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# The Relationship Between Emotional Intelligence and Performance Among Executive Coaches

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Walden University
2018

Abstract

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MIT, Washington State University Vancouver, 2002

BS, Arizona State University, 1992

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Industrial Organizational Psychology

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Abstract

Although there is research on the correlation between emotional intelligence (EI) and performance in areas such as business, education, and nursing, there was a significant gap in the literature regarding research on the relationship between executive coaches EI and their performance. As a result, I focused on the lack of empirical evidence regarding the relationship between EI and performance among executive coaches, with performance defined as the number of coaching clients secured in 2015.The purpose of this quantitative study was to determine if there is a statistically significant relationship between EI and performance among executive coaches. Through convenience sampling, 50 executive coaches served as participants by taking an online demographic/performance questionnaire and the Mayor-Salovey-Caruso Emotional Intelligence Test (MSCEIT), also online. The MSCEIT was used to test participant EI ($n$ = 50; males = 33, females = 16). The relationships among 6 control variables (age, gender, education, coach credentials, years of coaching experience, and coach training) were examined to determine if any relationships existed between the variables and EI and performance. SPSS 2.1 was used for data entry and 1-way ANOVAs/$F$-tests, Somers' $d$, and $t$-tests were used for data analysis. Although there was no significant correlation between EI and performance based on the findings, other relationships were found. A potential limitation of the study was the small sample size. Further research in this area is recommended. The implications for positive social change include informing executive coaches, organizations, and coach training programs on the importance of high EI among coaches, as coaches with high EI add significant value to society.

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# Dedication

To my parents, John & Darlene Duckett – thank you for instilling in me a strong work ethic and the value of higher education.

To my heroes, Alexandra Helen, Nollan Anthony, and Chandler Elizabeth – the three of you have been my greatest teachers, my most powerful sources of inspiration, my motivation, and my reasons for persevering during the most challenging times…I deeply admire and respect each of you and I love you with all my heart.

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# Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

The executive coaching profession is young, and the majority of research on executive coaching is anecdotal rather than quantitative and relates primarily to the increased demand for executive coaching (Newsom & Dent, 2011), its outcomes (de Haan, Duckworth, Birch, & Jones, 2013), and the coach-client relationship (Castro Correia, Rebelo dos Santos, & Passmore, 2016). Newsom and Dent (2011) purported that the popularity of executive coaching developed quicker than the understanding of the profession. Grover and Furnham (2016) discussed the need for empirical data.

This study was designed to investigate a gap in executive coaching literature, as scholars have not examined the relationship between emotional intelligence (EI) and performance among executive coaches. Performance, in this study, was defined as the number of coaching clients secured during 2015. Internal validity in this research was created with six control variables: age, gender, education, coaching credentials, years of coaching experience, and coach training. These variables were analyzed to determine if there were correlations between the control variables, EI, and performance.

Although I did not find a correlation between EI and performance among executive coaches, its implications might have a broader scope. Other data obtained from this work have the potential to provide coaches with information to inform professional and personal development. Such development could impact the quality of their work and benefit their clients. The influence of a coach, however, has the potential to reach beyond the direct impact they have on the client; it could infiltrate multiple systems such as the client's sphere of influence, the organization, the organization's stakeholders, and

ultimately society. In this chapter, I address the background of the study, the problem statement, the purpose of this work, the research questions and hypotheses, the nature of the study, the theoretical framework, limitations, delimitations, and the significance of the research.

## Background of the Study

Cox and Patrick (2012) contended that "working with people invariably involves emotions" (p. 34), thus, the ability to understand and manage emotions is critical. Given the importance organizations place on EI and the investment required to hire external coaches, with an average cost of 320.00 per session (Sherpa Coaching, 2013 p. 7), research could increase organizational returns on the coaching investment. The data obtained from this research could influence coaches to obtain and/or continue formal coach training. It could also influence coach training programs' curriculum development; guide coach associations with programming choices; and provide information to executive coaches on enhancing their EI, which could equate to better serving clients and increased financial success for coaches.

The International Coach Federation (2017), the largest global coaching organization, sets the standard for thousands of coach certification programs worldwide. According to Griffiths and Campbell (2008), the ICF leads the coaching industry with respect to coaching regulations and standards. Included in the ICF's 11 core competencies, which ICF accredited and approved programs must adhere to, are curriculum requirements for EI training. Because of the ICF's emphasis on EI, the demand for executive EI coaching within organizations, and the research supporting the

impact of high EI on professional and personal relationships, there is a need for high EI with respect to the executive coaching field.

Ratiu and Baban (2016) suggested that executive coaching is a "learning resource from which the corporate buyers…select those that better meet the diverse learning needs of leaders" (p. 209). EI is one of those learning needs. Landy (2005) asserted that the popularity and demand of EI coaching is due to how the business community views EI. Ackley (2016) purported that EI "has evolved from a new scientific construct, to a popular fad, to a mainstay concept in leadership and team development" (p. 269). It is critical to have skilled and qualified coaches to meet these demands. McKee, Tilian, and Mason (2009) asserted that it is EI, rather than IQ, that differentiates average from exceptional leaders. Yadav (2014) stated that "in an era of corporate diversity, emotional competence is the trait that is most needed" (p. 49). White (2017) described executive coaches as trusted leadership advisors (TLA) who "encourages greater introspection and vulnerability on the part of the executive" (p. 32) and requires a high level of EI for the executive coach. Such assertions also supported the need for this research.

Executives use emotional coaching to better understand and manage their emotions and the emotions of others (Keaton & Kelly, 2008). Keaton and Kelly (2008) found that because emotions are key factors to human existence, understanding how emotions relate to both personal and professional interactions is a component of success. Bar-On (2006) stated that high EI equates to higher personal and professional accomplishments, and Yadav (2014) contended that EI is critical to effective decision

making. According to Quick and Macik-Frey (2004), an executive's EI skills can either increase or decrease a department's performance.

EI is central to individual and organizational success. Kotsou, Nelis, Gregoire, and Mikolajczak (2011) found a correlation between an increase in EI and an increase in the quality of relationships and mental and physical health in addition to a decrease in somatic complaints and cortisol levels. Nafukho, Muyia, Farnia, Kacirek, and Lynham, (2016) found that 1 year after EI coaching/training, posttests showed an increase in EI as compared to the pretests. Organizations are seeking professionals, such as executive coaches, to guide EI development among their leadership and managers.

