCOC implemented the South African Coaching Framework in order to regulate the sports coaching industry (SASCOC, 2015a). Within equestrian sport, coaches are mostly non-professionals (Lincoln, 2008; Morris-Eyton & Coopoo, 2014). Lester refers to studies undertaken by Collins which have shown that the norm for a transition from non-professional to professional status is attained through the completion of a required degree or formal training programme culminating in state registration (Lester, 2009).

As stated above, coaches working in an unregulated industry do not subscribe to the requirement of legislation that defines the roles and responsibilities of stakeholders. Therefore, organisations cannot ensure legitimacy or coordinate their work in accordance with the laws, regulations and guidelines (Adams & Tower, 1994). Furthermore, according to Adams and Tower, (1994) an unregulated

environment is characterised by small groups of a limited market and these small groups will engage in regulation only if the economic benefit outweighs the costs.

With the 2016 adoption of a professional body for sports coaches, equestrian coaches will have access to various economic benefits such as insurance and liability protection (Radebe, 2015). In addition to the economic benefits, the importance of a regulated industry for equestrian coaches is further expressed in research undertaken by Collins *et al.* (2008) of a moral obligation and duty of care towards those who cannot speak for themselves. This duty of care is informed by legislative provisions, codes of practice and guidelines which are aimed at safeguarding the health and welfare of animals as set out in the Brambell Report (1965).

Notwithstanding the above, and in view of the recent 2016 adoption of the SASCOC Professional Body for sports coaches, the requirements of professional licensing and continuous professional development creates challenges for all non-professional coaches without the support of mentorship (Lincoln, 2008). These challenges are due to the licence-to-practice criteria set out by the professional body which requires evidence of mentorship as well as practical learning competencies in addition to an underlying coaching qualification (SASCOC, 2015).

## **2.6 Mentorship**

With its roots in Greek mythology, mentoring has long been recognised as the passing down of knowledge, advice, guidance and support from a more experienced person for the benefit of a less experienced person (Merriam, 1983). In agreement with the view of Weaver and Chelladurai (1999), mentoring is “a process in which a more experienced person serves as a role model, provides guidance and support to a developing novice, and sponsors that novice in his/her career progress” (Weaver & Chelladurai, 1999)(Weaver & Chelladurai, 1999)(Weaver & Chelladurai, 1999).

During the past two decades, studies have shown the entrenchment of mentoring in business models as a means to enhance the quality of staff (Truter, 2008). This has encouraged academic institutions to follow suit and it is now acknowledged that mentoring enhances career development (Leck & Orser, 2013). The impact of mentorship in the introduction of mentoring programmes has resulted in better job satisfaction with higher achievers and improved company loyalty (Lamb, 2005).

## **2.7 Mentorship in Sport**

Whilst ongoing studies support the value of mentoring in modern times (Roberts, 1999), recent studies also position mentoring as a valuable coach development tool in sports coach education and the sport coaching process (Jones, 2015). This has been reiterated in studies supporting mentoring as a learning process and the transference of knowledge from experienced coaches (Steyn, 2004) in a sports coaching environment where athletes learn (Cushion, 2006). However, studies in recent years suggest that despite the introduction of mentorship into independent coach education courses (Bloom, Durand-Bush, Schinke & Salmela, 1998) which were aimed at developing coaching skills, these courses have failed to present an integrated approach to sport coaching.

It is noteworthy that studies show that the sport coaching environment is where continuous professional development also takes place (Gilbert & Trudel, 2001) and reveals how coaches' views

on coaching evolve over time. It is a popular belief held by experienced coaches (Cervero, 1991) that procedural knowledge acquired from field practice may be more valuable than knowledge acquired from formal educational pathways (Cassidy *et al.*, 2009). These views are introduced into the traditions, habits, rules, cultures and practices of the community they join (Cushion, 2006) revealing that experienced coaches will seek developmental support and collaboration from other experienced coaches (Schempp, Elliott, McCullick, Laplaca & Berger, 2016). These and other studies support assertions by coaches that mentorship relationships had a significant influence on their professional development (Grant, Dorgo & Griffin, 2014) in offering insights into their own lived experiences in authentic settings that could not be matched by other traditional forms of education and teaching (Bloom *et al.*, 1998).

Nash concurs with Cassidy *et al.* (2009) and asserts that mentorship can be viewed as a dynamic relationship between more and less experienced coaches, giving sport coaches insights through their interaction with more experienced coaches in working environments (Nash, 2003). Research therefore supports the notion that mentorship is the bridge linking theoretical learning with practical application (White, Schempp, McCullick, Berger & Elliott, 2017).

The aim of the National Coaching Framework is to regulate the sports coaching industry (SAQA, 2009). This falls in line with a worldwide trend to establish national coach education pathways for the development of sports coaching as a profession (Duffy, 2010; Cushion *et al.*, 2010; International Olympic Committee, 2017; SASCOC, 2015) through a proposed standardised series of qualifications (SAQA, 2009). In regulating coaching practice, a curriculum will be developed (SAQA, 2013) setting out the scope of knowledge and specific outcomes to be achieved by the coach. The curricula has to be standardised to be effective in fulfilling the regulatory requirements of the governing body (Radebe, 2015). Thus, sports specific coaching programmes will address the needs of coaches across a variety of sporting code, at all levels of development (Morris-Eyton & Coopoo, 2014).

Taking heed of earlier studies which allude to reactions of the limitations or failures of formal education (Brennan, 1997), programmes of mediated study have been designed as short development workshops presented by experienced coaches (Cushion *et al.*, 2010). This provides an opportunity for a mentoring relationship to take develop in formal mentoring settings, creating learning for coach development which is sports specific and comprehensive (Mallett *et al.*, 2009). Since coaching involves a practical element, these mentoring programmes aim to develop coach effectiveness by linking theory with practice (Bloom *et al.*, 1998). In this manner, mentorship can be used in both formal and informal settings and is adaptive to different environments and relationships (Mallett *et al.*, 2009). Therefore, studies have recognised both formal and informal settings of mentorship, and the more casual approach of informal mentoring, but remains vigilant regarding mentoring as a process, thereby recognising the ongoing nature of the relationship, regardless of the environment (Schweitzer, 1993).

Key factors for evaluating the success of positive learning experiences which link theory to practice include learning content relevant to the coaching context. This is found in a formal learning setting, together with experiential learning which provides 'on the ground training', and a learner-centred approach that enhances pedagogical practice (Nash, 2003a). During interviews with coaches indicated support for mentorship within a structured programme (Grant *et al.*, 2014). Earlier studies showed support for mentorship situated within the personal, professional and situational parameters, in which the development of problem solving skills provides the context for learning (Schweitzer, 1993).

## 2.8 The Mentoring Relationship, and Learning

While coaching literature has consistently advocated mentorship as a valuable tool in the development of sports coaches, previous studies have focused on mentoring relationships (Weaver & Chelladurai, 1999) within formal and informal educational settings. Further recognition of its influence on professional development in business (Weaver & Chelladurai, 1999), resulted in the establishment of formal mentoring programmes within business settings. However, few programmes were aligned with the objectives or strategy of these organisations (Jones, Harris, & Milles, 2009). In comparison, whilst informal mentoring is not mediated by any external source and has the attributes of a mentoring relationship, informal unstructured mentoring is cited in Cushion, (2001) to lack consistency in quality and outcomes (Cushion, Armour & Jones, 2003). Formal mentoring relationship mediated by a program of study, wherein participants are assigned mentors, assignments and timelines has been the focus of past studies for mentorship guidelines (Grant *et al.*, 2014). It is noteworthy that studies show that the rewards of more frequent communication and contact with the mentor in formal education does not always translate into more knowledge for the learner. In addition, mentors may be less likely to receive intrinsic rewards from these interactions and thus become less motivated to remain in the mentoring relationship (Marshall, 2001). Less motivated mentors are not as invested in the development of their mentees (Ragins, Cotton & Miller, 2000).

Experience is shown to be an integral aspect of the coaching process as learning takes place when coaches construct meaning from their actions during coaching practice (authentic setting) (Gilbert & Trudel, 2001). Therefore, studies maintain that sport coach learning exceeds the boundaries of any formal training programme, and reminds coach educators of frameworks that underpin and guide coach education practice (Cushion *et al.*, 2010). Since 'practice makes perfect', knowledge becomes most useful if applied in the context of sporting practice (Duffy *et al.*, 2011).

In reviewing studies positioned within informal educational settings (Camiré, Trudel & Forneris, 2014), this has included learning from coaching experience, reflection, observation and mentorship (Nash *et al.*, 2009; Grant *et al.*, 2014; Cushion *et al.*, 2010). Further studies have shown that the focus of expertise has traditionally fallen on the athlete (Nash *et al.*, 2009) and mentoring has occurred more frequently among athletes than non-athletes. Even so, studies state that coaches were the most frequent mentors of athletes, and although athletes were not aware that they were being mentored at the time (Bloom *et al.*, 1998), these athletes retrospectively attributed mentoring as being instrumental in their success.

In as much as developing coaches considered a formalised and structured mentoring programme to be an important factor in their development as coaches, studies revealed the need for developing coaches to have access to learning resources other than those currently used in structured coach educational programmes (Bloom, Salmela & Schinke, 1995). Therefore for a coach to extract meaning from future coaching theory and practice (Cresap, 2003), critical thinking may better served in an authentic coach setting and context, rather than the simulated environment of a formal coach education course (Nash *et al.*, 2009).

Notwithstanding a lack of developmental literature to guide the process for mentorship in sports coaching (Grant *et al.*, 2014), the above mentioned studies indicate that mentoring had taken place as an informal practice for sports coaches entering the profession (Jones *et al.*, 2009), even though coaches became aware of this only when thinking back over their careers. While studies support the

value of structuring learning, it must be noted that mentorship requires time and effort to develop and become embedded into coach learning (Cushion *et al.*, 2010).

### **2.8.1 Formal Learning**

Formal learning is found almost exclusively in a classroom setting (Mcquade, Davis & Nash, 2015), with studies describing a formal mentoring relationship as an established, controlled and mediated programme of study offered by a higher learning institution or national certification body (Nash *et al.*, 2009; Cushion *et al.*, 2006). In this setting, learners are assigned a facilitator who will guide them through a curriculum. In addition, learners are required to submit a portfolio of evidence as part of the course (Grant *et al.*, 2014) and will be used in the evaluation process. However, while formal learning offers knowledge leading to certification, these programmes may not be as valued by sports coaches in the field due to the lack of an authentic coaching setting in which to apply the theory in practice, which provides learning opportunities through reflection (Werthner & Trudel, 2006). Some studies go further to suggest that the continuance of existing mentoring programmes in the current formal setting serves only to reproduce the existing coaching culture and practice (Cushion, 2006) and may render mentoring less effective (Roberts, 2000).

However, the studies agreed on the necessity of strategic planning for the integration of mentorship into the learning support of current formal coach-mentoring situations (Nash, 2003; Marshall, 2001) while recent studies reported that mentorship support is necessary for self-directed and work-based learning in the sports coaching context (Cushion *et al.*, 2010).

### **2.8.2 Informal Learning**

The studies place informal learning outside of a dedicated learning environment, or formal education program; therefore learning opportunities take place through practice, and lifelong learning (Golding *et al.*, 2009). In an informal setting, Lave (1991) points out that timelines and learning opportunities reside in the hands of the learner and decisions on content and agenda are set by the teacher, the learner or both parties. Thus, informal learning fits the profile of an informal mentoring relationship, unmediated by the external controls of a teacher or curriculum. In this manner, informal learning will encourage learners to adopt a problem-solving approach to finding solutions in authentic settings (Lave & Wenger, 1991).

Certain studies have explored approaches found in mentorship to use as potential learning experiences in formal coach education (Grant *et al.*, 2014). This has provided an appropriate method of supporting coaches who have independent learning skills, and the motivation to connect theory with practice, and practice with theory (Werthner & Trudel, 2006). The aforesaid supports the view that mentorship could provide an authentic context for coach development and coaching practices in a real and meaningful way (Grant *et al.*, 2014).

## **2.9 Mentorship Model**

Whilst the development of a mentoring model is shaped according to individual stakeholder requirements (Scandura *et al.*, 1996) studies see the effective mentoring relationship as a dynamic and complex process with participants taking on different roles and responsibilities in the relationship

(Allen, 2007). These roles and responsibilities need to take place in an authentic context, allowing both partners to develop their respective skills while the mentoring relationship exists (Bloom *et al.*, 1998).

Thus, a mentoring model should reflect the characteristics of a mentoring relationship (Jones *et al.*, 2009). Almost all the studies agree that the essence of any mentoring model is the empathetic relationship between the mentor and mentee. Smith (2005) expanded this concept by stating that integrity and empathy are the building blocks for effective mentorship relationships (Smith, 2005) as both build trust (Cassidy *et al.*, 2009), while studies have shown that trust may be influenced by various factors which include technical expertise, predictability of behaviour, fairness and the sharing of control (Leck & Orser, 2013). Other studies point out that a mutual trust between mentor and mentee should allow the sharing of professional and personal shortcomings as well as their successes (Johnson-Bailey & Cervero, 2004).

The importance of trust in the context of sports coaching cannot be understated as studies show that cognitive behaviour has its roots in social learning theory (Mearns, 2009). According to the social learning theory of Bandura, intellectual functioning occurs as people interact with other people (Mearns, 2009). Therefore, building trust and integrity is important in an effective mentoring relationship (Kepler, 2013) and in the support of high achievers (Jones & Spooner, 2006). A further consideration underpinned by the prerequisite of trust, is an assumed system of power which is hierarchical in nature (Kilty, 2006). Since a function of a mentor is to challenge in order to evoke excellence, and mentoring develops an understanding of professional perspectives (Young, Bullough, Draper, Smith & Erickson, 2005) for the acquisition of values, attitudes, skills and knowledge. Thus, while the mentor will encourage and challenge an exploration of 'how things can be done better' (Jones *et al.*, 2009), at the same time, trust in the mentor-mentee relationship creates a safe place for dialogue (Smith, 2005) within the partnership.

These fundamentals provide the basis for good practice without the need for a prescriptive approach (Jones *et al.*, 2009) since studies refute such an approach, given the dynamics of mentoring as a complex, social and psychological activity (Cushion *et al.*, 2006) and the unique pairing of each mentoring relationship (Klasen & Clutterbuck, 2002). While literature has thus far been unable to describe a standardised definition of mentoring (Jones *et al.*, 2009) despite attempts from both broad perspective and narrow perspectives, the underlying message to be taken into account is that mentorship is multifaceted and embraces elements of empathy and psychology (Smith, 2005). At the root of it, mentoring always has a relational aspect between the mentee and mentor, which is core to mentoring, and possibly the two-way street between the mentee/mentor (Jones *et al.*, 2009).

## **2.10 Mentoring Styles**

The considerations above place mentoring as a process encompassing a variety of environments and relationships. Using a novice-expert continuum to understand the stages of development and learning preferences of sports coaches (Grant *et al.*, 2014), some studies have identified directive, interactive and responsive mentoring types as supporting the fundamentals of mentoring relationships (Jones *et al.*, 2009).

### **2.10.1 Directive Style**

Directive mentors assume a controlling role and work to a set agenda with set outcome objectives for the mentee (Jones *et al.*, 2009; McQuade, Davis & Nash, 2015). Earlier studies defined the role of the directive mentor as being hierarchical, and advocate this mode of mentoring to be most suitable at the beginning of the mentoring relationship (Mead, Campbell & Milan, 1999). However, further studies have suggested that the prescriptive characteristics of the role may encourage the mentee to become passive, whilst a more learner centred approach would reduce dependency and increase self-confidence (McQuade *et al.*, 2015).

### **2.10.2 Interactive Style**

Interactive mentoring is characterised by an open relationship with the mentee where issues of concern are mutually discussed; thus the mentor takes on the role of a friend in a partnership between colleague and trusted advisor (McQuade *et al.*, 2015). In this manner, the interactive mentor role assumes a co-operative association, which is greatly valued amongst experienced coaches who seek collaboration amongst other experienced coaches (Young *et al.*, 2005). Whilst studies support interactive mentoring as a preferred mentoring style, caution is advised if used exclusively in the mentoring partnership, as it may result in the avoidance of responsibility by either party (Mead *et al.*, 1999).

### **2.10.3 Responsive Style**

In responsive mentoring, the mentee takes the lead in setting out the learning objectives and engages in dialogue with the mentor through the process of posing questions and concerns (Young *et al.*, 2005; Smith, 2005). Responsive mentoring is seen to be autonomous (Mead *et al.*, 1999) and best suited to experienced mentees who are able to use reflection, empathy and peer-to-peer questioning for problem solving (Jones *et al.*, 2009). Thus, mentees take responsibility for their coaching using interpersonal skills to create answers to problems. The caveat, however, is that if this style is used too early in the mentoring process, a responsive mentoring relationship may prove counterproductive (Mead *et al.*, 1999).

## **2.11 The Mentoring Types**

Some studies suggest that the distinction between formal and informal mentoring lies in the actual structure of the mentoring relationship (Jones *et al.*, 2009a). Other studies refer to mentoring as a process used in a formal and informal context (Galvin, 1998) which some studies have found to be effective in both settings (Stuart, 2010). In contrast, studies pointed out the limitations of formal mentoring in a group setting with an assigned mentor, pre-existing guidelines for the relationship (Singh, 2015), and a limited lifespan aligned to specific goals of the formalised programme (Roberts, 2000). Various studies confirm that some participants reported receiving more support from their mentors during participation in an informal mentorship programme, than the participants in formal mentorship programmes (Chao *et al.*, 1992). Most studies seem to agree that the prescriptive nature of formal learning limits mentoring opportunities, and may be less effective (Mcquade *et al.*, 2015). Whereas the longer the mentoring relationship, the greater its effectiveness (White *et al.*, 2017). This notion agrees with studies that state that the length of time being mentored was highly related to mentoring success (Côté & Gilbert, 2009; Stuart, 2010).

In contrast to the studies above, informal mentoring can be defined as a causal relationship between compatible personalities, which takes place outside of a mediated setting, with relationship attributes of trust and open communication (Grant *et al.*, 2014). To fulfil the mentoring functions of guidance and support that facilitate personal and professional development (Cassidy *et al.*, 2009), expertise cannot be realized from following a prescribed set of rules alone. Meaningful learning takes place from reflection on interaction, researched knowledge and practice (Bloom *et al.*, 1998). For the mentoring process to be successful, support is needed within a facilitated mentoring structure (Nash, 2003). A supported mentoring relationship follows a plan and preparation for what will be covered and what the goals are to be achieved in a learner centered approach (Jones *et al.*, 2009).

## **2.12 Facilitated Mentoring**

Organised mentorship programmes designed for sports coaches have been suggested by some scholars (Bloom *et al.*, 1998; Cushion, 2006; Nash, 2003) using the benefits of informal mentoring and placing it into a formalised structure. Ongoing studies taken from various domains as well as coaching, agreed with the premise that taking the benefits of informal and formal learning and the interaction of both, would provide the recipe for optimal learning (Cushion *et al.*, 2010).

This has led to the development of a facilitated mentoring model (Jones *et al.*, 2009) as a consequence of both informal and formal learning with attributes that best suit an organised mentorship model for sports coaching. In viewing mentoring as a formalised process, the facilitation of the mentee's professional and personal development journey provides a 'road map' for mentoring (Bloom *et al.*, 1998), and a bona fide framework for mentoring, applicable across all sporting codes (Nash, 2003).

### **2.12.1 Equestrian Coach Mentorship**

It appears that mentorship, equestrian or otherwise, has lacked a clear definition historically (Bloom *et al.*, 1998). In fact, research purports that mentoring does not reside with a clear theoretical base (Ehrich & Hansford, 2001). While it is widely accepted that social learning takes place when people learn from, interact and identify with one another (Bandura, 1969), Cushion (cited in Jones, 2015) has placed mentorship and its potential benefits within a socio-educational theoretical framework. In contrast, Ehrich and Hansford (2001) found that mentoring research lacked a clear theoretical and conceptual base.

Notwithstanding these various assertions, it is noteworthy that the four components predicting behaviour, are to be found in the core competencies of mentoring, as advanced by social learning theory. The first component is *potential*, described as the probability of engaging in a specific behaviour in a given circumstance. *Expectancy* described as the probability of a particular behaviour leading to a given outcome. *Reinforcement value* described as the value of the outcomes of behaviour in a given situation, and the *psychological situation* which is described as an individual's subjective interpretation of the situation. (Mearns, 2009).

This study recognizes the support of literature, for the participation of mentorship to support learning. With mentoring as a protected interaction in which learning takes place through analysis, review, decision making and re-practice (Subramaniam, Silong, Uli & Ismail, 2015).



Despite a lack of consensus by some researchers in the development of a theoretical perspective for their research on mentorship, it appears that the social learning theory could well be 'the right fit' for the placing of equestrian coach mentorship within its framework. By placing the study of mentorship in the social learning perspective and providing a conceptual philosophical frame within the theoretical framework of Social Learning Theory (Enfield, 2001; Ord, 2012) seems to be an appropriate to place for the study of mentorship for the equestrian coach to reside. This assumption revolves around social learning as an ongoing two-way interaction between an individual and the environment (Bandura, 1977).

In equestrian coaching, learning focuses on the environment and the person. In this way results are based on the expectation of a behaviour, for a positive outcome. Thus, learning is facilitated by understanding the complexity of the information provided in situational challenges.

Until recent years, mentoring in equestrian coaching has been 'seen and not heard'. While most equestrians looked back to coaches who had an influence on them and considered them to be role models, few coaches realised that they were being mentored at the same time. Role modelling is seen as another type of mentoring (Payne, Reynolds, Brown & Fleming, 2003) and is described as people learning through interaction and engagement with each other (Hall & Gray, 2017). Role modelling can be seen as a teaching approach for coaches to work along-side mentors, where the mentor has an impact on the mentee's practices, through discussing practices, the usefulness of what's being modelled and providing feedback (Hobson, Ashby, Maldeez, Tomlinson, 2009). Therefore, it seems appropriate to place mentoring within the broader construct of role modelling (Bandura, 1978) as an approach which offers support and guidance to a younger or less experienced person by an older or more experienced person (Yancey, Siegel & McDaniel, 2002).

Equestrian coaches are by and large self-employed and once having attained formal certification, most coaches, receive no formal support for further development (Winfield *et al.*, 2013); therefore, reflection has become a tool for equestrian coaches to further develop their coaching practice (Lincoln, 2008). Studies support mentorship as a catalyst for reflection in different ways (Kalén *et al.*, 2012). Due to the nature of equestrian activities, mentoring facilitates awareness on experiences and development within one-self and with others. Working with and observing a mentor as a role model, enables coaches, through a process of reflection, to internalize their mentor's behaviour, and build on previous knowledge (Murray & Main, 2005).

### **2.13 Conclusion**

The literature review greatly assisted the researcher in understanding the research problem, leading to an exploration of mentorship and its merits within sport coaching education. The literature studies provided a framework from a broad perspective of the social learning theory (Bandura, 1969), the integrative sport coach effectiveness theory as supported by Côté and Gilbert (2009) and the coach learning and development theory as researched by Cushion *et al.* (2010).

The literature highlighted the lack of research in equestrian coaching and which challenges were found in the coach learning with regards to the triad relationship of coach/horse/rider (Winfield *et al.*, 2013). The ontological stance of the researcher allowed her to interpret results from the interview questions

and gather meaning from the lived experiences of both professional and non-professional equestrian coaches in the specific context of coaching and mentorship.

The theories above underpinned by the social learning theory of Bandura (1969) allowed this researcher to explore mentorship in a 'real world' environment and lent support and clarification in formulating the research questions for the study. The research questions in turn influenced the development of the interview questions utilised in the interview protocol which follows in the research design and methodology of Chapter 3.

## Chapter 3

### Research Design and Methodology

#### 3.1 Introduction

The focus of this chapter falls on the discussion of the research design and research methodology. The researcher elaborates on the reasons for choosing a particular approach with regards to the appropriateness of the research design and methodology. The procedure of enquiry in qualitative research is such that the researcher interprets the meanings of what is said and, according to Agee (2009), qualitative research focuses on the 'why' and the 'how' of the research question, and that it is influenced by the skill of the researcher to correctly interpret the viewpoints of those who participate in the questioning interviews. This study therefore implemented a qualitative research design due to the exploratory nature of the research question.

The use of semi-structured interviews (DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006) was the method employed in the current study. The sample size was purposively chosen to discover relevant information based on the purpose of the study, which was determined by saturation (Ritchie, Lewis & Elam, 2003).

In agreement with Gray, cited in Agee (2009), research shows support for qualitative research being grounded in the 'real world' rather than in a simulated environment. Therefore, for authentic, valid findings, Agee (2009) further asserts that the researcher must be able to relate through his or her own experience in understanding the viewpoints of the interviewee and so arrive at an outcome that reflects the research results accurately. In this manner, the researcher becomes involved with the research enquiry, by utilising interviews to gather rich data (Mohajan, 2018).

#### 3.2 The Research Design

The research design was exploratory, and a qualitative study was undertaken to explore the aim and objectives. Qualitative research is associated with several research methods and is typically focused on understanding the topic under investigation from the perspective and the experience of the research participant (Denzin, Lincoln & Giardina, 2006).

Qualitative research is characterised by openness and flexibility, thereby allowing for adaptation as the research process unfolds (Parker, 2004). It is able to adapt to unexpected events that may emerge during the research process. Due to the aforementioned advantages associated with engaging in a qualitative research study, a qualitative method was selected in order to explore the research questions and objectives of this study.

The qualitative research approach is a phenomenological methodology which, according to Flick, von Kardoff and Steinke (2004), includes characteristics that may be evident across all the variations. These variations are oriented towards describing a lived experience rather than the attempt to quantify it. The focus of phenomenology, therefore, is the study of the experience as perceived by the participants without any preconceived ideas about the data collected (Flick *et al.*, 2004). Data collected utilising a phenomenological methodology includes, observation, interviews, and action research as well as

analyses of journals and personal texts. Thus, the methodology encourages the participant to be more open in the sharing of his or her experiences, and from whom information is garnered in less structured interviews, which are more effective. With the emphasis on subjectivity, the goal of phenomenological research methodology was aimed at maximising the depth of the information collected, making it an appropriate methodology for the research problem (Noon, 2018).

### **3.2.1 Qualitative Research Design**

A qualitative research design was employed for this study and, to a large degree, relied on personal opinions, different perceptions and the subjectivity of each participant (Merriam, 1998). The researcher aimed at exploring and seeking to understand human behaviour through the Social Learning Theory (Mearns, 2009), whilst the epistemological lens of subjectivism allowed for the data collection to reflect the opinions, perceptions and subjectivity of experienced and less experienced coaches and their understanding of mentorship in sports coaching. The data were analysed through the principles of inductivism with inductive reasoning as the theory underpinning this research. The findings sought to either establish what was already known or what still needed to be known using the Social Learning Theory in which this study is grounded (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). This theory is defined as learning taking place through interactions with others within a social context (Bandura, 1969; Nabavi, 2012) and provides a theoretical lens that seeks to unpack how people respond and adapt to and evolve through their changing situations (Green & Piel, 2010).

### **3.2.2 Inductive Approach to Qualitative Study**

The research approach was grounded in a qualitative study approach with induction as part of the construct of the theory underpinning this research (Tracy, 2010). The inductive process begins with collecting the data and thereafter identifying any patterns that become apparent between the variable relationships (Larkin & Thompson, 2011; Gray, 2004).

Gray (2004) further stated that the inductive approach does not set out to either confirm or expose weakness in a theory but rather, through the collection of data, and observing the similarity of these patterns, the researcher will construct generalisations, relationships and perhaps theories. Thus, the researcher strived to identify a sound principle without drawing conclusions on the basis of the data alone. This study has used constructivism to form general principles to draw a general conclusion by examining the particular facts through the exploration, in this case, of mentorship for the equestrian coach in South Africa (Vergel, Stentoft & Montoya, 2017).

The Table 3.1 describes the qualitative approach, integrating the viewpoint of the researcher as an insider, by developing subjective meaning, from a complexity of views (J. W. Creswell, 2007). The outcome of the research design is intended to result in conclusions that are both rigorous in method and representative of a subjective lens focused on the data. Table 3.1 takes into account the individual lens of the researcher, the context of the interviewees and the overall dynamics of mentorship.

Table 0.1: Characteristics of an interpretivist study

Feature	Description
The Purpose of the Study	The aim of this study was to make recommendation on how mentoring could be conducted for equestrian coaches.
Ontology	An Interpretivist believes in more than one truth and seeks to understand the phenomenon through the experiences of the participants.
Epistemology	Events are understood through engagement and interpretation of events and social understanding, thus knowledge and the way in which we discover that knowledge, is subjective (Scotland, 2012)
Design & Methodology	The design is exploratory and an interpretivist paradigm. The qualitative research tool is phenomenology The process of data collection via the route of semi structured interviews, using open ended questions; with population and purposive sampling of experts in sport federations and sports coaches in South Africa.

Source: adapted from (Angus, 1999)

The researcher followed an inductive approach underpinned by the Social Learning Theory of Bandura (Brown, Fleming, Payne, & Reynolds, 2003; Nabavi, 2012). The researcher developed subjective meanings of participants' varied and multiple experiences, to look for the complexity of views (J. W. Creswell, 2007) in interpreting each participants; view on mentorship. This data was gathered by employing an interview protocol as part of the semi-structured interview process comprising open ended questions (Srivastava & Hopwood, 2009). The data emerging from the data collection process were analysed and grouped in clusters of themes or classifications. This analysis aimed to determine an understanding of the phenomena in the study for effective mentoring and the identification of factors that bring this about.

### **3.3 Research Methodology**

The research methodology is the process with which results are formulated for the research findings. The research approach for this study was qualitative and the phenomenological methodology included central characteristics which were observed across case related variations (von Kardoff & Steinke, 2004).

The research method of semi-structured interviews employed for this study was descriptive and explored the relationships between the participants and events that took place in their contexts. A phenomenological approach assisted the researcher in revealing the lived experiences inherent in the lives of the participants. Three intertwining steps were identified, including the use of field notes as a secondary data storage method in the recording of thick descriptions, which gave deeper meaning to the behaviour and experiences interpreted with the contextual detail and the use of phenomenological approach in the exploration to identify what was at the core of the topic under investigation (Moran, 2000; Wertz, 2005).

An interpretivist paradigm was assumed in gathering 'deep' information and perceptions through an inductive qualitative research method (J. Creswell & Poth, 2016).

### **3.4 Research Population and Sampling**

The research population, according to Agee (2009), refers to the total group of possible interviewees from which the sample could be drawn, and from this group, a sample of thirteen (13) was selected based on the inclusion criteria and included eight (8) professional and five (5) non-professional equestrian coaches.

For the purpose of this study the professional coaches were defined as experienced coaches who may or may not have been registered. They met the criteria of having had at least 10 years of coaching experience. Secondly these coaches showed evidence of having achieved top honours in national or international level events for at least three to five years as an equestrian athlete. Thirdly these coaches were currently training equestrian athletes who were achieving top honours consistently at national or international level events.

These professional coaches brought a richness to the research as they explored their own mentorship journey through the research questions, which explored mentorship influences in each participant's professional development as an equestrian coach. The research questions also explored how each participant viewed mentorship as being of value to the further development of non-professional or less experienced equestrian coaches. A professional body for sports coaches does not yet exist in South Africa. Therefore, for the purpose of this study, a professional coach could also mean a coach with professional competition experience, earning a living in the absence of a professional body. Similarly, non-professional coaches without competition experience, are able to earn a living from coaching in the absence of a professional body.

The non-professional coaches in this study were defined as less experienced coaches who may or may not have been registered. These non-professional coaches filled the criteria of having had between two to five years of coaching experience. Secondly, the non-professional coaches may also be currently in training as coaches, engaged in a tertiary degree programme or engaged in reflective

practice to better themselves as equestrian coaches. Thirdly, these coaches had to have attained at least two years of personal competition experience at interprovincial or national level. The engagement with these non-professional equestrian coaches was deemed to be valuable as they offered their own ontological stance of how mentorship or lack thereof had influenced their own coaching development and progress.

### **3.4.1 Purposive Sampling**

It needed to be remembered that the participants included in this qualitative phenomenological research would be selected because they had lived experiences that were relevant to the focus of the study and thus would be motivated to talk about their experiences (Larkin & Thompson, 2011). A closely defined group for whom the research question was significant, was therefore selected through the process of purposive sampling (Devers & Frankel, 2000). Within a purposive, non-random sample, certain criteria are applied to select the participants.

Purposive sampling, therefore, involves some advance knowledge of the population to be investigated (Mettler, Sprenger & Winter, 2017). Purposive sampling was employed in this study to assist the researcher in selecting participants with consideration to the sample criteria based on experience, qualifications and position held.

Sixteen (16) participants were initially selected for the purpose of this study. The sample with the characteristics described above included up to eight (8) professional coaches from the equestrian disciplines of show jumping, dressage eventing and equitation and up to eight (8) non-professional coaches who were able to give complementary and comparative input on mentorship in their own equestrian discipline. While the size of the sample in this study initially comprised sixteen (16) coaches, the study reached saturation point after thirteen (13) interviews.

A saturation point determined the sample size since qualitative research produces thick descriptions. Thus, a point of diminishing return would become apparent and increasing the sample size would no longer contribute to new evidence (Ritchie *et al.*, 2003).

### **3.5 Reflexivity**

Reflexivity offers an opportunity for the researcher to critically examine her own interpretation of what was said or written (Vaara & Whittington, 2012) in a manner that ensures an honest representation of the thoughts of the participants (Shaw, 2010).