To assist in executive EI development, it is important that coaches possess high EI. Peltier (2010) contended that it is preferable for the coach to exhibit high EI levels in addition to successfully coaching others in the area of EI development. EI knowledge, skills, and abilities are central to successful coaching (Bono, Purvanovak, Towler, & Peterson, 2009). Kets de Vries (2014) asserted that effective executive coaches understand two key factors about their clients: how they think and how they experience emotions. Effective executive coaches must be emotionally intelligent. Duffell and Lawton-Smith (2015) purported that coaching effectiveness may be limited when client emotions are ignored. In order for executive coaches to meet organizational and client expectations, their EI skills must be strong.

Segers, Vloeberghs, Henderickx, and Inceoglu (2011) explained that in order to advance the coaching profession, an understanding of the industry is vital. Understanding who coaches are and what leads to their success is also vital. Kilburg (2016) asked,

"What does it take to become an expert executive coach?" (p. 184) According to Kilburg, little is known about how to develop executive coaches. Without this knowledge it is difficult for the industry to develop and grow in a productive manner.

Although there was significant empirical research regarding EI, as well as research on EI and performance and data on executive coaching, there was a gap in the research related to the relationship between EI and performance among executive coaches. In this study, I provided an understanding of executive coaches with respect to their EI and performance. More knowledge in this area could aid in the advancement of coaching, increase the credibility of the profession through empirical validation, provide scientific data to support executive coaching hiring practices, provide certification programs with data to support curriculum development, guide coach associations in their program selection, and inform coaches on future professional training. Recognizing the relationship between EI and performance among executive coaches could improve the return on coaching investments within organizations, enhance coach education practices, add credibility to the industry, and positively impact society.

## Problem Statement

High EI is a skill that organizations value and want developed in their leaders (Halsell-Scott, Shumate, & Blum, 2008; Quick & Macki- Frey, 2004), as it is important for leaders to have a high sense of self-awareness, demonstrate empathy, regulate emotions, and develop and maintain strong relationships (Wasylyshyn, Shorey, & Chaffin, 2012). There were significant data regarding EI, as well as numerous studies on executive coaching. Additionally, there were studies on executive coaching and EI. There

were fewer articles on EI and performance. A significant gap existed in the literature regarding research on the relationship between executive coaches EI and their performance. As a result, I focused on the lack of empirical evidence regarding the relationship between EI and performance among executive coaches, with performance defined as the number of coaching clients secured in 2015.

## Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this quantitative study was to explore the relationship between the dependent variable, performance, and the independent variable, EI, among executive coaches. Data were obtained through the administration of the Mayor-Salovey-Caruso Emotional Intelligence Test (MSCEIT) to executive coaches, along with a demographic/performance survey. As contended by Rostron (2009), practitioners have a responsibility to improve understanding and knowledge with respect to executive coaching. Woodcock (2010) indicated the need for more research regarding EI and executive coaching. The objectives of this research were as follows:

1. To determine if a significant relationship existed between EI and performance among executive coaches
2. To determine what other variables, if any, related to executive coaches' EI and performance
3. To contribute to existing research
4. To increase the coaching professions' understanding and knowledge of what contributes to executive coaches' success

5. To contribute to society by providing scientific data that could help develop coaches, increase the quality of their work, and provide data to assist organizations and coach certification programs

## Research Questions and Hypotheses

This study was guided by the following research questions and associated null hypotheses:

Research Question 1. Is there a statistically significant relationship between emotional intelligence and performance among executive coaches?

$H_0$1*:* There is not a statistically significant relationship between emotional intelligence and performance among executive coaches.

$H_1$1: There is a statistically significant relationship between emotional intelligence and performance among executive coaches.

Research Question 2a. Is there a statistically significant relationship between age and performance among executive coaches?

$H_0$2a*:* There is not a statistically significant relationship between age and performance among executive coaches.

$H_1$2a*:* There is a statistically significant relationship between age and performance among executive coaches.

Research Question 2b. Is there a statistically significant relationship between age and emotional intelligence among executive coaches?

$H_0$2b*:* There is not a statistically significant relationship between age and emotional intelligence among executive coaches.

$H_1$2b*:* There is a statistically significant relationship between age and emotional intelligence among executive coaches

Research Question 3a. Is there a statistically significant relationship between gender and performance among executive coaches?

$H_0$3a*:* There is not a statistically significant relationship between gender and performance among executive coaches.

$H_1$3a*:* There is a statistically significant relationship between gender and performance among executive coaches.

Research Question 3b. Is there a statistically significant relationship between gender and emotional intelligence among executive coaches?

$H_0$3b*:* There is not a statistically significant relationship between gender and emotional intelligence among executive coaches.

$H_1$3b*:* There is a statistically significant relationship between gender and emotional intelligence among executive coaches.

Research Question 4a. Is there a statistically significant relationship between education and performance among executive coaches?

$H_0$4a*:* There is not a statistically significant relationship between education and performance among executive coaches.

$H_1$4a*:* There is a statistically significant relationship between education and performance among executive coaches.

Research Question 4b. Is there a statistically significant relationship between education and emotional intelligence among executive coaches?

$H_0$4b*:* There is not a statistically significant relationship between education and emotional intelligence among executive coaches.

$H_1$4b*:* There is a statistically significant relationship between education and emotional intelligence among executive coaches.

Research Question 5a. Is there a statistically significant relationship between coach credentials and performance among executive coaches?

$H_0$5a: There is not a statistically significant relationship between coach credentials and performance among executive coaches.

$H_1$5a*:* There is a statistically significant relationship between coach credentials and performance among executive coaches.

Research Question 5b. Is there a statistically significant relationship between coach credentials and emotional intelligence among executive coaches?

$H_0$5b: There is not a statistically significant relationship between coach credentials and emotional intelligence among executive coaches.

$H_1$5b: There is a statistically significant relationship between coach credentials and emotional intelligence among executive coaches.

Research Question 6a. Is there a statistically significant relationship between years of coaching experience and performance among executive coaches?

$H_0$6a: There is not a statistically significant relationship between year of coaching experience and performance among executive coaches.

$H_1$6a*:* There is a statistically significant relationship between years of coaching experience and performance among executive coaches.

Research Question 6b. Is there a statistically significant relationship between years of coaching experience and emotional intelligence among executive coaches?

$H_0$6b*:* There is not a statistically significant relationship between years of coaching experience and emotional intelligence among executive coaches.

$H_1$6b*:* There is a statistically significant relationship between years of coaching experience and emotional intelligence among executive coaches.

Research Question 7a. Is there a statistically significant relationship between coach training and performance among executive coaches?

$H_0$7a*:* There is not a statistically significant relationship between coach training and performance among executive coaches.

$H_1$7a*:* There is a statistically significant relationship between coach training (ICF approved/accredited schools and non-ICF associated schools) and performance among executive coaches.

Research Question 7b**.** Is there a statistically significant relationship between coach training and emotional intelligence among executive coaches?