Reflexivity further creates awareness of the researcher's own presence in the research process and the need to remain cognisant of this involvement with the participants and the manner in which the researcher may influence the direction of the research. The researcher, in fact, becomes part of the phenomenon being studied as she draws on her knowledge of what it is to be a mentee, a mentor, and an equestrian athlete. This knowledge draws on the rules governing communication in the equine/rider/coach relationship; and on the cultural and experiential knowledge of the role of mentorship in everyday life (Barry, Britten, Barber, Bradely & Stevenson, 1999).

Agee (2009) noted the importance of reflexivity with regards to how the makeup of questions will position the researcher in relation to the interviewees. Flick *et al.* (2004) agreed that the unique

features of qualitative research allow for the study of how people experience and think about events and social relations. Both studies, however, alert the researcher from an ethical viewpoint to consider the kind of questions that both represent the lives of individuals and may exert an effect on others.

### **3.6 Data Collection**

Data collection within qualitative phenomenological research tends to be focused on methods which allow for depth and flexibility (Larkin & Thompson, 2011). Semi-structured interviews were conducted in the data collection process and are viewed as a non-standardised qualitative interview (Lewis *et al.*, 2018) with the analysis dependent on the goals, the questions and the methodological approach (von Kardoff *et al.*, 2004). Interviews like these are frequently used in qualitative studies because they allow participants and researchers to engage in active dialogue about the phenomenon under investigation (Gibson & Brown, 2009).

Semi-structured interviews are in-depth, provide thick descriptions (Tracy, 2010) and allow the researcher to collect appropriate data from appropriately selected participants with the focus falling on 'how' things are understood rather than 'what' happened regarding the phenomena being studied (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). Asking open ended questions enabled the researcher to explore non apparent issues and build rapport and trust with the respondents (Smith, Chen & Liu, 2008). In order to refine the questions that participants may have found too general, prompts encouraged the participants to explore individual interpretations of mental phenomena (Pietkiewicz *et al.*, 2014). According to research conducted by Adams (2015), probing questions allow information to be disseminated within the themes and sub-themes of the data analysis.

The semi-structured interviews allowed the interviewer to cover the desired topics while still providing the participants with the room to tell their story, thereby avoiding the risk of not eliciting the information regarding the topic required for the study as may have happened within an unstructured interview (Gibson & Brown, 2009). A scheduled set of formal interviews took place in person on a one-to-one basis with each interview lasting between thirty (30) to forty-five (45) minutes.

#### **3.6.1 Research Instrument**

The research instruments included the interview protocol for exploring mentorship for the equestrian coach, and a consent form with details of anonymity and confidentiality regarding the use of the collected data. The interview schedule consisted of biographical information such as age, gender, years of experience, professional status, employment status (section A) and a set of interview questions (section B). Both are attached as annexures A and B.

Justification for the questions in Table 3.2 below assists the researcher in exploring the role of mentorship in coach development to understand the link between mentorship and sports coaching in South Africa.

#### **3.6.2 Alignment of the Research Questions and Interview Protocol Questions**

Table 3.2 illustrates the alignment between the research questions and sub-questions of the study as well as the questions contained in the interview protocol. This table was used to ensure that the



research questions were aligned with the data collection process and the interview protocol questions and to furthermore, ensure that no gaps appeared due to irregularities in the data collection process.

Table 0.2: Justification of the interview protocol questions

Open ended questions to establish patterns in understanding aspects of mentorship through the lived experience of each interviewee.		
Question	Probing questions	Justification of the questions and sub-questions
1. What role has mentorship played in your advancement/success as an equestrian sports coach?	In what way did mentorship influence your coaching role?	The researcher wants to establish the characteristics of the mentorship role by asking this question and sub-questions.
2. In what circumstances have you needed mentorship in your equestrian sports coaching role?	2.1 For example, when coaching effectiveness is needed to improve high performance goals 2.2 For example, during periods of self-doubt as a sports coach	The researcher wants to establish the value or need for mentorship to improve coaching effectiveness
3. Can you describe how a lack of mentorship may have impacted on your advancement/success as an equestrian sports coach?	For example, when having a mentor may have helped you to be more effective as a coach?	The researcher wants to establish the importance of mentorship through an understanding of coaching effective characteristics
4. How has mentorship influenced your personal growth as an individual?	For example, in making you more empathetic, tolerant, patient.	The researcher wants to establish the connection between mentorship and the development of intrapersonal and interpersonal skills.
5. In what way has mentorship influenced your approach to coaching?	5.1 For example in the qualities you see in yourself as a coach 5.2 For examples in the coach qualities you look for in other coaches	The researcher wants to establish the connection between mentorship and the scope of knowledge needed for coach effectiveness in sport
6. Is there anything else you would like to say about mentorship or coaching relating to the equestrian industry?	For example, anything that you feel would contribute to the questions above	The researcher wants to identify any underlying sub themes

### 3.6.3 Data Capturing

Since the human mind tends to forget quickly, as a secondary data storage method in qualitative research, field notes are crucial in order to retain the data gathered from verbal and (where applicable) non-verbal aspects of responses to questions (Groenewald, 2004). The researcher captured the data from the interviewees in this study by using audio recordings as well as detailed field notes. These recordings were subsequently fully transcribed and professionally coded, through the process of interpretive phenomenological analysis using ATLAS.ti V8.

### **3.7 Data Analysis**

The data were analysed and interpreted through the process of interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) (Larkin & Thompson, 2011). The phenomenological component associated with IPA extensively describes the participant's central concerns and ideas in the form of experiences reported to the researcher (Smith, Chen & Liu, 2008). The interpretative component associated with IPA provides context to these experiences while considering their cultural and physical environments (Smith *et al.*, 2008).

Through this process there is the endeavour to make sense of the constitutive relationship between the participant and their world (Miles & Huberman, 1994). The ultimate goal for the researcher includes a renewed insight into the phenomenon under investigation, which is informed by the participant's own relatedness to, and engagement with, the phenomenon (Smith *et al.*, 2008).

Qualitative research is analysed by being broken down into smaller units which reveal their characteristics, elements and structure (Dey, 1993). Connections are then made between these units of meaning, drawing new insights from the data. According to Gray (2004), content analysis is commonly used in analysing qualitative data. However, the researcher did not draw conclusions from the data but, rather, was led by the data so that conclusions emerged from the data collection pertaining to the phenomenon. This is supported by Gray (2004) who reports that a characteristic of grounded theory is that it does not begin with prior assumptions. Tesch (1991) argues that descriptive, interpretive approaches are geared towards providing rich descriptions and interpretations of lived experiences derived from their meaning to those who experience them.

#### **3.7.1 Content Analysis and Coding**

Analysis of data involves the exploration of the interaction of smaller units of meaning and consequences pertaining to a particular phenomenon (Dey, 1993). In the analysis of this study, the researcher unpacked patterns of narrative and their meaning within the context of Social Learning Theory with a particular focus on the perceptions of individuals and the way they interact with one another (Mearns, 2009) .

In looking at the constituent parts, the researcher drew these together into broader themes in order to discover different patterns within these themes (Strauss, 2008). To make sense of patterns and meanings, Gray (2004) advocates identifying patterns as they emerge from the data; hence the researcher transcribed her own data and obtained professional coding.

The data were analysed firstly with a case-by-case analysis (Larkin & Thompson, 2011) with the transcript of a single participant being perused in detail before moving on to the transcript of the next participant. Each transcript was read a number of times in order for the researcher to become familiar with the data.

Initial coding included the information provided by the participants, which was considered significant and/or interesting, and included observation of behaviour and the emphasis placed on certain words or phrases. This process allowed the researcher to provide an initial description of themes evolving in the data. At this stage of the analysis, the researcher considered the link between the emerging themes and their connections with the relevant theory (Mearns, 2009). For instance, the views of R11 were supported by studies undertaken by Denzin and Lincoln (2011), Nabavi (2012), Green and Piel

(2010), thus adding to the development of the grounded theory which is underpinned by the Social Learning Theory (Bandura, 1969).

The next stage of the coding process in the analysis included the connecting of the themes, also known as the axial coding process (Strauss, 2008). Here, the researcher endeavoured to make sense of the themes that emerged and clustered them. A table was then created which assisted the researcher in ordering the themes coherently. Superordinate and subordinate categories could then be identified. At this stage, the data were organised into a structure in a narrative pertaining to the central phenomenon of the study (Strauss, 2008). This selective coding process allowed for the formulation of a story line between the interrelationship of the superordinate and subordinate categories (Gray, 2004) and the development of the grounded theory.

The validity of these relationships is tested in the trustworthiness of the study as discussed below.

### **3.8 Trustworthiness of the Study**

The analysis of the qualitative data garnered in this study is based on interpretation. As credibility and truthfulness of the interpretation is central, triangulation provides an independent measure to either confirm or contradict the findings (Noon, 2018). As this study is qualitative, the criteria associated with trustworthiness was applied. As evident in Table 3.3 below, the strategies for ensuring trustworthiness in qualitative research includes credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability (Denzin *et al.*, 2006; Shenton, 2004).

The researcher gathered information from various approaches through the process of 'triangulation' to ensure objectivity of the study (Strauss, 2008). Triangulation is understood to be the collection information through various approaches in order to understand the context of independent lived experiences (Gray, 2004). Together with the use of other sources (Merriam, 1998), triangulation tests whether the collected data reflects reality and is independent of, and not influenced by, the assumptions of the researcher (von Kardoff *et al.*, 2004). In this manner, the use of purposive sampling, using a variety of tools including reflexivity (Agee, 2009), advances the neutrality of the researcher (Guba & Lincoln, 1994).

Furthermore, according to the credibility of the researcher, the major instrument of data collection and analysis is of particular importance as his/her experience and qualifications provide validity in qualitative research (Shenton, 2004). Yet Merriam (1998) cautions that the manner in which the researcher understands the data could create an unconscious bias and to guard against this, in this study, the researcher pertinently followed the data and remained aware of her own perceptions. The strategies for ensuring trustworthiness are set out Table 3.3 (Shenton, 2004).

Table 0.3: Strategies for ensuring trustworthiness in qualitative research projects

Credibility	The use of recognised research methods and using random sampling to ensure that the true picture is being presented. Member checking of data and interpretations or theories that are formed therein.
Transferability	Ensuring sufficient detail in the provision of background data in order to ground the context of the study with a comprehensive description of the phenomenon in question, which can be applied elsewhere.
Dependability	Ensuring that the methods used are clear so that the study can be repeated in other research.
Confirmability	The researcher must demonstrate that findings emerge from the data and not from one's own predispositions or bias. There may be shortcomings in the study methods and possible effects on the research.

Source: adapted from (Shenton, 2004)

### 3.9 Ethical Considerations

The application of ethics in the process of collecting data, is central to procedural mandates that facilitate informed consent, maintain privacy and confidentiality and ensure protection from harm or deception (Sales & Folkman, 2000).

Interview protocols ensured the participants had been provided with all the relevant information regarding the study (Noon, 2018) and were not made uncomfortable or anxious in any way during the interview, or harmed in any way by the research (Gray, 2004). The researcher evaluated whether the interviewee might be placed at risk in terms of stress or feelings of vulnerability during the interview and assurances of confidentiality were offered to the interviewees (Allmark *et al.*, 2009). A further ethical consideration was the right of participants to withdraw from the research at any time (Badger, 2000). According to Patton (1990), an interview must state what the interviewee stands to gain by participating in an interview.

The ethical guidelines proposed for a qualitative study (Allmark *et al.*, 2009) were strictly adhered to throughout the process in this research study. The researcher considered all the principles of the assessment of the quality in qualitative research (Tierney, 2008; Denzin, 2009).

Informed consent suggests that the participant has been provided with the relevant information regarding the study in order to make an informed decision about their participation in the study (Noon, 2018). This researcher provided each potential participant with all the information pertaining to the aim and purpose of the research study. The potential role of the participant in the study was thoroughly explained. Furthermore, the voluntary nature of participation in this study, without compensation, was emphasised and the anonymity of each interviewee was assured.

Each of the participants was over 18 years of age and informed consent was given by each of the participants. However, when interviewing a minor or vulnerable person, ethics dictate that consent is given by the parent or guardian and the interview undertaken in their presence, therefore the researcher must be sensitive to information disclosed that may cause the interviewee discomfort in the presence of a third person (Allmark, Boote, Chambers, Clarke, McDonnell, Thompson & Tod, 2009).

The data collection method used, that of semi-structured interviews, was seen as a beneficial method to garner the data when the ethics associated with the study was considered. This method assisted the interviewer in establishing rapport with the participants as well as clarifying aspects associated with the purpose of the study (Gibson & Brown, 2009).

### **3.10 Limitations and Scope of the Study**

#### **3.10.1 Scope of the Study**

Denzin *et al.* (2006) argue that human learning is best researched by using qualitative data. In selecting a research methodology, it is best to select that paradigm whose assumptions are best met by the phenomenon being investigated (Denzin *et al.*, 2006). The ontological/epistemological lens allows for a 'thick description' of the phenomenon under study.

The researcher's ontological stance is relativist. Her interpretivist lens is the belief that there is more than one perspective which provided the framework within which to understand the phenomenon through the experiences of the participants (Scotland, 2012). This is aligned with the epistemological paradigm in which events are understood through engagement, the interpretation of events and social understanding; the knowledge thus gained, and the way we understand it is subjective (Brannen, 2005).

The scope of the study extended to the exploration of factors critical for successful mentoring and focused on coaches with a range of experience sets. Particular insights explored related to their own journey in terms of personal development, their ability to engage with others, insight into how these coaches understood the learning of others, how they experienced their own growth, and their broader contribution to society. The Social Learning Theory (Bandura, 1969) for this study was considered the most appropriate theoretical framework because of its particular societal understanding and focus:

- People engage with each other on different levels;
- Coaches, as helpers of these individuals, form the bridge between these individuals and their other groups; and
- Each individual has a unique perspective, speed and style of learning that needs to be considered.

To answer the research question posed by the study, the researcher used interpretive, inductive qualitative research analysing the data drawn from a selected sample (Merriam, 1998). Data gathered from understanding the lived experiences of the eight experienced coaches, revealed deep insights to human behaviour over an extended coaching period at all levels. In many cases these coaches were able to offer insights on the continuity of individual behaviour, as some of their coach/rider relationships endured over a period of years. Furthermore, these experienced coaches were able to share perspectives of having been mentee and mentor and insight to the factors for successful mentorship for equestrian coaches.

### **3.10.2 Limitations of the Study**

The limitations of the study were found in terms of geographical scope, where the interviewees were based in the two provinces of Gauteng and Western Cape, in South Africa (Simon & Goes, 2013). However, the first group of interviewees consisted of experienced professional coaches who regularly coached riders residing in most of the other provinces.

A further limitation of qualitative study is the fact that it occurs within a natural setting and is therefore difficult to replicate (Simon & Goes, 2013) as interviewee behaviour and responsiveness may differ extensively depending on the prevailing conditions at the time of the interview. Thus, in line with naturalistic inquiry, which is not concerned with generalisation but seeks to explore meanings and descriptions (Lincoln & Guba, 1985), the researcher sought to gather insight from rich descriptions of the individual narratives (Gray, 2004).

Finally, a small sample of interviewees was chosen from a larger possible population. Unless this sample is representative of the larger population, the study risks not being an accurate reflection of the population (Larkin & Thompson, 2011). This study focused on a purposive sample drawn from a population of possible equestrian coaches to provide a valuable perspective on the topic of mentorship, and in order for the sample to be representative across range and experience, two groups of equestrian coaches were chosen. The first group had experienced mentorship or had mentored less experienced coaches in the equestrian field. The second group comprised coaches who may not yet have experienced mentorship in their professional development.

The target sample consisted of these two groups so as to explore their perspectives from each side of mentorship. The interviews continued until saturation point had been established in terms of data collection (Groenewald, 2004). The sample by definition provides limited data, thus to mitigate this, the sample was carefully chosen to be as representative as possible.

### **3.11 Conclusion**

Chapter 3 discussed the research design and methodology and its appropriateness as a qualitative study approach aimed at interpreting the nature of the research question. This was achieved through a range of semi-structured interview methods. Clusters of themes were developed by grouping units of meaning together, to identify specific topics. These topics were transcribed and coded to determine dominant or central themes (Flick, von Kardoff, et al., 2004). Based on these dominant themes, Chapter 4 considers the findings that can be drawn from these themes with a particular focus on answering the research question. This will be performed using the Social Learning Theory as the conceptual framework.

## Chapter 4

### Data Analysis and Results

#### 4.1 Introduction

In this chapter of the study, the researcher focuses on presenting the data collection and analysis of the study. Creswell (2012:253) suggested that data analysis calls for displaying the conclusions arrived at in “tables and figures and constructing a narrative” to clarify what has been unearthed in reply to the queries in the inquiry.

The first section of this chapter focuses on the biographical information of the respondents; thereafter, the various themes evolving from the raw data are discussed. Observations made of the intonations of the respondents during the interviews and the patterns in the initial coding are discussed. The researcher discusses the themes arising from the data coding process, with a further summary of the categories as they relate to each of the themes and lastly, the research questions contained in this study are outlined.