$H_0$7b*:* There is not a statistically significant relationship between coach training and emotional intelligence among executive coaches.

$H_1$7b*:* There is a statistically significant relationship between coach training and emotional intelligence among executive coaches.

## Nature of Study

The purpose of this quantitative research was to determine if a significant relationship existed between executive coaches EI and their performance. I also examined six control variables, age, gender, education, coach credentials, coaching experience, and coach training, to determine if they significantly related with EI and/ or performance. The target sample for this study was between 48 and 66 participants; this study had 50 participants. Chapter 3 provides the power analysis to justify the numerical estimates of sample size. I used the MSCEIT and a demographic/performance questionnaire to gather data from the participants.

## Definition of Terms

For the purposes of this study, the following terms were defined based on how they were utilized in this research:

*Client:* The executive whom the coach coaches (IFC Code of Ethics, 2017).

*Emotional intelligence*: According to Mayer and Salovey's model of emotional intelligence, EI is a person's ability to perceive, use, understand, and manage emotions (as cited in Multi-Health Systems, 2011).

*Executive:* Typically, an executive is defined as an individual at the C-Suite level of organizations (Peltier, 2010). For this study, an executive was defined as a top-level manager and/or a C-Suite level individual in a given organization. Executives are coaches' clients (Peltier, 2010).

*Executive coach:* An internal or external professional used to improve the performance of his or her client, the executive (de Haan & Duckworth, 2010).

*Performance:* Number of coaching clients secured in 2015.

*Sponsor:* The sponsor is the personnel (human resources or manager) in charge of securing the executive coach and who the coach reports to. In the case of an external coach, the sponsor is also responsible for paying the coach for services rendered to the client (International Coach Federation Code of Ethics, 2017).

## Assumptions

Several assumptions were made for the research. Because the sample size of executive coaches was a small population for this work, it was assumed that the sample was a generalizable representation of the executive coach population. I assumed that the participants completed the assessment and demographic/performance questionnaire to the best of their ability and were honest in their responses. I assumed that the MSCEIT was an acceptable measure of each executive coaches' EI.

## Limitations

This study had several potential limitations. EI strengths were measured by an ability-based assessment with no validation from other sources. To minimize this limitation, the most appropriate assessment available for this work was selected, as described in Chapter 2. The acceptable sample size was between 48 and 66 participants; this study had 50. Being on the lower end of the adequate sample size could have been a limitation. Participants were asked to recall how many clients they coached over the course of the previous year, and their recollection could have been inaccurate. Another limitation was unclear questions. Rather than asking how many clients were secured, it may have been clearer had the question asked, "How many clients did you coach in

2015?" Additional limitations and more detail of the aforementioned limitations are discussed in Chapter 5.

## Scope and Delimitations

In this study, I examined the EI of executive coaches to determine if a statistically significant relationship existed between EI and performance. Performance was defined as the number of coaching engagements secured in 2015. Data were collected via the MSCEIT and a demographic/performance questionnaire; both were taken online. I determined if the six control variables-age, gender, education, coach credentials, coaching experience, and coach training–had a significant relationship with both EI and performance.

I selected the MSCEIT after researching the top three EI theories and assessment tools. The specific areas of EI assessed with the MSCEIT were based on Mayer and Salovey's four branch model of EI and consisted of the following: perceiving emotions in one's self and in others, using emotions, understanding emotions, and managing emotions in one's self and in others. Each branch aligned with what the IFC deemed important components for coaches to possess in order to work effectively with clients.

This topic was selected because high EI is associated with performance (Mishra, 2016). Although there was significant research on EI, I did not find any data on the EI of executive coaches as related to performance; thus, this work was intended to contribute to expanding the knowledge of coaching and to serve as a resource to organizations when selecting executive coaches, coach certification programs, coach associations, and individual executive coaches.

The confines of this research were limited to participant responses on the MSCEIT and by the control variables age, gender, education, coach credentials, coaching experience, and coach training. The aforementioned was used to control for factors other than EI that may or may not have impacted participant performance.

## Significance of Study

Because a statistically significant relationship between EI and performance was not found in this research, the gap in the literature related to EI, performance, and executive coaching was not filled; however, in this examination of EI among executive coaches, as related to their performance (and the control variables), I highlighted a potential area for future inquiry. Moreover, this work could inspire future research in this area, adding additional empirical validity to the coaching profession. There is a "movement towards evidence-based coaching" (Griffiths & Campbell, 2008, p. 20). Although this work did not directly impact the coaching industry, organizations, coach certification programs, individual coaches, and society, as related to the relationship of EI and performance among executive coaches, other findings could have an impact.

The professional application of future research could extend to those in the coaching industry, specifically coach certification programs, coach associations, individual coaches, and the ICF. EI had a relationship between EI and performance. The other relationships that were determined between some of the control variables and EI and/or performance could have been established. As it currently stands, the beginning of that framework was established.

Lastly, had a relationship between EI and performance among executive coaches been verified, the knowledge could have extended beyond the organizations using coaching services, beyond the schools that train and certify coaches, beyond coach associations, and beyond the ICF, the leading organization overseeing the coaching industry. Executive coaches make a positive contribution to society. Not only are coaches' leaders, coaches influence leaders, and leaders influence society. A coach's purpose is to assist others in their professional and personal development through accountability, support, and empowerment. A residual of this development is increased happiness levels, according to Belic (2011). By promoting self-worth, professional development, and increasing happiness of individuals, families, organizations/companies, and society benefit; thus, positive social change occurs.

## Summary

EI is a contributor to a person's success. Resnick (2016) described EI as "the most essential component of leadership and professional coaching" (p. 302). Although there was significant research related to EI and performance, there was a gap in the literature regarding the relationship between EI and the performance of executive coaches. Being that EI is foundational to the coaching profession, having knowledge of a relationship between an executive coaches' EI and performance had the potential to contribute to the coaching profession. I found a relationship between EI and the performance of executive coaches, which had the potential to contribute to multiple entities, such as organizations/companies, coach certification programs, coach associations, and the ICF. Individuals, both coaches and clients, could have benefited from the knowledge gained.

Ultimately, this examination could have positively contributed to society as coaches and clients increased their EI and consequently their performance.

This dissertation is organized as follows: In Chapter1, I introduced the study and the justification and purpose of this work, as well as the problem that was under investigation. Chapter 2 contains a comprehensive literature review of theoretical and empirical works relevant to EI, EI and performance, coaching, and executive coaching. In Chapter 3, I focused on the description and rationale of the research methods selected for this research. In Chapter 4, I provided a presentation of the results, and in Chapter 5, I discussed the results with respect to the relevant literature.

# Chapter 2: Literature Review

## Introduction

The purpose of this research was to bridge the gap in literature and contribute to the coaching profession by examining if a relationship existed between EI and performance among executive coaches. Performance was defined as the number of coaching clients secured in 2015. I also examined the relationship between six control variables and both EI and performance. Although this work did not result in a correlation between EI and performance among executive coaches, based on previous research, a relationship does exist among other populations. The literature review could provide coaches with an understanding of the relationship between EI and performance and give them cause to investigate their EI and how it impacts their performance.

EI is a topic of interest in the business and coaching communities. Although there was an abundance of literature on EI, there was a lack of empirical research regarding EI in coaching (Gregory & Levy, 2011), and there were fewer studies on EI and performance. Consequently, I did not find any data regarding EI and performance among executive coaches. With the interest in EI and how it relates to workplace success, the growth of the executive coaching industry, and organizations hiring executive coaches to work with leaders on EI development, statistically determining a relationship between EI and performance could have been beneficial for coaches, organizations, and coach certification programs.

The underlying theoretical foundations for this study were EI theory, open-system theory, and emotional contagion theory (EC). EI theory and EC theory were used to

describe the impact emotions have on individuals, as well as how these emotions influence others and performance. System theory was used to describe the interconnectedness of those comprising organizations, how emotions flow, and how emotions impact the system.

This literature review begins with an analysis of the aforementioned theories. Next, I presented a background of coaching with a review and analysis of personal and executive coaching and how emotions impact the quality and effectiveness of the coach. I described the demand for coaching and the role executive coaching plays in organizational success throughout the entire system. A review of EI research is presented to provide an understanding of the concept, as it was the independent variable in this research. I then integrated executive coaching and EI to illustrate the research gaps with regard to the EI of executive coaches. Lastly, I reviewed EI and performance (performance was the dependent variable in this study). Through this reviewing process I gained an understanding of EI, executive coaching, and performance, and identified gaps in current research.

## Literature Search Strategy

I provided a comprehensive literature review using the Walden University EBSCO Host, where I ran searches on all available databases. Searches included, but were not limited to, the following: Academic Search Complete, American Doctoral Dissertations, Business Source Compete, CINAHL Plus with Full Text, PsycARTICLES, SocINDEX with Full Text, PsycINFO, and Communication & Mass Media Complete. I limited searches to peer-reviewed journals with an open range of publication dates. I also

used Google Scholar, as well as Internet searches. Broad searches on EI, executive coaching, and coaching, took place along with more searches on EI and performance, executive coaching, and EI. I used some of the following key words to guide searches: *coaching, executive coaching, EI, organizations, IQ and EI, EI and executive coaching, EI and performance, personal coaching, life coaching*, and *performance and coaching*.

In cases where there was little current work and/or no work, I sought related research, such as performance and nursing, education, and leadership. I used some older works. I also used the lack of information to determine where gaps existed, as was the case with coaching and performance.

## Theoretical Framework

The underlying theoretical frameworks for this study were EI theory, open-system theory, and EC theory. Several factors contribute to a person's high-level performance in professional environments, and EI is a contributor as EI is regarded as a professional success standard (Perez, Petrides, & Furnham as cited in in Schulze & Roberts, 2005). Numerous scholars linked EI and performance, including Singh and Mahmood's (2017) study on EI and expatriate job performance; Maqbool, Sudong, Manzoor, and Rashid's (2017) study on the impact of EI on project success; and Jeon and Koh's (2014) research on EI and performance of clinical nurses in Korea. The three primary EI theories were reviewed in this work.

The second theory used to explain the significance of high EI among executive coaches and how it may relate to performance was EC theory. EC theory is used to describe the spread of emotions from individual to individual and/or group to group

(Caruso & Salovey, 2004) and how these emotions impacted performance (Snaebjornsson & Vaiciukynaite, 2016). If emotions remain isolated to the individual who experiences them, the concept of EC is limited to the person who experienced the emotion; yet, according to EC theory, emotions spread and affect those they spread to. Due to the strength of the coach-client relationship, the spread of emotions could positively or negatively affect coaching outcomes and impact coaching performance.

The third theory used to explain the significance of EI and performance, in the context of executive coaching, was open-system theory. This theory is used to illustrate the interconnectedness of individuals within the organizational structure, as well as those associated with the organization. I used open-system theory to illustrate the influence that coaches have on the client, as well as the organization as a whole. Additionally, open-system theory illustrated that emotions spread throughout organizations.

## Emotional Intelligence Theories

### Reuven Bar-On

Bar-On's (2006) model of social-emotional intelligence (ESI) was developed over 17 years and combined intrapersonal and interpersonal competencies influenced by several researchers, including Darwin (emotional expression), Thorndike (social intelligence and performance), and Wechsler (general intelligence). Bar-On asserted that it is the combination of social intelligence and EI that describes the EI paradigm verses describing it solely as EI. Bar-On defined ESI as "a cross-section of interrelated emotional and social competencies, skills and facilitators that determine how effectively we understand and express ourselves, understand others and relate with them, and cope

with daily demands" (para. 14). The following abilities are key components of Bar-On's model:

> 1) Ability to recognize, understand and express emotions and feelings, 2) Ability to understand how others feel and relate with them, 3) Ability to manage and control emotions, 4) Ability to manage change, adapt and solve problems of a personal and interpersonal nature, 5) Ability to generate positive affect and be self-motivated. (para 13)

Bar-On (2006) defined EI as effective emotional recognition, assessment, and management in oneself and in others. According to Bar-On (2010), individuals who are more resilient to daily challenges are those who can understand themselves and others; they are more emotionally intelligent. Bar-On (1997) wrote that individuals are able to cope better with daily challenges when they understand and express themselves and have the ability to understand others.

**Mayer and Salovey**

EI theory, as described by Mayer and Salovey, is grounded in psychology literature and is a mental ability model of EI (as cited in Salovey, Brackett, & Mayer, 2002). Mayer and Salovey (1997) defined EI as

> The ability to perceive accurately, appraise, and express emotions; the ability to access and/or generate feelings when they facilitate thought; the ability to understand emotions and emotional knowledge; and the ability to reflectively regulate emotions in ways to promote emotional and intellectual growth. (p. 23)

Mayer and Salovey's model was the second to emerge (as cited in Emmerling & Goleman, 2003). This model includes a focus on integrating emotions with cognitive intelligence as opposed to mixed models, such as Bar-On's EQi, that blend mental abilities, personality traits, and dispositions.

Mayer, Salovey, and Caruso (2004) linked emotion and cognition in their four-branch hierarchal model where emotion progresses from emotional perception, to using emotions as data, to understanding emotions, to emotional management. This EI model structures emotion by integrating thinking and emotions and while each branch is interrelated; they also work independent of each other (Caruso & Salovey, 2004). The foundation of this model is integrating emotion and thinking.