#### 4.2 Biographical Information: Respondents

Table 4.1 indicates the respondent designations utilised in the data analysis process of this study. The age groups, years of experience, gender, professional/non-professional groupings as well as their current employment status are noted.

Table 0.1: Biographical detail of respondents

Respondent No	Prof/non prof Coach	Age group	Years of Experience	Gender	Current employment status
R1	Profession coach	55-65	31 years and above	male	Full time self employed
R2	Professional coach	55-65	31 years and above	female	Full time self employed
R3	Professional coach	35-44	16 – 20 years	female	Full time self employed
R4	Professional coach	55-65	31years and above	male	Full time self employed
R5	Professional coach	55-65	31 years and above	female	Mostly part time with 4 years full time self employed
R6	Professional coach	35-44	21-25 years	female	Full time self employed
R7	Professional coach	35-44	21-25 years	Male	Full time self employed
R8	Professional coach	45-54	26-30 years	female	Full time self employed
R9	Non-professional coach	18-24	Less than 5 years	female	Employed as part time coach
R10	Non-professional coach	18-24	Less than 5 years	female	Employed as part time coach
R11	Non-professional coach	18-24	Less than 5 years	female	Employed as part time coach
R12	Non-professional coach	18-24	Less than 5 years	female	Employed as full-time coach
R13	Non-professional coach	35-44	11-15 years	female	Employed as part time coach

In order to assure anonymity, no names or any other references were used that could identify the respondents in any way. To further ensure this, the researcher used numerals (1,2,3, etc.) to identify the respondents set out in Table 4.1 above.

#### 4.3 Reflexivity and Initial Coding

Creswell, (2013) states that a good research undertaking begins with choosing an area of interest and a paradigm (Groenewald, 2004). A research paradigm is described as “a basic set of beliefs that guide action” seen from the researcher’s world view (Lincoln & Denzin, 2000). This world view is the researcher’s perspective and determines how the social phenomena will be studied. With this in mind, the heart of in-depth interviewing revolves around the researcher’s interest in understanding the lived experience of others, and trying to find meaning from these experiences (Seidman, 2006).

The researcher, as the primary instrument for data collection and analysis, thus reports in the first person, on both the interview context and researcher observations. A first person writing style is deemed appropriate as an insider perspective offered by the researcher, which is in line with the qualitative research paradigm (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011).



As the researcher, my epistemological position regarding the study I have undertaken is expressed as follows. The data are the source of perspectives of the participants who are involved with coaching, either as professional or as non-professional coaches. These coaches may or may not have experienced mentorship. To understand these perspectives, I engaged with the participants in collecting the data.

In line with recommendations for researchers to reflect on their own actions, feelings and conflicts which may be experienced during the research (Barry *et al.*, 1999), I have made observations of certain aspects during the interviews. These observations are noted in my reflective journal.

Of the 13 participants, everyone managed their time keeping arriving in time or even sometimes ahead of the scheduled interview, despite the significant congestion of inner-city traffic. I attributed this to participants giving the subject of mentorship a certain ‘gravitas’ and perhaps wanting to ensure they were able to make full use of the time allocated for the interview.

I noted that the participants switched off their phones without being asked to do so and the only interruption experienced during one of the interviews was due to an unscheduled incident that needed immediate attention. In spite of this interruption, methodological notes contained in my reflective journal, kept a record to maintain continual orientation; the notes have been combined with the primary data. In my interpretation, I have considered the content of these methodological notes together with the field notes and the transcribed interviews. Table 4.2 summarises my observations while conducting the interviews and the initial coding.

Table 0.2: Observations of the researcher during the interviews

Participant	Reflexivity
Respondent 1	The respondent arrived early for the interview and during the interview it became clear that the participant had studied the interview guide which I had e-mailed to him. He sat upright and did not move when considering the interview questions. I considered the participant to be a highly skilled and an experienced person in the field. He spoke with intensity, and conviction on the merits of mentorship, in enriching him as a person and as a coach.
Respondent 2	The respondent arrived ahead of the interview time and sat in a relaxed open manner and injected humour in some of her views. The respondent expressed gratitude in being asked to give her views on, and her role in receiving and giving mentorship. I got the impression that the participant was enthusiastic at the thought of being able to pass on her knowledge and wisdom to younger coaches
Respondent 3	This highly successful participant arrived a few minutes ahead of the arranged time and expressed feeling a little nervous. This was demonstrated by the way she sat, poised and leaning slightly inward. She reflected over every question before answering and was adamant throughout, that she could not have achieved her own personal best without the mentorship she had received in her own career. This respondent came across as someone who cared deeply about her responsibility towards both younger coaches, the horses and clients in her care.
Respondent 4	This respondent arrived a few minutes ahead of the interview and seemed relaxed in the interview. He appeared humble in recognising the mentorship role he played in the current lives of coaches and expressed conviction of the importance the role mentorship had played in the success of his career. He gave me the impression that he looked more for personal integrity in the mentor/mentee relationship rather than expertise. My impression of this respondent was that he was deeply committed to helping young people by giving of his knowledge and experience.
Respondent 5	The respondent arrived well ahead of her interview time and seemed agitated when discussing the need for mentorship, expressing frustrating at the lack of formal mentorship available to

Participant	Reflexivity
	younger equestrian coaches. I felt the participant was sharing an emotional time in her life, when drawing the comparison between her difficult child and adulthood without a mentor, and the positive pathway mentorship brought her in her middle adult years. She expressed the feeling she would love the chance to pay it forward through some sort of mentorship programme.
Respondent 6	This interview took time to begin as the respondent was engaged with questions from her team in the minutes leading up to the interview time. Although she admitted having read the information, I had sent her ahead of the interview, this respondent seemed doubtful of what mentorship meant. After a few open-ended questions as to what mentorship could mean to her, the respondent became animated and enthusiastic in recognising mentors in her life. During the interview this participant seemed keen for younger coaches who had not been exposed to mentorship, to know there were great mentors out there to tap into. I felt this coach was impassioned to share her positive mentoring experiences with other coaches and was using me as a conduit to get the message to others.
Respondent 7	This respondent was on time and appeared well prepared for the interview. He spoke with authority on his first-hand experience at having received great mentorship both formally and informally. He gave me the impression that he initiated contact with those in his life, whom he felt could sustain him in mentorship especially in his professional life. This respondent seemed comfortable with the attainment of his professional and personal goals. He expressed great conviction that mentorship should be very much part of coach education. I considered this respondent highly articulate, and driven, and someone who knew what he wanted to achieve in both his professional and personal life.
Respondent 8	This respondent arrived ahead of time for the interview. I got the impression this respondent embraced the positives in her life. She admitted to the misconception she had of mentorship being restricted to imparting only technical knowledge, until a mentor who was not an expert in her field, had a profoundly positive effect on her. The respondent appeared convinced that mentoring should be a deliberate act during one's development. I got the impression that this respondent was surprised that a mentor who was a non-equestrian was able to teach her skills that would benefit her in her equestrian coaching role.
Respondent 9	The respondent was on time and appeared unsure of what was expected from her. She relaxed after being given assurance that she had total control of the proceedings and seemed keen to give her views on the subject. During the interview this young respondent showed signs of uncertainty when asked about her role as a coach; but she expressed confidence that her coach tutor who she felt was her mentor, would continue to support her as she learnt to deal with different ways in which people learn. I felt this respondent grasped the concept of mentorship well, in the way she compared her own experiences to that of being mentored.
Respondent 10	This respondent arrived ahead of the interview time. She communicated freely when discussing how mentoring was currently taking place in her life by people she trusted. She seemed assured that some family members had acted as mentors in her childhood, and she became animated when explaining that her coach mentor, had given her the confidence and support to communicate with different people in the way they receive knowledge differently. I felt this respondent placed a great deal of importance on trust in the mentoring relationship, in the way she expressed what mentoring had provided for her in her personal development.
Respondent 11	This respondent arrived a few minutes ahead of schedule and seemed well prepared for the interview. As a young coach, this respondent expressed conviction in using the communication skills developed through a formal mentorship program. This respondent was convincing, in her belief that mentorship had guided her to measure up to herself, rather than to some standard. I got the impression this respondent had given a lot of thought to the interview questions, and measured mentorship as a valuable development tool, which she would continue to draw on in her future as an equestrian coach.
Respondent 12	This participant seemed pragmatic at the thought she had no mentorship in her childhood years and showed acceptance on having to rely on herself as she grew up. While she showed determination with the way she had to deal with a lack of mentorship throughout this time; she expressed frustration at the mistakes she made, which she felt could have been avoided through

Participant	Reflexivity
	mentorship. It seems this realisation occurred once she began to experience mentorship in a formal coaching programme. I felt this participant shared comprehensive detail and experience with regard to the lack of mentoring, and the way it had impacted her personal life and approach to coaching.
Respondent 13	This respondent arrived a few minutes ahead of the scheduled time and during the interview it was clear that this participant had strong views on mentorship. She articulated herself well, acknowledging her strengths, yet her demeanour remained humble in the manner in which she expressed how mentorship informed her approach to coaching. She expressed conviction that she would continue to need and seek mentorship in her personal and professional life. I gained the impression that this respondent had received positive mentoring in her life, which had helped to support and guide her through some challenging times, and that she had a good grasp of the personal benefits of mentorship.

Figure 0.1: Example of the thematic coding process relating to Figure 4.2

#### 4.4 Themes Evolving from the Data Coding Process

The researcher found clear themes emerging from the data coding process which are shown below. The critical purpose of qualitative research is to produce information that proposes thorough information pertaining to only a small number of subjects as opposed to hefty groups of subjects. Furthermore, research states that in order to accomplish the above, one needs to reduce the set of codes to arrive at no more than seven themes (J. Creswell, 2012). Figures 4.1 and 4.2 are examples of raw thematic data coded into prevailing themes extracted from the ATLAS.ti.V8.

Icon	Name	Count	Groups	Comment	Creator	Creation Date
	Lack of mentorship: Lack of communic...	5	Lack of mentors...	1 It was evident with from the participants' perspective th...	Monique v/d Walt	04 Aug 2019
	Lack of mentorship: Lack of confidence	4	Lack of mentors...	1 The participants indicated that if they were not expose...	Monique v/d Walt	04 Aug 2019
	Lack of mentorship: Lack of knowledge...	6	Lack of mentors...	1 This code refers to the participants indicating that if th...	Monique v/d Walt	04 Aug 2019
	Lack of mentorship: Made many more...	5	Lack of mentors...	1 In this particular code the participants reflected that t...	Monique v/d Walt	04 Aug 2019
	Lack of mentorship: The need for ment...	6	Lack of mentors...	1 This code refers to the participant indicating that they...	Monique v/d Walt	04 Aug 2019
	Mentorship in advancement: Exposur...	4	Mentorship in a...	1 This code refers to the coaching's reflection of the var...	Monique v/d Walt	04 Aug 2019
	Mentorship in advancement: Improvem...	5	Mentorship in a...	1 This code refers to the focus of the person as a coachi...	Monique v/d Walt	04 Aug 2019
	Mentorship in advancement: Improving...	9	Mentorship in a...	1 This code refers to the participants indicating that one...	Monique v/d Walt	04 Aug 2019
	Mentorship in advancement: Knowledg...	15	Mentorship in a...	1 This code refers to the process of mentoship as being...	Monique v/d Walt	04 Aug 2019
	Mentorship influence on coaching: Find...	3	Mentorship influ...	1 This code refers to the ways in which mentoring has i...	Monique v/d Walt	04 Aug 2019
	Mentorship influence on coaching: Iden...	12	Mentorship influ...	1 This code refers to the participants indicating that hey...	Monique v/d Walt	04 Aug 2019
	Mentorship on coaching: Lifelong learni...	6	Mentorship influ...	1 This code refers to the participant indicating that the...	Monique v/d Walt	04 Aug 2019
	Mentorship on personal life: Built toller...	7	Mentorship in a...	1 This code refers to the personal life impact that the m...	Monique v/d Walt	04 Aug 2019
	Mentorship on personal life: Developed...	9	Mentorship in a...	1 It was indicated by the participants that they have dev...	Monique v/d Walt	04 Aug 2019
	Mentorship on personal life: Sense of i...	2	Mentorship in a...	1 This code refers to the mentee/coach developing a se...	Monique v/d Walt	04 Aug 2019
	Need of mentorship: Advancement of C...	5	Need for mentor...	1 This code refers to the circumstances where the ment...	Monique v/d Walt	04 Aug 2019
	Need of mentorship: How to become a a...	3	Need for mentor...	1 This code refer to the question regarding processes w...	Monique v/d Walt	04 Aug 2019
	Positive influence of mentorship: Acces...	7	Mentorship in a...	1 This code refers to the the mentee to be exposed to v...	Monique v/d Walt	04 Aug 2019
	Positive influence of mentorship: Allowi...	6	Mentorship in a...	1 This code refers to one of the components associated...	Monique v/d Walt	04 Aug 2019
	Positive influence of mentorship: Buildi...	14	Mentorship in a...	1 This code refers to one of the many positive influence...	Monique v/d Walt	04 Aug 2019

Result: 20 of 20 Code(s)

Name	Comment	Cri
Lack of mentorship	This particular theme speaks to the reflections from p...	M
Mentorship in advancing in Equestrian...	This particular theme expressed the various indication...	M
Mentorship influence on coaching proc...	This theme refers to the the impact that the mentorshi...	M
Need for mentorship programmes	This theme refers to the participants indicating that th...	M
<b>Result: 4 of 4 Group(s)</b>		

Figure 4.2 Example of raw thematic data, coded into prevailing themes

Four main themes, with their categories and subcategories are identified in Table 4.3. These were identified in the coding process by the ATLAS.ti. V8; therefore, the researcher had no need to further condense the codes.

Table 0.3: Identified themes, categories and sub-categories

Themes	Categories	Subcategories
Theme 1: In-effective mentorship	1. Communication	Mistakes Problem identification Accessibility
	2. Confidence	Stress Adaptable Guilt
	3. Knowledge	Holistic Interaction Impact
	4. Mentorship	Focus Reflection Inclusive Empathy
Theme 2: Mentorship in Advancing Equestrian Coaching	1. Exposure	Holistic Interactive Understanding
	2. Intrapersonal skills	Development Self-confidence Responsibility Advancement
	3. Improve horse & Rider	Connectivity Interpersonal skills

Themes	Categories	Subcategories
		Professional knowledge
	4. Knowledge transference	Adaptability Structure Connection
Theme 3: Mentorship influence on Coaching	1. Independence	Development Principles Motivation
	2. Differences	Recognition Adaptable Open minded Encouraging Understanding
	3. Life-long Learning	Patience Adaptable Reflection Foundational Knowledge
	4. Find own path	Individuality Bigger Picture Perspectives Well Rounded
Theme 4: Need for Mentorship programmes	1. Career	Knowledge Technique Guidance Support Accessible
	2. Better coach	Merge 'how' with 'what' Professional knowledge transfer Intrapersonal knowledge mastery Interpersonal knowledge skills Life-long learning

An in-depth description of the categories of each of the four themes are identified and described below. Table 4.4 presents a summary of the categories related to Theme 1 (ineffective mentorship) is discussed.

Table 0.4: Ineffective mentorship categories (Theme 1)

Categories	Description
1: Communication	The skill to communicate with mentors in transferring important professional knowledge and interpersonal abilities.
2: Confidence	The support of mentors in applying important knowledge and abilities, to become learner centred. Knowledge reduces stress, develops adaptability and grows confidence.

3: Knowledge	The transfer of knowledge through mentorship, of systems and business processes that are part of the business of coaching.
4: Mentorship	Achieves learner outcomes through recognition of different ways of learning, using reflection to focus on various answers for decision making.

Each of the above-mentioned categories related to theme 1 are discussed below with supportive verbatim interview quotations.

#### **4.4.1 Theme 1: Ineffective Mentorship**

This theme speaks to the reflections of the participants related to their interpretation of the lack of progress in coach development without exposure to a mentoring process. These various aspects were expressed as a sense of what they would have missed if they had not had the opportunity of mentorship in their own coaching development.

##### *4.4.1.1 Theme 1: Category 1 - Communication*

It was evident from the perspectives of the participants that they would not have had the skills to communicate with their pupils in the processes of transferring important skills and knowledge without the guidance of a mentor. Some of the coaches indicated that communication in the mentoring process gave them the confidence in not always having the right answer and to make mistakes, while still providing the way to empower their athletes by building on what is good.

The mentor was also able to assist the mentee through this teaching process to ultimately become the mentor. Below are verbatim extracts from the interviews which illustrate some of the responses of the participants related to communication. (The letter “R” denotes the different respondents, i.e. “R5” is respondent 5.)

*R5: without mentorship you hit your head against the wall, because the mentor would have helped you to see the door ... my mentors have shown me that there are different answers, and mistakes can be made.*

*R8: as a coach you have done wrong by your pupil because you haven't sought a way to work through this or understand that client or personality type, which mentorship will help you with.*

*R4: It's important to know what was good, because good builds good, and good mentors build good coaches, so you can't stick to the book, must empower pupils in a learner centred way.*

*R6: if I get stuck, I will speak to B and he will mentor me and help me to see the problem in a different way.*

*R2: Now many have passed on (mentors) and I suppose I have become a mentor to others. I think having mentored (D) I didn't even realise I was mentoring her at the time.*

The researcher noted that R8 and R6 mentioned that communication is important in knowledge transfer and it builds trust in the coaching relationship, whilst R5 and R4 emphasised that, although mistakes are made during learning, communication helps to provide different answers, which grows the confidence of the coach.

#### 4.4.1.2 Theme 1: Category 2- Confidence

The participants indicated that had they not been exposed to their respective mentors they would not have had the confidence that they currently possess. The fact that mentorship allowed space for error, and a community of some sort to share errors or concerns, allowed them to be better coaches. Below are verbatim extracts from the interviews which illustrate some of the responses of the participants related to confidence.

*R12: Without having a mentor even though I am self-sufficient, did impact my confidence quite a lot so as I have gone along, I have made mistakes, which has impacted on my confidence. In turn my pupils would have coped better as shows had I been able to guide them.*

*R10: Without mentorship I wouldn't be able to read or understand people and if they are catching what I am saying. I would then see a lot of confusion and I would lose confidence*

*R8: A lot of us were involved in disciplines we didn't know the first thing about, but mentorship put us in such a great standing that you gained more and more confidence in your ability in 'how' to coach.*

*R9: I used my feelings of confidence to calm her, I learnt this from mentorship. Mentorship gave me confidence and showed me how to expand this to other people.*

*R11: Without mentorship "I wouldn't have had the confidence to express my knowledge, too shy to interact, too scared to say something wrong previously, now I can't stop talking.*

The researcher noted that the respondents R10, R9, R11 who felt that confidence was a significant benefit gained through mentorship, were all non-professional coaches of similar biographical backgrounds, while R12, as a non-professional coach, who did not have the benefit of a mentor, felt she lacked confidence because of not having had the benefit of mentorship.

#### 4.4.1.3 Theme 1: Category 3 - Knowledge of self, systems and processes

This category refers to the participants indicating that if they had not been exposed to the mentoring process, they would not have gained the necessary knowledge systems in the context of coaching in the industry. The participants indicated that their mentors had allowed them access to the various components involved in the coaching process for the transference of knowledge for them to be able to make more informed decisions in their careers. This is inclusive of the fact that, as a coach and mentor being exposed to mentorship, it gave them a space in which to reflect on their own experiences with a more knowledgeable person. Below are verbatim extracts from the interviews which illustrate some of the responses of the participants related to knowledge of self, systems and processes.

*R1: it's a difficult industry because you are working with a lot of humans, a lot of clients, if you have not had the opportunity before to work with a mentor together, it's very difficult to deal with human behaviour, it's not the animal that makes the trouble, it's the owner of the horse, the parents of the children and you must learn to deal with this.*

*R2: I look back at mentors who had an impact on my way of coaching, positive influences as well as those who made me say that I never want to coach like that. The match between mentor and mentee has to be carefully chosen. A formalised mentorship is a choice for the*

*individual, in any sphere but especially for equestrian because it's a very personal career choice. Equestrian is a very intense discipline and once you become immersed in it, this becomes your world.*

*R6: he has encouraged me through mentorship through my riding, and my business, teaching me how to run a yard, managing horses, dealing with people, promoting and selling myself.*

*R7: Massive it's made me into the shape I am. The discipline the structure, learning and the knowledge".*

*R8 you have to look up to the people who have experienced it, gone and fought a path and have produced both riders and horses, then it's definitely when you learn.*

*R3: Mentorship has been out of the sports arena. Equestrian with its love for the animal, is an emotionally charged sport. It's a team aspect and when everything is good, we have success, and when it goes wrong, we have the team working for success, but having failure. The coach gets completely involved in the pair (horse and rider) so when you go home there has to be a debrief and self-reflection of what went wrong, what to do next time, life lessons.*

*R11: mentorship has helped me through my coaching, to add to my professional knowledge in equestrian.*

With this interview question, the researcher had a sense that respondents R1, R2, R6, and R3 found it a challenge to separate their private lives from their professional coaching roles.

#### *4.4.1.4 Theme 1: Category 4: Need for mentorship*

This category refers to the participants indicating that they had noticed that there seems to be a huge gap and a need for mentoring in the SA context of equestrian sport. It was reflected by some participants that they would compare this to any other sport where one would need a mentor in order to successfully master the art that one is practising. Therefore, the coaches indicated that their exposure of working with mentors in their field had assisted them in the process of development, allowing them space to make and learn from mistakes and to have empathy and patience in order to transfer knowledge to current and future pupils. Below are verbatim extracts from the interviews which illustrate some of the responses of the participants related to the need for mentorship.

*R13: not enough mentorship in the equestrian industry, younger people are becoming protégée's and as coaching becomes more formalized, they are looking to find mentors, the older generation are closed and don't want to give of their secrets of competitive edge and everyone should want a protégée, during my time overseas, all the coaches had a protégée 'or two in a formal sense.*

*R12: Mentorship is good practice, there are so many young riders who have goals and never reach them because they are not exposed to mentorship. Start a system where coaches can volunteer to be a mentor because riders don't always know what they want. Makes coaches more aware of the responsibility they have towards their riders.*

*R7: I don't believe there is enough mentorship. Difficult sport and everyone is closed, clinics are good to go on, for development*



*R6: I would like to see more formal mentorship for the experienced coaches especially, to continue to grow, and I would like to go on a monthly course where there is a program where you can choose a mentor to address my own pathway. Perhaps once every three months we could touch base to discuss my development.*

*R6: I didn't realise I was being mentored, but looking back I see I was mentored by those people and how would I have grown over the years without it*

The researcher noted that the respondents felt strongly that mentorship should become part of coach education. Interestingly, R13 as a young non-professional coach, felt that the older generation coaches were reluctant to share their knowledge with other coaches.

#### **4.4.2 Theme 2: Mentorship in Advancing Equestrian Coaching**

This particular theme expressed indicators of various learning skills that the participants felt had assisted them in the advancement of their equestrian coaching careers as a result of their exposure to the mentoring process. This theme further expressed the positive influences that mentoring had on them as professional coaches and the ripple effect of that aspects of these mentoring experiences had within their personal lives.

In Table 4.5, a summary of the categories related to Theme 2: Mentorship in advancing equestrian coaching is discussed.

Table 0.5: Mentorship in advancing equestrian coaching categories (Theme 2)

<b>Categories</b>	<b>Description</b>
Experiential learning	Learning by doing in exposure to various learning approaches and skills as a result of mentorship by a more experienced person.
Self-confidence	Understanding the principles of how people learn differently, through interaction with one another.
Improve horse/rider	Guidance of an experienced expert in knowledge transfer to develop skills in the coach, to help both horse and rider
Knowledge transference	Mentorship as a conduit to transfer professional and interpersonal knowledge skills from an older more experienced coach to a younger less experienced coach

Each of the above-mentioned categories related to theme 2 are discussed below with supportive verbatim interview quotations.

##### *4.4.2.1 Theme 2: Category 1 – Experiential learning*

This category refers to the reflections of the coaches regarding various learning approaches in equestrian coaching and refers to skills that may not have been accessible other than through the process of mentorship. Coaches who had experienced mentorship gave a first-hand perspective of the benefits of mentorship interaction in understanding the processes involved in the equestrian coaching process. Below are verbatim extracts from the interviews which illustrate some of the responses of

the participants related to exposure to various approaches in equestrian coaching and skills through access of mentorship.

*R2: In my younger days I had more informal than formal mentors, mentorships influenced me and taught me a better approach both positive and negative.*

*R3: there are principles and people learn in different ways and more than one right or wrong answer, and the setbacks with older coaches is that the psychological side is missing, the open mindedness.*

*R11: my first mentor (N) taught me so much, I couldn't express my knowledge and kept it to myself. Doesn't matter if its right or wrong, but have confidence in yourself that if it's wrong, someone will give the right answer and I will have learnt something.*

*R6: The old way of thinking, was that mentors very tough, so you needed to have resilience, now with new generations, you need to have empathy as well as toughness.*

The researcher noted that R3 and R6 felt that the older coaches of their generation lacked a degree of open mindedness and both respondents used words like empathy and psychology in suggesting that which was missing in learning at that time. R2 even mentioned through the influence of his mentor; he learnt what not to do as well as what works best whilst R11 felt empowered that mentorship showed her it was acceptable not to have all the answers.

The biographical data showed that R3, R6, and R2, as older coaches, had received informal mentorship from other experienced coaches, whilst R11 is a young coach who encountered mentorship as part of her formal coach learning and still enjoys the support of mentorship informally.

#### 4.4.2.2 Theme 2: Category 2 - Self-confidence and improvement in coaching

This category refers to the focus of coaching with references to interpersonal skills development within the mentoring process. The participants indicated that having a mentor available in the ongoing coaching process assisted them with their interpersonal skills and self-confidence and that the mentoring process presented opportunities to ask for proper guidance, throughout the knowledge transference and implementation processes involved in equestrian coaching. Below are verbatim extracts from the interviews which illustrate some of the responses of the participants related to self-confidence and improvement in coaching.

*R5: played an extremely significant role in my coaching, I have relied quite heavily on mentorship. It allows me to be far more empathetic towards different riders and has encouraged me to be more adaptable and self-aware.*

*R4: I feel growing up I didn't have a mentor, I had an instructor but did my lessons and went home, so I was very independent in my riding and knowledge. If I had a mentor, it would have helped, and I wouldn't have made so many mistakes. By not having a mentor to help I didn't learn the structure or system but used my own way. I didn't manage my stress very well and this transferred to my teaching with my pupils and made it difficult for me to manage their stress. Until I attended a formal program and then mentorship played a role in my advancement.*

*R1: mentorship has made me more focused on what needs to be taught. It has shown me that if someone doesn't get it right, you need to persevere through it, just take a different time lapse, different ways to get there because everyone is different, you need to adapt to them and as a coach you have an understanding of how people learn.*

The researcher noted that R1, and R5 felt that mentorship developed their interpersonal skills and reflective abilities, which gave them confidence to apply various approaches to achieve coaching goals. R4, who had not experienced mentoring, acknowledged a lack of guidance in how to develop her knowledge skills, which created tension in her abilities to attain her coaching goals.

#### *4.4.2.3 Theme 2: Category 3- Improving the horse and rider*

This category refers to the participants indicating that one of the key elements relating to the role that mentorship had played in their advancement and success as a coach is the process involving the horse and rider. It was indicated that the horse and rider need to be able to create a bond and so develop as a pair. It was further indicated that the process of mentorship allows coaches to access this information. Thus, the focus of mentorship is to develop skills in the coach, which benefit both the horse and rider. Below are verbatim extracts from the interviews which illustrate some of the responses of the participants related to improving the horse and rider.

*R5: With mentorship you start to learn there are many more aspects to it the coach really understands his or her role in getting the horse and rider to perform together, not just how to execute the movements, but the timing of both horse and rider” “the coach and mentor are responsible for both and the horse cannot verbalize, thus making for a mentor who is extremely good at picking up visual and non-verbal signs.*

*R1: mentorship has taught me the ‘how’ to coach the athlete to improve both horse and rider and not only the ‘what’ to coach, without mentorship I wouldn’t have been able to successfully coach the combination.*

*R2: in our sport it makes us (mentor) take responsibility not only for a person, but for another living thing and know there are different pathways to achieve the goal (the horse) this then translates across to the ride.”*

*R11: I have noticed a lot of instructors came from different places and instruction gets taught in a certain kind of way that sticks to the textbook and doesn’t adjust to the rider. Instructors try to progress too quickly.*

The researcher noted an important response from R5 who emphasised the communication skills of the mentor when developing learning skills in the equestrian sport coaching domain. R11, on the other hand, recalled that she found some coaches relied on used a centred approach in their coaching which restricted the progress of the riders.

#### *4.4.2.4 Theme 2: Category 4 - Knowledge transference*

This category refers to the process of mentorship as a conduit by which knowledge transfer occurs. It refers to knowledge transferral from an older more experienced individual, usually involved in the sport for years, to the less experienced individual in order to understand the specifics of the equestrian

coaching process. Below are verbatim extracts from the interviews which illustrate some of the responses of the participants related to knowledge transference.

*R8: in any sport or walk of life if you haven't got the right leader you cannot follow correctly. We have always looked at older people who have produced horses themselves and then produced riders, so you know their record speaks for itself.*

*R7: massive influence from older mentors who have made me into the shape I am. Two major mentors in my life, structured, wanting to do better, the stages of learning, very correct and full of knowledge.*

*R6: He has been a very important influence and has encouraged me through mentorship in my business, dealing with people and promoting myself.*

*R3: mentorship teaches you to reflect on the differences in learning and feelings of riding at the top level and feelings of coaching at top level. My mentor has the flair, natural feel learnt from previous experiences, he allows me to try things.*

*R2: mentorship has made me a more well-rounded coach, not only focused on the riding, and I want them (riders) to be aware of the experience they are having, mentoring is careful not to let them get away with anything, but giving a more personal approach is having better results.*

*R5: mentorship teaches you to remember the foundation and principles and not waiver on those things because they are tried and tested but be aware of difference and ready to adapt to new information and styles according to each person.*

The researcher noted that R8, R7, and R3 valued the experience and expertise of older mentors in a trusting relationship, whilst each respondent agreed that the transferring of knowledge occurred differently for each individual. The respondents placed emphasis on the value of the intrapersonal and interpersonal skills gained through mentorship.

#### 4.4.2.5 Theme 2: Category 5- Personal mastery

This category refers to the impact of the mentoring processes on the personal life of the participants. Within this particular category it was indicated that mentees had reached a process of building more empathy. Furthermore, these participants indicated that the mentoring process had taught them to transfer a sense of tolerance and patience with personal aspects of their own lives. Below are verbatim extracts from the interviews which illustrate some of the responses of the participants related to personal mastery.

*R1: it (mentorship) has definitely made me stronger and far more patient. It has influenced my complete life outside of horse training or human training and changed my behaviour when I am going shopping or something else; I see things differently. I drive my car differently, I am less angry, less stressed in situations so the whole thing is a learning curve for the rest of your life, and not only in the industry you are working in; it really makes you a better human*

*R2: huge, I think me personally, it's made me more tolerant and humbler. The communications skills learnt in mentoring coaching have made me want to become more patient and to carry this through in my own life. Mentoring has to keep soul; coaching cannot just be a job.*

*R5: mentorship has made me more humble and made me want to improve on all aspects in life, has opened my mind that there is so much room for growth no matter what level you are as a coach or an individual and everyone has a lot to learn.*

*R6: as a person it's made me more confident, disciplined, more commitment, character building, get up in the morning, shaped and moulded me as a person. Mentorship in my personal life has made me positive, don't take no for an answer, stick it out, get up and go, keep going if things go wrong its ok. Inspired me to know I can achieve what I want to achieve, to believe in myself.*

*R7: Mentorship has made me into the person I am today, structured, driven, inspired, motivated, burning desire to keep learning and watching. I am embracing where I am and my life. Gratitude, respect, loyalty discipline, desire, optimist. Open minded and it allows me to see others in a different life. How people around you react, honouring others and how hardworking they are.*

*R8: mentorship has given me confidence as a person, I stand by what I say and do. So many people help you with your growth, and mentorship educates you at the same time that you don't always have to see black as black, sometimes its matt black or shiny black, and sometimes its ok to say, I don't know. I am more patient as a mother.*

*R4: If you choose the right mentor it will make you a better person, always the top guys in their profession, what are their philosophies, way of living, their conduct. I try to improve myself by building on this; so great trainers are great role models and as riders 20%, and 80% is how they conduct themselves. Find a mentor and that's how you will live your life.*

The researcher noted that all the respondents unreservedly cited mentorship as developing not only their professional skills but exerting a positive influence on developing better intrapersonal skills and the self-knowledge. A noteworthy insight came from R4, who is an older professional coach in the 55 to 65-year category, with over 31 years of experience as an equestrian coach. R4 specifically looked for mentors, not only with professional knowledge in their field, but particularly those mentors who had exceptional intrapersonal skills that he could draw on to continue developing his own skills.

Table 0.6: Mentorship influences on the coaching process (Theme 3)

Categories	Description
Find my own path (independence)	Using the knowledge skills provided by mentorship; to build on and acknowledge one's own approach to coaching
Identifying differences	Building on foundational principles, but being adaptable to technology, innovation and management of people.
Life-long learning	Happens over time, takes patience and time to perfect. You need to have the three foundational knowledge skills of professional, intrapersonal, and interpersonal knowledge.