Caruso and Salovey (2004) contended that this progression illustrates "the degree to which the ability is integrated within the rest of an individual's…personality" (p. 199). Furthermore, each branch encompassed "a developmental progression of skills from the more basic to the more sophisticated" (Caruso & Salovey, p. 199). The abilities-based model has four branches and is hierarchal, with the foundation, or Branch 1 being perceiving, which is a person's ability to recognize and perceive emotions in his or her self and in others; Branch 1, using, links emotion to cognition; emotions serve as intellectual data and it is critical to integrate cognition with emotions. Branches 3 and 4 are the strategic areas. Branch 3, understanding, involves the ability to understand and analyze emotional progression. Mayer et al. contended that EI development typically increases with age, and Branch 4, managing, relates to emotional management of a person's self and others.

Caruso and Salovey (2004) stressed the importance of integrating emotion and thinking and discussed the application of their theory in the business world. Caruso and Salovey differentiated between negative emotions, such as anger, envy, and sadness, and positive emotions, such as happiness, joy, and contentment. Caruso and Salovey discussed how all emotions, negative or positive, if used intelligently, serve people well. For instance, when used effectively, fear is a catalyst for action; when used ineffectively, fear creates paralysis. Positive and negative emotions are a part of an executive coach's experience, whether their own emotions or that of the client. In either instance, perceiving, using, understanding, and managing emotions effectively is critical to the outcome of each coaching engagement. An emotionally intelligent coach will know how to work with, rather than against, both negative and positive emotions in order to assist each client in achieving his or her desired outcomes.

**Goleman**

Goleman's EI paradigm, grounded in work performance, distinguishes itself from Bar-On and Mayer and Salovey (Emmerling & Goleman, 2003) and was the third EI model to emerge. Goleman formulated the theories from a culmination of Mayer and Salovey's (1997) work and "separated strands of research" (para 2), which included neuroscience. Goleman (1998) extended Mayer and Salovey's definition of EI by adding the following five main constructs, which include personal skills/qualities: self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and relationship management (Emmerling & Goleman, 2003). Goleman (1995) defined EI as a person's ability to motivate him or herself and persist despite the challenges faced and the frustrations felt.

According to Goleman (1995), EI is related to self-control; those with high EI more successfully control impulses and delay gratification. EI is also a mood regulator and prevents moods and emotions from clouding a person's thinking. Like Mayer and Salovey, Goleman contended that EI is associated with empathy.

Goleman (1998) suggested that EI involves various competencies that influence leadership performance. Goleman's (1998) EI model consists of five main EI constructs: self-awareness, self-regulation, social skills, empathy, and motivation. Goleman (1998) stated that emotions guide moment-to-moment decisions by interacting with the rational mind, either enabling or disabling thought. According to Goleman (1998), two intelligences, the rational and emotional, determine a person's success. Goleman (1995) asserted that when an individual effectively manages his or her emotions and is able to deal with others' emotions, they have an advantage in many areas of life, including the ability to cope with difficult situations.

## Measuring Emotional Intelligence

EI researchers debate EI measurements and their effectiveness (Roberts, Zeidner, & Matthews, 2001) and described them as divergent conceptualizations of measuring EI-ability based EI measurements and mixed-method measurements of EI (Cho, Drasgow, & Cao, 2015; Wei, Liu, & Allen, 2016). Some contended that the most effective EI measurement is ability-based (Fiori et al., 2014; Mayor et al., 2004; Smieja, Orzechowski, & Stolarski, 2014). Some scholars argued that mixed methods are the most effective EI measurements (Bar-On, 1997; Goleman, 1995). I provided a summary of both methods to justify the method selected for this work.

**Mixed Method Model**

Researchers such as Bar-On (1997); Goleman (1995); and Joseph, Jin, Newman, and O'Boyle (2015) maintained that EI is most effectively measured through a mixed-model method assessing personality, motivation, and social skills in addition to gaging emotions. Proponents of the mixed model asserted that EI is a combination of personality traits, social behaviors, competencies, and intellect, and EI should be measured as such (Whiteoak & Manning, 2012). Conversely, opponents of this method contended that there are multiple disadvantages of mixed models. Roberts, McCann, Matthews, and Zeidner (2010) asserted that the Bar-On and Goleman self-report assessments have the "highest public visibility" but "are considered problematic" (p. 7) because they are too similar to personality assessments, they do not measure intelligence, and they are prone to participant biases or faking. However, although faking is a possibility, typically people do not know what answers are most appropriate for their given situation, such as the criteria employers seek on the assessment. Joseph and Newman (2010) stated that mixed methods lack the rigor of ability-based models, and although it tends to be more generalizable to job performance "it suffers extreme theoretical underdevelopment" (p. 72).

**Ability Model Method**

EI is a person's capacity for the cognitive processing of emotional information and is not related to personality (Mayer & Salovey, 1997). Whiteoak and Manning (2012) contended that EI is "psychometrically independent from other measures of personality" (p. 1663). For subscribers of the ability model, the appropriate measurement is through an

objective, maximal performance assessment focused on aptitude (Whiteoak & Manning, 2012). EI is illustrated as an intelligence rather than a combination of traits, skills, and intelligence (Brackett & Mayer, 2003; Lopes, Salovey, & Straus., 2003; O'Connor, & Little, 2003). The MSCEIT ability model was backed by "decades of research in social and personality psychology" (Joseph & Newman, 2010, p. 72). Petrides (2011) contended that the MSCEIT "does not measure intelligence of any kind" and insisted that EI is a personality characteristic (p. 659).

In order to formulate a scientific-based understanding of EI and EI interventions, measuring EI is critical. The MSCEIT was the first ability-based EI assessment that evaluates responses on a level of correctness scale and measures maximum performance (Caruso & Salovey, 2004). As of 2009, the MSCEIT was the only ability-based instrument available to measure EI (Brannick, Wahi, Arc, Johnson, & Nazian, 2009). In 2014, the Test of Emotional Intelligence (TIE) was introduced as an ability/performance-based assessment grounded in culturally-appropriate narratives and experiences and is based on Mayer and Salovey's (1997) EI model (Smieja et al., 2014).

According to Multi-Health Systems (2011), the MSCEIT measures "how well people perform tasks and solve emotional problems, rather than having them provide their own subjective assessment of their emotional skills" (para 1). Mayer et al. (2004) contended their ability model was more accurate then self-report assessments because there was a significant difference between a person's perceived and actual intelligence. Lanciano and Curci (2015) contended that "studies and research on EI ability have a great deal to offer the challenge of understanding human behavior and how to best foster it" (p.