### **4.4.3 Theme 3: Mentorship Influences on the Coaching Process**

This theme refers to the impact that the mentorship approach tended to have on the coaching and training perspectives of the participants. Within this particular process, the mentees expressed that life-long learning and being viewed as mentors themselves at the same stage, they tend to have some double-bound visualisation where they would be able to reflect as mentees and mentors at the same point in their career. So not only are they developing as mentees and coaches, but they are now beginning to take on the role of mentor as well.

#### *4.4.3.1 Theme 3:Category 1 - Find my own path (independence)*

This category refers to how mentoring has impacted the mentee coaching process. More specifically, this particular category refers to the mentoring process as a learner centred approach, dependent not only on technical knowledge, but also intrapersonal skills and interpersonal skills according to the ability of each person. Below are verbatim extracts from the interviews which illustrate some of the responses of the participants related to finding independence.

*R1: mentorship has given me the knowledge to learn the difference between teaching and coaching, and also to be a mentor for other younger people. ...the most important thing is to give your knowledge and your lifetime of experience to others. ... other people can learn from you and they pass it on to the next generations.*

*R2: I keep learning and don't ever stop, what defines all good coaches is the amount of passion that we all have in what we do, the human factor of how to give the knowledge across. The growth of youngsters would be enriched by mentorship after training, the interaction, the respect and celebration of differences. I would love to pass on some knowledge to those who want to learn.*

*R3: I mentor youngsters when they have a rough day, or in their personal lives; mentorship will come in different guises, both formally and informally, add it into the way you coach, and the mentees draw from it and so it has an impact.*

*R4: Using mentorship to enhance me as a coach, there is room for different qualities and styles, and mentorship allows me to use my strengths and add to my own philosophy and that of some of my mentees.*

*R6: Each mentor is different, and I learnt something different from each mentor, and I have taken this forward to mentor other people. I am more confident, disciplined, committed and resilient. I can achieve what I want to achieve, to believe in myself.*

The researcher noted that, in the development of their intrapersonal skills, the respondents felt that through mentorship they were empowered to transfer knowledge in a manner that recognises individuals learn various skills in different ways within their own time frame. It appears that mentorship has encouraged coaches to recognise the value of passing on this philosophy to younger coaches.

#### 4.4.3.2 Theme 3: Category 2 - Identifying differences

This category refers to the participants indicating that they have managed to identify that there are different ways of approaching the equestrian sport, both in the coaching and learning approaches. Moreover, by being exposed to the various components involved with the mentoring process, the participants have indicated that the process influenced their way of coaching others with their own coaching perspective.

Below are verbatim extracts from the interviews which illustrate some of the responses of the participants related to identifying differences.

*R5: Remember the foundation and principles and not waiver on those things because they are tried and tested. And remember to be aware of difference and be ready to adapt, so can use new information and new styles according to each person. Keep the foundation but be open minded enough to give them the skill they need using empathetic skills.*

*R12: With mentorship you can take a step back and see the bigger picture, it's the understanding that things can be done differently as everyone (horse/rider) learns differently. When coaching people, because we are different, it's for the mentor to be able to show us it's ok to be different and capitalize on our strengths. Do not focus on the weakness but focus on what you do well.*

*R1: We learn the difference between teaching and coaching and also play the role to be a mentor for other younger people.*

*R3: your mentor has shown you to think in a different way therefore the people you mentor have a different way of thinking to the way you think and therefore you are able to empower them to think in the way that makes sense to them. Different ways to get to the same goal*

*R7: mentorship taught me to identify the differences in people, equip them with the knowledge, have empathy and patience, motivate and push them to where they want to go*

*R9: In the old ages people were very strict, and you had to get it right, coaches didn't adapt to the individual person, the modern age is more open minded. People process information differently and as a coach you have to have an understanding of how people learn.*

*R10: you have to adapt and understand how they learn and how they figure things out in their head, so important for the coach to understand and adapt and not force things onto them that they don't understand.*

*R11: "take into account the different ways people look at the world, empowering people to think for themselves and giving them confidence to think for themselves.*

*R13: People need guidance and mentorship plays a really big role in modern times, I don't think it's easy to be a mentor you have to be sure about what you are telling someone, so you need lots of knowledge.*

*R6: The old way of thinking was that mentors were very tough, so you needed to have resilience, now with the new generation you need to have empathy as well as toughness.*

The researcher noted that the respondents recognised that knowledge transference takes place differently for individuals in different timeframes. However, R5, R6, R9, and R13 suggest that this was not a consideration in the old ages. It is noteworthy that this view is held by both the older professional coaches as well as the younger non-professional coaches. Both samples agreed it was important to understand that people learn differently.

4.4.3.3 Theme 3: Category 3- Lifelong learning process

This category refers to the participant indicating the importance of mentorship in that the equestrian coaching process is a lifelong learning process that takes patience and time to perfect. Below are verbatim extracts from the interviews which illustrate some of the responses of the participants related to the lifelong learning process.

*R2: I keep learning and never stop, every lesson, every person I meet is an experience, whatever I have learnt about coaching through mentorship, I have probably used in raising my children.*

*R13: the formal foundation is fundamental across all coach and mentorship will come in different guises, both formally and informally; add it to the way you teach, and you will draw from it as you go and so it has an impact.*

*R2: never think you are too good, as a coach it's good to take a step back and see where you are going. The younger coaches have the technical skills but possibly their interpersonal skills not quite honed, and they don't handle how to be a people's person when you are 20; as you get older you are able to bring this on board as part of the tapestry.*

*R6: I didn't realise I was being mentored in the riding school for years, but looking back I see I was mentored by those people and how would I have grown over the years without mentorship" "I would like to see more formal mentorship for the experienced coaches especially to grow, and I would like to have a program and subject matter and a choice of mentor and for a sustained period, so I can call on that mentor.*

*R7: Mentorship has made me the person I am today, structured, driven, inspired, motivated, the burning desire to keep learning and watching.*

The researcher noted that respondents agreed on the value of mentorship as an ongoing support for coaches in their onward learning journey as a coach.

Table 0.7: Summary of categories relating to (Theme 4): Need for mentorship programmes

Categories	Description
Career Advancement	The mentoring process provides the skills for knowledge transfer to become a more professional coach.
Better Coaching	Attributes learnt through the mentoring process develop a good coach into a great coach



#### **4.4.4 Theme 4: Need for Mentorship Programmes**

This theme refers to the participants indicating that there is a need for a mentoring process in the South African context. Through their personal experience regarding the mentorship process, they expressed the need for mentoring from an equestrian perspective. This might be due to the process that they were exposed to and the fact that they had realised that the need for mentoring is crucial for one to become a better equestrian coach.

##### *4.4.4.1 Theme 4: Category 1- Advancement of career*

This particular category refers to circumstances where the mentee indicated that they would have needed a mentor throughout their career, also referring to the circumstances where the mentee needed assistance in the formats and ways in which they were able to advance their career in equestrian coaching. As with many sports, the mentee would need to approach certain individuals who had a better knowledge base in order to inform them of the ways that they would be able to advance their careers regarding technique or making certain career choices. Throughout this process, it was indicated that the mentee would have needed the guidance of someone who had been exposed to similar processes and therefore would be able to guide them through these processes.

Below are verbatim extracts from the interviews which illustrate some of the responses of the participants related to the advancement of a career.

*R1: we don't have a mentorship program for equestrian coaches in SA but I think we have it for soccer or rugby players, and over here the equine industry is closed, so very important to develop our coaching industry, there has been a lot of progress going forward in many areas, except for the coach development, in this industry we are working with both the human factor and the horse, and often we get schooled from other people on what to teach, but not how to coach.*

*R2: I think one of the biggest things in equestrian is that one doesn't have formalise mentorship. The people you looked up to would influence and guide you, informally much more than formally.*

*R3: to me mentorship is vitally important, and the international coach development courses that I have been involved in for the last 10 to 12 years adds to my coaching abilities and coaching experience.*

*R4: every day of my life, I am a learner, and it's not been only one mentor and there is room for different qualities and styles that allows me to use my strengths. I travel to different countries and watch many mentors and I will add on to my system which has worked for 30 years.*

*R5: "top coaches must mentor coaches, two or three at least, to impart their knowledge as to how to coach, whatever you coach, bring awareness that you have to think in a different way, and cannot be closeminded.*

*R6: mentorship has given me a plan and bigger vision, I don't have tunnel vision like when I was a young person, mentorship has taught me to think in a different way, therefore I am able to empower the people I mentor, to think in the way that makes sense to them.*

*R7: it has been every stage of my career, that I have needed mentorship to bring me to the next step of my career. From an early age I watched (G) coaching and said one day I will work under him. This made me focused, even at that age I was aware that mentors could share their knowledge to make me better.*

*R8: Mentorship has helped me as a coach by providing or receiving mentorship and through the years we have come across so many fantastic young kids including my own. The mentorship courses we did last year were fantastic because so many coaches met on the same level. You get a reputation for being a coach who can teach others from the beginning all the way up, and it's all a mentorship.*

*R9: I think mentorship through the ages has always developed coaches, so I think it plays a big role in everyone's life, there is always a place for mentorship.*

*R10: It's hard for people to adapt in certain ways, and you think you are giving the information over to them, but they don't see the same picture you see, so you as the coach have to adapt and not force things. Mentorship has taught me it's important to learn how people learn, especially children. It allowed me to grow and has given me confidence to deal with problem solving.*

*R11: I have learnt through mentorship that people learn differently, teaching young people and adults, all understand things in different ways, kids just do what you say, adults have their own mindset and ask why and mentorship has taught me as a coach, to take into consideration the different ways people look at the world.*

*R13: mentorship re-affirms my confidence in my own strength as a coach, while reminding me there is always room to grow. My strength of empathy to feel and understand that an individual may be nervous or have own individual challenges that they bring to the session, this is my biggest strength.*

The researcher noted that most of the respondents accredited mentorship in their development as coaches to having contributed to their ongoing success in this field, with respondent R1 emphasising that, in equestrian coaching, the coach and mentor work with the human and the horse together. R1, R2, R3 and R8 emphasised the value of facilitated mentorship programs.

#### *4.4.4.2 Theme 4: Category 2- Better coaching*

This category refers to the processes provided for the mentee, by the mentor, for development within their career. The participants reflected that they needed the assistance of the mentor in becoming a better coach. This process allowed them to develop confidence and certain skill sets transferred by the mentors as part of the skills that these mentors were once exposed to in the knowledge development processes of their own professional development. Below are verbatim extracts from the interviews which illustrate some of the responses of the participants related to better coaching.

*R2: you have to be sure about what you are telling someone, because people look up to you and will believe what you are saying. ... what I need to know so lots of pressure on the mentor.*

*R5: "from a technical point of view, when faced with a new scenario or situation or obstacle I have relied on my mentor.*

*R8: mentorship put me in such great standing, as I gained so much confidence in my ability in 'how' to coach. Mentorship has helped with my planning; I have become a lot more disciplined in coaching and riding.*

*R4: mentorship has made me a more well-rounded coach, not only focused on the riding, but I want them to enjoy the experience, so it's not 'my way or the highway', so be careful not to let them get away with anything, but giving a more personal approach is having better results.*

*R3: I am not quite sure but think in the old ages, people were very strict, and you had to get it right, coaches didn't adapt to the individual person, the modern age is more open minded. I think mentorship through the ages has helped people, so I think it plays a big role in everyone's life.*

*R7: the formal foundation is fundamental across all coaching and mentorship will come in different guises, both informally and formally, add it into the way you teach; and you will draw from it and so it has an impact. I don't believe there is enough mentorship, equestrian is a difficult sport and everyone is closed, perhaps they would feel more secure with another coach.*

*R12: not having a mentor to help, I didn't have a structure or system, doing it my own way meant I didn't manage my stress very well. This made it more difficult for me to manage my riders' stress.*

The researcher noted that most of the respondents felt that mentorship enhanced their intrapersonal skills which empowered them to become better coaches. R12 recognised that without a structure, she lacked confidence to deal with stress, which impacted negatively on her riders, and attributed this to not having had mentorship to guide her.

#### **4.5 Summary**

The first section of this chapter focused on providing biographical information of the respondents. The researcher provided an introduction to the data collection and analysis process by detailing the collection of data. The researcher then demonstrated how she applied aspects of the third chapter of the study to garner the data, specifically through the use of semi-structured interviews and an interview protocol. The data coding process was explained before restating the research question and sub-questions of the study. Thereafter, the results of the research were presented in terms of the interview protocol designed for use in this study. The researcher discussed the various themes that evolved from the raw data as well as the intonations of the respondents during the interviews and the patterns that emerged in the initial coding. The themes that arose from the data coding process, and a further summary of the categories as they related to each of the themes, were summarised and discussed.

In this summary, it was evident that the older coaches felt mentorship had enhanced their knowledge transference through a better understanding of how to achieve the same goal in different ways. They also felt that mentorship had given them insight into their own values and assisted them in learning about themselves as coaches and as people. The younger coaches felt that mentorship had developed their interpersonal and communication skills which had given them a better understanding of the different ways in which people learn. Both groups felt that mentorship showed them there are various

ways to achieve the same goal and that it was more important to develop according to the strengths of the individual rather than to conform to a wrong or right way.

In the following chapter, the researcher furnishes the results and (discussions) draws conclusions emanating from the study. The researcher also presents key findings of the study and suggests areas in which future research could be undertaken.

## Chapter 5

### Results and Discussions of this Study

#### 5.1 Introduction

An overarching discussion of the study follows in this chapter with the presentation of findings that emerged from the interview, in response to the interview questions. The chapter seeks to build themes around this data and determine answers to the main research question of what critical factors are necessary for successful mentoring.

#### 5.2 A discussion of the Study

The topic selected for this study was “An exploration of the critical factors for successful mentoring for equestrian coaches in South Africa”. An understanding of the study topic became clearer as themes emerged from the data collection and analysis. These were directly related to experiences shared by the respondents, of mentorship opportunities that took place retrospectively, and during the course of their personal and professional development. The emergence of these themes from the research process, allowed the researcher to find comparisons and contrasts alongside the works of *Cushion et al.* (2010) in the role of coaching and the coaching context and how people learn, and Côté and Gilbert (2009) (effective coaching - intrapersonal/interpersonal skills). Together with studies on better social relationships in and out of the sporting context, and the role of the mentoring in sports coaching (Cassidy, 2004), (shared meaning and values). These themes are supported by the Social Learning Theory of Bandura.

#### 5.3 Discussion on the Research Questions Contained in this Study

In the paragraphs below, the researcher discusses the primary research question of seeking to identify the critical success factors required for effective mentorship; and the sub research question of whether these factors change depending on the professional nature of the coach. These are explored in the context of the literature review, the themes that emerged from the data collection, and that analysis of this study.

##### 5.3.1 Answering the Research Question: Critical Factors for Successful Mentorship

In her attempt to answer the primary research question concerning the critical factors for successful mentorship, the researcher was informed by the relevant studies found in the literature review, as well as the themes that emerged from the collection and analysis of the data presented in this study.

###### 5.3.1.1 Effective interpersonal skills

In reviewing the literature, the view that effective coaching is a consequence not only of procedural knowledge but is greatly influenced by the interpersonal skills of the coach, resonated specifically with

Khabiri and Sajjadi (2011), Marcone (2017), Rocchi *et al.* (2013), and Rezania (2014). The researcher found agreement with this view in the analysis of the data collected.

An analysis of the data revealed that twelve (12) of the thirteen (13) participants in the study indicated they had been empowered by mentorship to develop their interpersonal skills, allowing them to transfer knowledge through understanding the different ways in which individuals learn. Only one (1) participant was unable to substantiate the value of mentorship in support of her earlier interpersonal skills development. This participant concluded this was as a result of not having had mentorship during her initial training as a coach. She offered further insight, in saying had she received mentorship in her initial training, that she would have developed her interpersonal skills better. She substantiated this view by confirming in later years she had improved her interpersonal skills to become a more effective coach through the support of mentorship.

The findings above are consistent with the literature and are supported by Cushion *et al.* (2010), Marcone (2017), Horne (2002), and Coté and Gilbert (2009) who suggest that the potential of athletes to reach their full potential is affected by individual coaching types. This view is strongly supported in studies of Vallerand and Losier (1999) as cited by Rocchi (2013), who suggest that interpersonal style of a coach may influence an athlete's motivation for playing sport either adversely or positively. Additional studies by Cushion *et al.* (2010) expressed the need to further define the quality and scope of learning studies, with the literature stipulating that effective coaching must show a determination in understanding the different physical and mental developmental stages of an athlete. Cope, Bailey and Pearce (2013) agreed with the need to develop this understanding, specifically in the context of recreational, development, and elite sport, thus supporting the views of Coté and Gilbert (2009).

The data analysis supports the literature which has found that effective coaching relies on an understanding of how individuals learn in the dynamic environment of sport (Rezania, 2014), as social learning takes place when people interact and identify with one another (Bandura, 1969). This is further substantiated in Social Learning Theory research put forward by Rotter (1954) on predicting behaviour, and according to Mearns (2016), this notion is found in the core competencies of mentoring.

#### 5.3.1.2 *Effective mentoring relationship*

The data analysis evidenced that the mentor/mentee match is cited as one of the critical factors for successful mentorship. The data analysis showed that ten (10) of the thirteen (13) participants felt it was important to have a mentor with whom they resonated.

Almost all the literature agreed that the essence of any mentoring model is the empathetic relationship between mentor and mentee. Smith (2005) expanded by stating that integrity and empathy are the building blocks for effective mentorship relationships since both build trust (Cassidy *et al.*, 2009). Similar studies showed that trust may be influenced by various factors which include technical expertise, predictability of behaviour, fairness, and the sharing of control (Leck & Orser, 2013). Studies have also pointed out that a mutual trust between mentor and mentee should allow the sharing of professional and personal shortcomings as well as their successes (Johnson-Bailey & Cervero, 2004).

While literature has thus far been unable to offer a standardised interpretation of mentoring (Jones *et al.*, 2009) despite attempts from both broad perspective and narrow perspectives; the underlying

message is that mentorship is multifaceted and embraces elements of empathy and psychology. Fundamentally, mentoring is always a relational aspect found between the mentee and mentor, which is the core of mentoring and allows for the push and pull between the mentee/mentor (Jones *et al.*, 2009).

#### 5.3.1.3 *Holistic mentoring process*

The literature suggested that the distinction between formal and informal mentoring lay in the actual structure of the mentoring relationship (Jones *et al.*, 2009a) while other studies referred to mentoring as a process used in a formal and informal context (Galvin, 1998). Certain studies, however, found that mentorship was effective in both settings (Stuart, 2010). At the same time, limitations of formal mentoring have been found with an assigned mentor in a group setting given pre-existing guidelines (Singh, 2015) and a limited lifespan aligned with specific goals of the formalised programme (Roberts, 2000). A number of studies confirmed that some participants received more support during participation in an informal mentorship programme than in formal mentorship programmes (Chao *et al.*, 1992). Nevertheless, most studies seemed to agree that the prescriptive nature of formal learning only (Mcquade *et al.*, 2015) limited mentoring opportunities; thus, mentorship may be less effective.

During the course of the interviews, the researcher found that twelve (12) of the thirteen (13) participants felt strongly that mentorship provided both tangible and intangible benefits from formal and informal opportunities and if mentoring continued, this support provided growth in one's career and personal life. In fact, six (6) of the thirteen (13) participants stipulated during the interview that mentorship was important for equestrian coaches in both settings and should offer support for a sustained period.

In the data analysis regarding the sub-research question, the researcher interpreted the data to determine whether the factors above had changed according to the perspectives of the professional and non-professional equestrian coaches. The researcher noted that the six (6) participants who support both formal and informal mentorship over a period of time were all professional fulltime coaches in the 55-65 age category. Respondent R1 commented that mentorship *"works perfectly because you give people time to learn and see the bigger picture; you give them (mentee) confidence to be a good coach, because the process can only be achieved after a couple of years"*, while Respondent R7 said that *"the formal foundation is fundamental across all coaching and mentorship will come in different guises, both informally and formally, add it into the way you teach; and you will draw from it and so it has an impact"*.

The data analysis above resonates with the literature in supporting the need for ongoing mentorship and the notion that the longer the mentoring relationship, the greater its effectiveness (White *et al.*, 2017). This was consistent with earlier studies stating that the length of time of being mentored was highly related to mentoring success (Bloom *et al.*, 1998; Côté & Gilbert., 2009; Stuart, 2010).

#### 5.3.1.4 *Better coaching*

In the data analysis, the researcher found that 50% of the professional coaches expressed the view that formal mentorship created a system whereby mentors spoke the same language, not matter what discipline, and were able to collaborate in the context of various disciplines. The researcher found this noteworthy as these three (3) participants had attended formal equestrian coach mentoring

workshops over a period of three years. Furthermore, these coach-mentoring-programmes had in fact incorporated experienced coaches from several equestrian disciplines such as show jumping, dressage, eventing, mounted archery, carriage driving, vaulting, and tent pegging. This ties in with the studies that suggest that mentorship is able to provide a framework that is applicable across all the equestrian disciplines (Nash, 2003).

The assertion further emerged within the selected sample of professional equestrian coaches that there is a structure, and steps in learning from novice to advanced levels, with both the people and the horses developing as they learn. Therefore, it was important to allow mistakes to happen as mistakes are part of the learning process and confidence is developed through making mistakes and learning from them. The studies supported these assertions during the correlation of the rider performance as it impacts on the performance of the horse (Lincoln, 2008) during the progression of skills between the rider and the horse (Winfield *et al.*, 2013). This takes place within the situational environment of the horse and rider which must constantly be assessed, in order to make evaluations to guide and direct whilst making necessary adjustments for predictable behaviour (Auty & Pollard, 2016).

Various researchers have thus agreed that mentorship creates learning opportunities in becoming aware of specific coaching context dynamics, that relate directly to equestrian coaching practice (Winfield *et al.*, 2013).

The researcher found it noteworthy that some of the professional coaches expanded on mentorship, saying that they experienced the equestrian coaching industry in South Africa as 'closed' and conveyed this as a perception that some professional coaches were reluctant to share mentoring practices with others, as these coaches viewed their knowledge as being their personal intellectual property. The researcher found these comments illuminating, as they originated from those respondents who had significant coaching experience themselves. These comments were prompted during insights expressed on peer mentoring for experienced coaches.

In reviewing the limited research found on equestrian coaching, the researcher found support for these findings in studies that revealed that the older equestrian coaches were by and large self-employed and, once having attained formal certification, received no formal support for further development (Winfield *et al.*, 2013). This suggested that equestrian coaches may view their professional knowledge as commercial interests and thus be reluctant to share good practice with others (Winfield *et al.*, 2013). These views were further elaborated upon by Knowles *et al.* (2006) who were concerned that this approach could lead to an isolated and insular coaching community (Knowles *et al.*, 2006).

### **5.3.2 Answering the Sub-Research Question Whether the Critical Success Factors Needed for Effective Mentorship Change According to the Degree of Professional Accreditation of the Coach**

Non-professional coaches, in the age group of 18 – 21 years were not unaware of the value of both the formal and informal mentoring process. However, as they were engaged at the time of the interviews, in formal coaching programmes, which included both the theory and practice of mentorship, it was taken for granted by these respondents, that mentorship was already part of all coach training programmes.



It is noteworthy that the literature indicates that the facilitation of mentorship in both formal and informal settings allows for adaptation in different environments and relationships (Mallett *et al.*, 2009). It thus appeared that the views of the respondents regarding the benefits of formal and informal mentorship were similar to those of ongoing studies undertaken in various domains, suggesting that the interaction of both formal and informal mentorship would provide the recipe for optimal learning (Cushion *et al.*, 2010). Therefore, the answer to the sub-research question is that the factors remain the same, irrespective of whether the coaches are professional or not.

#### 5.4. Aim of the Study

The study aimed at exploring mentorship for equestrian coaches in South Africa.

#### 5.5 An Overview of the Contributions the Study Aims to Make

In Chapter 4, four emerging themes arose from the data. These pertained to patterns found in the data and identified topics most common to each respondent. In Chapter 5, underpinned by existing literature and the experience of the researcher, these themes have been further explored and synthesised into the intended contributions of research to the literature. Whereas the themes indicated the main points made by the respondents, the contributions would ensure that the findings offer additional practical and theoretical value. The extrapolation of the themes into contributions are identified below.

Table 0.1: Themes and contributions of this study

Themes (chapter 4)	Contributions (chapter 5)
Theme 1: Ineffective mentorship	Contribution 1: Empowering mentoring relationship
Theme 2: Mentorship in advancing equestrian coaching	Contribution 2: Contextual interaction between horse and rider
Theme 3: Mentorship influence on coaching	Contribution 3: Recognition of individual learning
Theme 4: Need for mentorship programmes	Contribution 4: Facilitated mentorship programmes

These contributions would add significant value to the study and the critical factors for successful mentorship in the sport coaching context. These are discussed below.

The factors affecting mentorship for equestrian coaches are depicted in Figure 5.1, which supports the contributions discussed below.

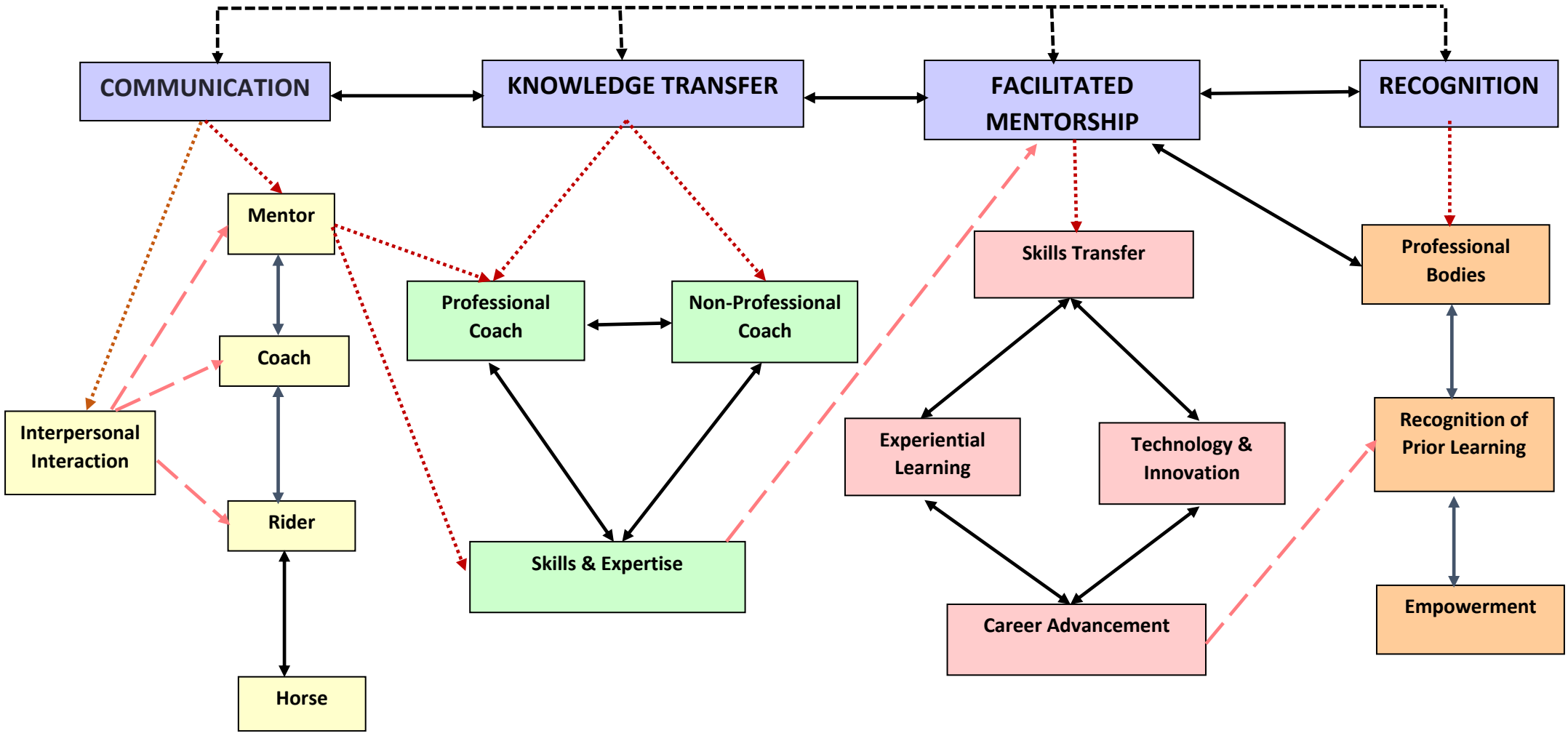


Figure 0.1 Factors Affecting Mentorship for Equestrian Coaches

### **5.5.1 Empowering Mentoring Relationship**

This particular theme refers to reflections from the majority of the respondents who felt that mentorship was important in developing them as coaches and to be the best version of themselves. In particular, these reflections highlighted the attributes of communication through accessibility to a trusting mentorship relationship in giving them confidence to focus on different ways of learning. These viewpoints found wide support in the literature (Jones, 2015; Steyn, 2004; Cushion, 2006; Gilbert & Trudel, 2001; Merriam, 1983) and more specifically, they were aligned with studies showing that cognitive behaviour relating to trust has its roots in the Social Learning Theory (Mearns, 2009). In consideration of this, Mearns (2016) further states that intellectual functioning takes place as people interact with and react to one another. In discussions on the dynamics of mentorship engagement, availability and mentor investment (Jones *et al.*, 2009), researchers Mcquade, Davis and Nash (2015) mention that a hierarchical mentorship style may be present in the beginning of a relationship. In response, Busen and Engebretson (1999) suggest that tensions may arise in the mentor/mentee relationship because of this. In view of the different styles of mentorship, most studies agree that integrity and empathy build trust (Cassidy *et al.*, 2009). In fact, Smith (2005) contends that trust within the interaction of the mentor and mentee creates a safe place for dialogue.

These comparisons confirmed the importance of trust in a mentoring relationship (Kepler, 2013) as informed by the viewpoint of an interviewee below.

*R2: I look back at mentors who had an impact on my way of coaching, positive influences as well as those who made me say that I never want to coach like that. The match between mentor and mentee has to be carefully chosen. A formalized mentorship is a choice for the individual, in any sphere but especially for equestrian because it's a very personal career choice. Equestrian is a very intense discipline and once you become immersed in it, this becomes your world.*

### **5.5.2 Contextual Interaction Between Horse/Rider**

This particular theme expressed the various indications that it was not experience alone that contributed to knowledge but rather, it was the process of learning to apply context to the experience that resulted in knowledge being gained from the experience. The respondents felt that this was important in the context of equestrian coaching with the added dynamic of the horse, rider, coach triad. This concern was borne out in the scant literature on equestrian coaching, and related to studies conducted by Lincoln (2008) and Auty and Pollard (2016) who emphasised the responsibility placed on the coach by the specific dynamics of having to guide and direct both horse and rider at any given time and in any context. It is noteworthy that Hall (2006) adds that, although this pattern of decision making may be similar in other sports, in equestrian sport, it is the responsibility of the coach to also consider the behaviour of the horse as well as that of the rider.

*R2: in our sport it makes us take responsibility not only for a person, but for another living thing and know there are different pathways to achieve the goal (the horse) this then translates across to the rider.*

These viewpoints on the learning process expressed above by these equestrian coaches seem to resonate with the social learning perspective, even within the triad; and provides a conceptual

philosophical frame that sits well in the theoretical framework of Social Learning Theory (Enfield, 2001).

### **5.5.3 Recognition of Individual Learning**

This theme refers to the impact that mentorship has on the ongoing development of coaches. The respondents expressed views that being exposed to the various aspects involved in the mentoring process and reminded them to acknowledge and develop their own approach to coaching by building on the foundational principles.

*R5: Remember the foundation and principles and not waiver on those things because they are tried and tested. And remember to be aware of difference and be ready to adapt, so can use new information and new styles according to each person. Keep the foundation but be open minded enough to give them the skill they need using empathetic skills.*

These reflections seemed to resonate with studies on the prediction of behaviour as put forward by Rotter (1954) in his paper on social learning theory research. The social learning research asserts that predicting behaviour is the probability of engaging in a specific behaviour in a given circumstance, the value of outcomes of behaviour in a given situation, and an individual's subjective interpretation of the situation, which are re-iterated in the core competencies of mentoring (Mearns, 2009).

These sentiments are aligned with studies that confirmed the significance of participation in support of the learning process (Subramaniam *et al.*, 2015) and mirrors the Social Learning Theory. Researchers Winfield, Williams and Dixon (2013) elaborated on this by also reminding readers that mentorship is able to create learning opportunities in awareness of the dynamics in a specific coaching context. This pattern between the learning process and specific coaching context, as the 'you tell me I forget, you show me I will remember, you involve me and I will learn' philosophy of an individual, is intrinsic to the Social Learning Theory (Nabavi, 2012).

### **5.5.4 Facilitated Mentorship Programmes**

This theme refers to the participants indicating that, through their exposure to mentorship, they recognised the value and need for a facilitated mentoring process to advance the careers of equestrian coaches in South Africa. These respondents reflected on their own mentoring experiences in viewing mentorship as crucial to develop the attributes needed for good coaches to become great coaches. They felt that a facilitated mentoring process provided the skills for knowledge transfer and for this to happen, coaches would need the guidance of someone who had been exposed to similar processes and who would be able to guide them through these processes over time. R1 emphasised that it was as important to know 'the how' in knowledge transference as well as the tactical knowledge of 'what' to coach, and this could be learnt only in stages through a structured mentorship programme.