1112). Disadvantages of this method are that it is it could be more difficult to score (MacCann, Matthews, Seidner, & Roberts, 2003) then the mixed method approach and some respondents could not see how the assessment pertained to their work and life (Six Seconds, 2011, para. 7).

**Selected Method**

Joseph and Newman (2010) summarized the two forms of EI assessments as follows:

> 1) The ability-based model is "a narrow, theoretically specified set of constructs pertaining to the recognition and control of personal emotion, 2) As an umbrella term for a broad array of constructs that are connected only by their non-redundancy with cognitive intelligence which is the mix method. (p.55)

After researching the three leading EI measurements McEnrue and Groves (2006) asserted that no single tool meets every need and they contended that "measuring a few things very well (for example, high fidelity, high interpretability, and narrow bandwidth, or more things less well (low fidelity, broad bandwidth, more comprehensive coverage" is a better option (p. 31). They concluded the MSCEIT was the most effective tool for determining employee and leadership training and development needs. According to Sheldon, Dunning, and Ames (2014), the MSCEIT is "one of the more well-validated and widely used EI tests used by numerous Fortune 500 companies and large organizations for training and development purposes" (p.128). It is also less vulnerable to faking, it is congruent with the EI theory and shows high reliability (Brackett et al., 2005). The MSCEIT was recommended for academic researchers (Six Seconds, 2011, para 5).

For the aforementioned reasons, and to increase this study's validity, I utilized the Mayer et al. theory of EI as a theoretical foundation for this research and the MSCEIT to assess participant EI. The MSCEIT is a performance-based tool related to emotional processing (Salovey, Brackett, & Mayer, 2004). This model was chosen for the following reasons: (a) It was the only model that clearly linked emotions with intelligence, (b) it was the first abilities based EI model and assessment tool in which newer assessments were based, and (c) Mayer and Salovey (2007) were the leaders in EI research – it was from their work that the other EI leaders developed their theories.

Based on the literature reviewed, I concluded that determining executive coaches' EI levels with the use of the MSCEIT was the best tool for investigating the relationship between executive coaches EI and performance. Mayer and Salovey (2007) stressed that EI could possibly influence how a person forms in relationships. A strong relationship between coach and client is critical for successful coaching engagements. With this consideration in mind, the MSCEIT was used to measure the EI of executive coaches for this research.

## Open Systems Theory

While executive coaching is a one-with-one, or team intervention, very few within an organization have direct contact with the coach. Based on open-systems theory the EI attributes and work of the coach indirectly impacts the entire system, both internally and externally. This review and analysis of open systems theory revealed the holistic connection between people in organizations – how those comprising organizations are intertwined and how the actions and behaviors of one individual impact

countless others, both in and outside of the system. Open systems theory provided a theoretical framework from which to gain further understanding of EI and executive coaching. This theory also demonstrated how the application of executive coaching and the implicit and explicit use of EI impacted the entire organizational system.

Referred to as a "classical theoretical approach" (Church, 1994, p. 21), open systems theory has served as a solid framework that numerous researchers have relied on for decades to better understand how organizations function and how to improve organization operations on a human level because "organizational settings dominate our lives" (Boyed, 2015, p. 650). For instance, in their 1993 study on consultants, Ridley and Mendoza (1993) described open systems theory as an effective method for analyzing and assessing the entire organization, versus merely considering isolated sections of an entity. Church (1994) used open systems theory to reveal how communication impacted organizations on a macro, rather than micro level. Starnes (2000) described the ways that external and internal factors impacted non-profit organizations and utilized open systems theory to strengthen such entities. Mansor and Tayib (2013) developed an integrated, holistic model for tax administration performance management utilizing open systems theory in order to include external stakeholders. Sommers (2014) based an approach to governance on a systems model.

Open systems theory views organizations as social systems and described the organizational structure as the people comprising the system rather than the physical building and equipment (Katz & Kahn, 1978). Katz and Kahn (1978) asserted that social systems are human inventions and thus are imperfect - therein lies the need for ongoing

human development within the system, with executive coaching among the viable options. Lemonides (2007) described organizations as entities that are holistic and goal driven with collaborative and interdependent subsystems. The subsystems consist of entities such as leadership, employees, departments, projects, production and services processes, and teams (McNamara, 2011). Organizations are only as strong as the people comprising them, including external hires, such as coaches, whom train and develop members.

High functioning interacting subsystems create a system whose sum is greater than the output of each independent subsystem (Lemonides, 2007). While high functioning subsystems are the goal, the reality is that individual goals and organizational goals are frequently out of alignment, creating a weak and dysfunctional system. According to Katz and Kahn (1978), assuming that organizational and individual goals and purposes align is unreasonable. The primary role of an executive coach in the triadic relationship with sponsor and client is to ensure that goals align.

Systems theory also suggested that both internal and external factors constantly disrupt the system; it is constantly changing (Brown, 2015). The health of the system, or organization, determined its resilience toward this change and relies on constant functioning relationships between subsystems, as well as the relationship of the system with its surroundings (Lemonides, 2007) to navigate successfully through changes. The sustainability of the system, or organization, relies on constant functioning relationships between subsystems and the relationship of the system with its internal and external surroundings (Lemonides, 2007). Because each subsystem is connected in some way,

when a breakdown between systems occurs, the entire system ultimately suffers. Conversely, when a connection between systems strengthens, the entire system strengthens. Utilizing proactive measures, such as executive coaching, helps ensure survival and growth. Church (1994) asserted that collaboration and goal agreement are integral components to the vitality of an open system.

## Systems Theory and Executive Coaching

Establishing consistent "attitudes, perceptions, beliefs, motivations, habits, and expectations" (Katz & Kahn, 1978, p. 37) among the people in the organizational system is the psychological cement that holds the organization together, according to Katz and Kahn (1978), this statement eliminated the need for ongoing training and development by skilled individuals, such as executive coaches. In order for that cement to be solid it is imperative that organizations understand the credentials, experience, and skills of those they hire to guide, support, and strengthen their teams, this includes EI proficiency. Preston, Moon, Simon, Allen, and Kossi (2015) described great leaders as those whom help people optimize their performance by understanding others' emotions as well as their own, in other words, great leaders are emotionally intelligent.

Executive coaching is an intervention that reinforces and strengthens the like-mindedness of those comprising a system. Because each subsystem is in some way interrelated, when a breakdown between systems occurs the entire system ultimately suffers. Conversely, when a connection between systems strengthens, the entire system strengthens. Based on open systems theory, an organization is a multi-faceted,

interrelated system, and what impacts one component of the system ultimately impacts all components.