*R1: we don't have a mentorship program for equestrian coaches in South Africa. The coach learnt a couple of year ago, maybe some teaching, but they don't know if its correct; they need a constant program to come to workshops, to get the chance to develop themselves. With a program you have long term goals, this is mentorship working perfectly because you give the people time to learn what you tell them, you have to learn with horses and humans, the process to be a good coach is a program that you can only achieve after a couple of years.*

Most of the respondents accredited mentorship as having contributed to their ongoing success in this field. R1 was emphatic that mentorship was lacking in South Africa for equestrian coaches and that it was greatly needed in the coaching industry. This outlook coincided with the views of Jones, Harris and Miles (2009) who support the development of an organised mentorship model for sports coaching to provide a framework for mentoring, applicable across all sporting codes (Nash, 2003).

## **5.6 Limitations Emerging from the Study**

As noted in Chapter 1, the sample used by the researcher intended to explore the views and lived experiences of mentorship from the perspective of experienced equestrian coaches also seen as professional coaches as well as the perspectives on mentorship of less experienced coaches, also seen as non-professional coaches. The question of limitation is then whether this research can be replicated with other groups and is the research transferable in its relevance to other sporting codes?

It can be assumed that the description of a professional and non-professional equestrian coach, can be applied to coaches in other sporting codes, previous to the legislated professional body being in place (Minister of Sport and Recreation South Africa, 2012).

The current perceived limitation of some coaches not openly sharing information with other will cease to be a concern, with the registration of a professional body. With the professional body in place, coaches will be recognised at their level of expertise and have no need to 'protect' their intellectual property. This can be seen to have a positive impact, across disciplines, since many coaches may identify with certain aspects of declarative and procedural knowledge as being part of their intellectual property.

Despite the limited research in this particular domain the researcher used her expertise and experience, to specifically choose a sample of professional coaches who represent decades of national coaching expertise in equestrian sport. Furthermore, these professional coaches have made available for many years, their coaching expertise, to coaches and riders from every province in South Africa.

## Chapter 6

### Conclusion and Recommendations

#### 6.1 Introduction

The purpose of this qualitative research study is to offer an in-depth view that considers mentorship in advancing the equestrian coaching process. The group which was targeted for interviews consisted of a sample of professional and non-professional coaches with varying professional experience levels and contexts. The engagement with coaches of varying professional experience levels was important because the researcher wanted to understand the factors of effective mentorship from various angles.

The contributions of coaches with different levels of experience were relevant to the studies as the researcher needed to understand the insights of professional coaches who had considerable experience of what it was like to be mentored and, secondly, they would have mentored other coaches. The researcher also wanted to explore the experiences of the second cohort of less experienced coaches to discover whether they had experienced mentorship, what it was like, and what they thought were the critical factors for successful mentorship. This was necessary because the researcher sought to use the insights of both cohorts to answer the research question.

#### 6.2 The Objectives of the Study

In undertaking the study, the researcher wanted to achieve the following objectives:

- The exploration of mentorship factors, which could contribute to the professional development of equestrian coaches.
- To collect input and learning experiences of sports mentoring by both professional and non-professional equestrian coaches regarding the requirements of mentorship.
- To identify the critical elements for equestrian coaching and mentorship.
- The exploration of recommendations emanating from the findings pertaining to the factors for successful mentoring of equestrian coaches.

#### 6.3 The Use of a Qualitative Research Paradigm and Design

Following a review of the literature, the researcher identified qualitative research as the most appropriate design for this study. The context of qualitative research allowed for the interpretation and understanding of human behaviour (Mearns, 2009) as it applied to the Social Learning Theory (Bandura, 1969).

The researcher chose to employ the epistemological lens of subjectivism to reflect on the opinions and perceptions of the respondents, and induction was used as part of the construct of the theory

underpinning this research (Tracy, 2010). The findings attempted to discover that which was already known as well as that which still needed to be known, while offering the theory with which to unpack how people respond, adapt and evolve to their changing environment (Green & Piel, 2010).

#### **6.4 The Research Questions**

The principal research question under exploration covered the critical factors for successful mentorship for equestrian coaches in South Africa. From the principal research question, the sub question was intended to interpret the data collected, identify the critical elements of effective sports coaching and mentorship in equestrian coaching, and lastly, to use the findings that determined the factors for successful mentoring of equestrian coaches.

#### **6.5 The Research Gap and Justification for the Study**

According to Hall (2016), few studies have been undertaken regarding mentorship in equestrian coaching, apart from anecdotal reviews of coaches who said that they had been guided by a peer with more experience in the keep and care of an equine, and this may well have been the same person who had guided them as they began their riding career. Additional studies on therapeutic riding (Westerman, Stout & Hargreaves, 2012) revealed a significant influence from mentoring in terms of social development in therapeutic horse-back riding (Vygotsky, 1980) and a study cited mentoring using reflective techniques in reflective practice for equestrian coaches (Winfield *et al.*, 2013). These studies produced substantiated support for the Social Learning Theory which underpinned this study. Nonetheless, mentorship in the context of equestrian coaching remained scant.

In as much as the research revealed mentorship was not well defined (Bloom *et al.*, 1998), mentorship was nonetheless viewed as a cornerstone in the development of sports coaches (Nash, 2003a). This was borne out by assertions of many studies that argue that it is important for coaches to understand how people learn within their specific developmental stages as well as in each particular coaching context (Côté & Gilbert, 2009). As stated earlier in this study, this aligns with the four competencies of learning advanced by Rotter (Mearns, 2009) in his paper on social learning theory research, and can be found in the core competencies of mentorship (Mearns, 2009).

#### **6.6 Summary of Findings and Contributions**

The findings of the study pertain to four elements linked to coaching. These viewpoints begin at the relationship level between two people, with the horse itself then added to the relationship as a further dimension, along with the broader recognition of how people learn.

The findings conclude with insights into the desired status of the equestrian coaching system and finally, how all the above-mentioned elements need to be present for effective mentoring to occur within equestrian sports coaching. In essence, the findings have revealed that for mentorship to be effective, these four elements need to be present at the same time.

The motivation for conducting this study arose from the assumption that mentorship could contribute to coach education and development, as well as to fulfil the criteria in becoming a professional coach

(SAQA, 2009). But that there were gaps in the existing literature about the nature of effective mentorship in the equestrian industry.

With this in mind, the aim of this study was defined as the identification of critical factors for successful mentorship in order to make recommendations on how mentoring could be conducted for equestrian coaches. To accomplish this aim, it became necessary to evaluate the critical factors for successful mentorship. In holding the view that such factors should be context-based, the literature review confirmed this paradigm for the researcher, who followed an inductive approach underpinned by the Social Learning Theory (Bandura, 1969) to gather data pertaining to the possible influence for successful mentorship in sports coaching. The Social Learning Theory (Bandura, 1969) thus served as a backdrop to unpacking the factors for effective mentorship.

Social learning theory finds applicability for human learning in the ability to explain the relationship between behaviour and learning, as well as the importance that observation and modelling play in the learning process. The social learning theory underpins the process of learning in humans who are at the core, social beings. Thus, people learn in a social context, allowing for increased engagement, collaboration and communication with one another.

The value of applying the social learning theory in understanding relationships between behaviour and learning is undeniable. A recommendation is made for facilitated mentorship models designed to create opportunities for vicarious learning in various environments, such as schools, sports clubs and the workplace.

The researcher used a qualitative study to answer the research questions. The sampling technique used was purposive sampling of professional and non-professional coaches in an equestrian coaching context in two provinces of South Africa. These two provinces were selected as most of the competitive equestrian events take place there. The interview criteria stipulated that professional coaches must have at least ten or more years of experience in the field and be involved in high performance coaching. Non-professional coaches were chosen for the insights they could offer regarding the mentorship process. Themes emerged from the data by applying an inductive method of analysis. The deductive method was utilised during the discussion of the findings by utilising the ATLAS.ti. V8 software.

In the analysis of the research, the findings were condensed to four themes. Elements that emerged from these themes were construed as being integral in the critical success factors for mentorship in the professionalisation of sports coaching and as a support to coach education. The insights gained from all thirteen participants provided strong arguments for facilitated mentorship as a valuable development tool for equestrian coaches.

Once these themes were identified, and in an attempt to provide an enhanced level of insight, the researcher used the themes as foundations and, having overlaid her own experience with the combination of extant literature, sought to produce four contributions that she will add to the existing body of knowledge. These contributions take the themes that emerged from the analysis which the researcher has sought to offer as an enhanced insight that is both academically rigorous and has practical applicability.

The researcher found that the insights of the participants had reflected a lack of mentorship opportunities in coach education for equestrian coaches. All the participants were resolute in their



assertions that for mentorship to be effective, it needed to be structured and provide ongoing support within a relationship of trust. In this context, the interviewees expressed the view that mentorship allowed coaches to access various components involved in the coaching process for the transference of knowledge to be able to make more informed decisions in their careers. In mitigation of the need for mentorship, some of the respondents elaborated on the perception that there were professional coaches who viewed their knowledge as being of commercial interest, and thus were reluctant to share good practice with others. The researcher found these comments illuminating as they originated from those respondents who had significant coaching experience and were considered to be high-performance coaches in the industry.

## **6.7 Answering the Research Questions**

The principle aim of this study was to understand and determine the need for mentoring in equestrian coaching as an outcome of the objectives determined by the research. This would stimulate a determination to establish those emergent factors which contributed to a programme strategy for mentorship in the professional development of equestrian sports coaches. To further guide this endeavour, the research objectives were described in the form of research sub-questions as specified in Chapter 1. The discussion and interpretation of the findings were structured in line with the research sub-question.

The primary research question sought to add further definition and insight into effective mentorship, in asking what the critical factors were for successful mentorship in equestrian coaching, which according to literature, is not well documented (Hall, 2016).

Evidence from the interviews revealed the following:

- I. Facilitated mentoring programmes – as a structured process, they are deemed to be crucial to achieving effective mentoring. Mentees need reasonable access to their mentor for at least one or two years. Within this time frame, informal mentorship could be included as an appropriate approach as most coaches are self-employed with time constraints. However, there are opportunities to meet at shows to discuss areas of mutual benefit. The mentoring programme must allow for the specialised knowledge skills needed in knowing the horse in order for technical knowledge transference to be effective. Studies underpinning this evidence for facilitated learning opportunities through mentoring have been recommended by Cushion (2006).
- II. Trust Relationship – ‘horses for courses’: at times, the mentor will challenge, and mentees must be allowed to make errors to learn from them; criticism makes the coach vulnerable. As the mentor/mentee relationship must be built on trust and empathy, the pairing should be mutually chosen. This evidence is substantiated by Jones *et al.* (2009) who suggest that the mentor and mentee pairing should be compatible as trust allows for the mutual sharing of personal and professional shortcomings as well as success.
- III. Interpersonal skills – are essential for knowledge transference, building confidence and developing competence and communication skills for effective coaching. In support of the

evidence Côté and Gilbert (2009) confirm the need for professional, intrapersonal and interpersonal knowledge in the pursuit of effective coaching skills.

- IV. Peer Mentor group – The supervising of professional coaches and mentors is necessary to maintain coaching standards as well as provide a support and a debriefing mechanism. This community of experts provides formal access to specialised tactical and technical skills knowledge when working in the context of the horse and rider. This evidence resonates with Mead *et al.* (1999) who asserts that peer mentor meetings foster the development of professional behaviour, bringing credibility to the process, and importantly, regular professional mentoring meetings should be an ethical imperative.

The secondary research question sought to explore whether the critical success factors change according to whether the coaches are professional or non-professional.

In answering the above research question, the researcher took into account the biographical data provided by each respondent throughout the research process.

Evidence from the biographical data revealed the following:

- Gender – The respondents comprised 76% females and 23% males. The researcher found no indication in the findings that gender had any bearing on the interview questions. The respondents stressed only the importance of the mentee/mentor relationship being one of mutual choosing from the perspective of trust, openness and compatibility.
- Employment status – Of the professional coach respondents, 87.5% were self-employed full-time, and 62.5% coached more than one discipline and 100% of the non-professional coach respondents worked part-time. The findings showed that the employment status of professional and non-professional coaches had no bearing on the research questions.
- Age – While 50% of the professional coach respondents fell into the age group of 55-65 years and the balance, into the age group of 35-44 years, 80% of the non-professional coach respondents fell into the age group of 18-24 years. Despite the difference in age and experience of both samples, the case for mentorship remained strong across all responses.
- Experience level – Of the eight (8) professional coach respondents, 50% had more than 31 years of professional coaching experience, and the balance had between 21-30 years of professional coaching experience. Of the non-professional coach respondents, 80% had less than five (5) years of coaching experience and 60% of the five respondents had just finished a two-year coach development programme. The evidence revealed that although professional coaches expressed the notion of wanting to pass on their knowledge through mentoring younger, less experienced coaches, they expressed the need for periodic mentorship, while the non-professional coaches expressed the wish to continue in a mentor relationship for their ongoing development with someone they felt at ease with. There was no evidence that the different experience levels changed the critical success factors.

In consideration of the secondary research question, which asks if the critical success factors change according to the coach's status, the data revealed that it did not make a difference in the interview

questioning. In support of evidence underpinning these findings, Bloom *et al.* (1998a) reported on the responses of professional coaches who attributed their professional knowledge development to having being mentored. Further studies evidenced support for these findings in aspiring coaches who felt that mentorship during their training (Schempp, Mccullick & Elliott, 2017) had increased their commitment to developing to be more effective coaches (Nash, 2003).

## 6.8 Future Research

Although this research has added to the understanding of mentorship, further research needs to be undertaken to standardise the definition of mentorship, beyond that of the roles and functions of mentorship (Lamb, 2005).

Secondly, future research is warranted in equestrian coaching. In particular, regarding the critical issue of the horse within the mentorship relationship, as there is very little research concerning the triad, apart from how horses and humans connect (Hall, 2006) and how self-reflection is useful in facilitating the interaction between the triad (Winfield *et al.*, 2013). This is obviously a crucial element in equestrian coaching and presents a broad scope for further research into this important dynamic.

## 6.9 Conclusion

This research has contributed to understanding the factors needed for effective mentoring. This research study has indicated these factors to be:

1. Empowering a mentorship relationship
2. Contextual relationship between horse/rider
3. Recognition of individual learning
4. A facilitated mentorship programme

Regarding *empowering mentorship*, this research study indicated that when mentorship takes place, there is a specific focus on the personal relationship between a mentor and a coach with respect to communication and the creation of trust. This was key when regarding mentorship and was a common characteristic identified by the respondents. Therefore, key to this dialogue are both the aspects of the availability and accessibility of the mentor as well as the trust and reliance that needs to be created in this relationship.

The *relational context* between the horse and rider was of particular interest because one needs to consider the triad in the equestrian coaching context, bringing in the element of the horse, which is the second non-verbal athlete, which is unique to this sporting code. This was also an important insight that the respondents yielded.

The recognition of *individual learning* was also a key characteristic underpinned by the Social Learning Theory. Each respondent highlighted the importance of his or her own learning journey and style. The main inference drawn from this is that any mentorship programme must take cognisance of individual learning styles.

Finally, at a programmatic level, the interviewees indicated that for successful mentorship to take place, the activity of mentoring must be embedded in a focused and purposeful model. Mentoring that takes place only once off or without direction, risks loss of confidence in the process.

In terms of practical implications, this research aimed to contribute to the body of knowledge relating to mentorship and its constituent parts. In particular, this study presents four critical factors necessary for successful mentorship.

## 7 References

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## Appendix A: Interview Schedule

### INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

#### SOUTH AFRICAN SPORTS COACHING

##### *Exploring mentorship for the Equestrian Coach*

DATE AVAILABLE	TIME AVAILABLE (30-60 minutes)	POSITION IN ORGANISATION	CONTACT DETAILS

Interviewee Name:

.....

Interviewee Signature:

.....

Researcher's Name:

.....

Researcher's Signature:

.....

Date: .....





## Appendix B: Consent Form

### CONSENT FORM

I hereby confirm that I have been adequately informed about the nature, conduct, benefits and risks of the study. I have also received, read and understood the above written information. I am aware that the results of the study will be anonymously processed into a research report. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I may, at any stage, without prejudice, withdraw my consent and participation in the study. I had sufficient opportunity to ask questions and of my own free will declare myself prepared to participate in the study.

Research participant's name :-----

(Please Print)

Research participant's signature: -----

Date: -----

Researcher's name: -----

Researcher's signature:-----

Date: -----

## Appendix C: Sample Interview Questions

### SAMPLE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

The Research question of the study is to determine the link between mentorship and equestrian sports coaching in South Africa.

1. What role has mentorship played in your advancement/success as an equestrian sports coach?
2. In what circumstances have you needed mentorship in your equestrian sports coaching role?
3. Can you describe how a lack of mentorship may have impacted your advancement/success as an equestrian sports coach?
4. Explain in what instance you have found yourself needing mentorship in your equestrian sports coaching role?
5. How has mentorship influenced your personal growth as an individual?
6. In what way has mentorship influenced your approach to coaching?
7. Anything else you would like to say about mentorship or coaching?

These sample questions are chosen in order to support the research question and sub question. Patterns will emerge from the data collected of each participant's views and experiences in equestrian sports coaching.

The Literature Review will indicate certain themes and the researcher will test these themes through the patterns that emerge from the interview questions.