According to Deacon (1996) organizational "structure arises from the action of people in the system, and these actions are shaped by the structure in which they are embedded," (p. 551) or the organizational culture. Katz and Kahn (1978) described these actions as "roles or clusters of activities" (p. 755) based upon organizational expectations. In order to develop and maintain a healthy system where roles and expectations align, interventions are necessary because people often experience difficulty implementing necessary change on their own (Deacon, 1996). Deacon emphasized that effective interventions occur when outside sources understand the business culture and align strategies with organizational goals – these outside sources include executive coaches.

## Systems Theory and Emotional Intelligence

Executive coaching is only one component of a successful intervention. In today's workplace EI is also considered. Team and individual training and development conducted by an outside or internal source, such as an executive coach, are vital interventions that result in creating and maintaining a unified structure and a successful system. Increasing leaderships' EI so they can more effectively lead is a highly sought intervention strategy. Job performance is linked to EI and transformational leadership styles, with transformational leaders exhibiting high EI (Shahhosseini, Silong, & Ismaill, 2013). What this showed was that highly emotional intelligent leaders have the skills to motivate and excite those they lead. However, the EI strengths of that outside source, the

executive coach, also impact the quality of training and development they provided and how well they can motivate their clients.

While examining EI and executive coaching from an open systems perspective, it was evident that the emotional development of coaches and executives, as well as the individualized intervention of coaching, impacted the entire system and, when done effectively, had a positive impact. The introduction of executive coaching into an organization related to what Katz and Kahn (1978) described as maintenance inputs, which were "the energetic and informational contributions necessary to hold the people in the system and persuade them to carry out their activities as member of the system" (p. 754). Katz and Kahn contended that "no social organization can exist without its members habitually accepting their expected activities, possessing the knowledge and skills needed for the performance of those activities, and having the motivation to engage in that performance" (p. 754). According to Goodman (2002), executive coaching does not occur in isolation, rather, it transpires in an open system and influences the whole organism.

As Goodman (2002) contended, realizing that executives are an integral part of the system, and understanding how they impact that system, is both critical to effective coaching as well as to the overall health of the organization. When one hires an executive coach, whether internal or external, that coach becomes an integral part of the system as well. This exemplifies the importance of investigating EI and its relationship to performance among executive coaches. Executive coaching, an individualized workplace training strategy designed to enhance mid and upper level management and leadership

performance in a current position and/or to prepare these individuals for advancement, would directly and indirectly impact other components throughout the system or organization. Thus, systems theory provided a sound structure for this phenomenon.

## Emotional Contagion

EC, the spread of emotions from individual to individual or group to group through verbal and nonverbal communication was described as a reflexive neurological process (Rempala, 2013). Rueff-Lopes, Navarro Caretano, and Silva (2015) described it as "mimicry' (p. 412). Recent research on EC revealed the spread of emotions via social media and revealed that emotions spread in written form without the nonverbal cues (Ferrara & Yang, 2015).

EC is a critical influence in workplace environments and impacts performance (Snaebjornsson & Vaiciukynaite (2016) and productivity (Bhullar, 2012; Vijayalakshmi & Bhattacharyya, 2012), which ultimately affects organizational outcomes. Because emotions are always in play during communication Snaebjornsson and Vaiciukynaite (2016) described EC as a continuous process where cocontagion occurs, a "neutralization of the initial emotions is being created, where original emotion is reduced" (p. 58). Hatfield, et al. (1993) contended, "it fosters behavior synchrony and the moment-to-moment tracking of other people's feelings even when individuals are not explicitly attending to this information" (p. 96). The spread of emotions can be subtle.

Just as people can catch a cold or the flu from others, they can also catch emotions and become infected (Snaebjornsson & Vaiciukynaite, 2016). While the health metaphor was associated with negative emotions and passiveness, EC was also associated

with transferring positive emotions (Rempala, 2013) and was described as an integral component for empathy (Rempala, 2013; Hatfield, Bensman, Thornton, & Rapson, 2014) and gratitude (Mangus, Bock, Jones, & Folse, 2015). However, Rempala revealed that EC was higher with negative emotions (i.e. sadness) than with positive emotions (i.e. happiness). Kelly, Iannone, and McCarty (2016) exposed participants to videos of faces morphing from neutral expressions to either happy or angry expressions to test "the automaticity of emotional contagion" (p. 189). Their research revealed that anger produced EC quicker than happy expressions.

An individual's emotional state is often influenced by the emotional state of those they are in relation with and that certain people are more susceptible to EC than others (Cheng, Yen, & Chen 2012; Cox & Patrick, 2012). For instance, those who were self-aware, emotionally reactive, who were aware of others, perceive interrelatedness between themselves and others, and who read and mimic other's emotions were most susceptible to EC (Hatfield, et al., 1994). Ferrara and Yang (2015) related to EC and social media revealed that participants with high susceptibility to EC were significantly more likely to adopt positive emotions and conversely, those less susceptible were more apt to use negative emotions.

According to Arizmendi (2011), emotions, weather positive or negative, connected people in all types of personal and professional relationships and were essential to the human experience. Those in close relationships were more impacted by other's emotions than those in distant relationships, so much so that they subconsciously mimicked one another's emotions through vocal patterns, facial expressions, and physical movement

(Arizmendi, 2011; Hatfield, Cacioppo, & Rapson, 1993). According to Bhullar (2012), this could ultimately lead them to experience the associated feeling, for example, happiness leading to happiness or anger leading to anger. Dezecache et al. (2013) "investigated the transmission of emotional information in transitive triadic chains where the behavior of an individual A was observed by a participant B who was herself observed by a participant C" (p. 2), while B did not know she was being observed (because research suggested that female faces are more expressive than male's, all B participants were female) and C could not clearly determine B's emotional reactions. They found that C's facial expressions mimicked those of A, which revealed that joy and fear could unintentionally spread beyond dyadic interactions. The researchers acknowledged that there could be individual differences in how prone participants were to emotional cues. Such finding supported the significance of this research.

EC was closely linked to EI and had implications on executive coaching. When emotions were effectively perceived, used, understood, and managed, as described by Mayer and Salovey's (1997) model of EI, it minimized, or eliminated, the potential of negative EC from occurring and it increased the likelihood of positive EC which was associated with less emotional exhaustion, higher job satisfaction, and better job performance (Becker & Cropanzano, 2015). Internal and external factors influence how people think and feel, these factors also influence the spread of emotions to others. Both EI research and EC research contended that the more aware one is of their own emotions, the better awareness they had of others' emotions (Mayer & Salovey, 2004; Vijayalakshmi & Bhattacharyya, 2012), which is essential to effective executive

coaching. Each of the aforementioned research examples supported the use of EC theory as a theoretical foundation for this research.

## Coaching Background

The US coaching industry developed in the early 1990s, according to Brennan, (2008) and in addition to executive and life coaching other niches exist, such as performance coaching, health and wellness coaching, peer coaching, personal coaching, and executive coaching, the common foundation for each is human development (Kenworthy, Passarelli, & Oosten, 2014). According to Kenworthy et al. (2014,) the following are considered the "'five roles' of coaching: 1. Internal Coach, 2. External Coach, 3. Manager-as-Coach, 4. Group Coach, 5. Peer Coach" (p. 291).

Joo (2005) asserted that the practice of executive coaching exceeded theory and eleven years later Kenworthy et al., (2016) described coaching as a "rapidly expanding phenomenon" (p.290). Seligman (2007) contended that the coaching industry lacked two significant components, "a scientific, evidence-based backbone and a theoretical backbone" (p. 266). Bono et al. (2009) asserted that practitioners had published more coaching literature than scholars, creating a disparity between rigorous research and less theory-based works. Passmore, Holloway, and Rawle-Cope (2010) explained that 428 articles on coaching were published between 1937 - 2008 and, of those articles, 93 empirical and PhD works were published over the span of 62 years, between 1937 and 1999. They also stated that since 2000 the research gap began to fill, making peer reviewed empirical research more accessible. Although Gregory, Beck, and Carr (2011) purported that "the popularity of coaching continues to grow at a rate faster than research

can validate coaching practices," (p.26) the researchers supported the claim of Passmore et al. (2010) that empirical research had increased over recent years. Thus, it was apparent that coaching research is needed to assist in the evidence-based growth and development of the profession. Segers et al. (2011) contended, in order to advance the coaching profession, an understanding of the industry is vital. Had a correlation existed between the EI and performance of executive coaches this research would have had the potential to advance the profession by providing data-based research regarding a critical success factor (EI) in the coaching industry.

The coaching industry remains unregulated, anyone can call themselves a coach and more and more practitioners do, regardless of education, training, and experience. As Seligman (2007) pointed out, this profession is without boundaries, there is not a set standard for academic qualifications, as coaches can have doctorates or no degree at all. Some are certified some are not, and coaching practices, or niches as they are commonly referred to, range from fashion, to fitness, to relationships, to organization, to high level executive coaching, and everything in between, making the need for empirical research critical in order to add legitimacy to the profession.

## Personal/Life Coaching

Price (2009) asserted that two distinct categories of coaching exist, life (personal) coaching and organizational coaching. Life coaching was defined and described in many ways, for example, Biswas-Diener (2009) defined personal coaching as "a professional relationship in which coaches work with clients to facilitate experiential learning and improve functioning and performance, often in the context of working toward specific

goals" (p.543). Coaching clients, as described by Biswas-Diener, are "relatively free of psychopathology" (p. 546), and are high-functioning (Jarosz, 2016). Katsikis, Kostogiannis and Dryden (2016) suggested that life coaching is a learning process, facilitated by a coach who includes intrinsic and extrinsic solutions which are derived by the coach asking open-end questions. Jarosz (2016) described the objective of life coaching as helping people develop "confidence and skills necessary to implement changes and maintain those changes" (p.42). Coaching offers those who want to perform better and enhance their lives in defined areas an individualized, one-with-one or small group option that was not available a few decades ago.

Prior to coaching, personal and professional growth and development options included classes, books, workshops, seminars, and therapy. In the past, when one had a barrier preventing them from achieving personal goals they would either seek therapy or live with the barrier because they did want to hire a therapist. Unlike therapy, coaching does not have a stigma associated it, and, according is more socially accepted (Atad, Galily, & Grant, 2013). Grounded in positive psychology, the coaching model emphasizes a positive approach focused on "client strengths, resources, and successes, there is an emphasis on client's potential for growth and success" (Biswas-Diener, 2009, p. 547) and looks primarily at the present and future rather than the past. Conversely, the therapeutic model is typically a past oriented, deficit model assuming clients are broken and need fixing. Coaching allows people to move forward in their lives without feeling there is something wrong with them.

A controversy surrounding the coaching industry is that is unregulated, thus anyone can work as a coach. There are no federal or state standards set for this field, nor are there any unified, accredited coaching programs (George, 2013). George revealed that the lack of standardization was a detriment to coaches as individual practitioners and to the profession as a whole, as coaches are often perceived as non-professionals whom lack credibility. George also indicated that the unregulated coaching industry could have negative consequences to clients as well as they may hire unqualified coaches.

> While personal coaching specializations differ, Biswas-Diener (2009) described the following four techniques commonly utilized in personal coaching
>
> Active Listening – attending to word choice, emotions, and content, Asking Powerful Questions – opened ended questions that help foster self-discovery and increase self-awareness, Cognitive Tools – help clients reframe negative perceptions and self-talk, Accountability – follow-through on commitments, goal setting, action step completion, etc. (p. 545).

## Executive Coaching

Executive coaching, a subcategory of organizational coaching, is a humanistic rather than scientific (Osatuke, Yanovsky, & Ramsel, 2017) workplace development strategy focusing on facilitating change (Passmore et al., 2007), enhancing performance (Baron & Morin, 2009), increasing productivity (Anderson, Williams, & Kramer, 2012) aligning executive's abilities with organizational strategic needs, and culture management (Schalk & Landeta, 2017). Executive coaching is an individualized or small group training program used by organizations to develop executives (de Haan & Duckworth,

2010) in a “rapidly evolving professional, business, and economic climate” (Kovacs & Corrie, 2017, p. 74). It was developed in the early 1990s and by the mid-90s, according to Kilburg (2016), there were a couple of journals publishing articles on the topic. As of 2015 “PsycINFO lists 765 citations by title on executive coaching and over 90 dissertations” (Kilburg, 2016, p. 180). According to Sherpa Coaching (2013), “Up until 2008, lower-level management received a larger share of coaching services each year,” (p. 12); however, with recent economic turnaround the trend has cycled back to its exclusive beginnings and it is once again typically reserved for C-Suite personal and high-level managers (Sherpa Coaching, 2013).

Executive coaching differs from life coaching due to its triadic or multi-stakeholder (Turner & Hawkins, 2016), relationship between the coach, organization (sponsor), and executive (client), and the fact that coaching objectives must align with organizational objectives (Tanasescu, Popescu, Radulescu, & Badea, 2009), the executive may or may not get to select their own coaching goals and objectives. Tanasescu et al. (2009) stated that executive coaching is “mutually projected and previously agreed on between a professional coach and a person or a group with managerial authority and trust within an organization” (p. 63). Turner and Hawkins (2016) contended that some executives may be forced to work with an executive coach as a condition to keep his/her position, thus, some feel coerced into coaching. A recent study revealed that managers who were forced to work with a coach did not receive the same benefits of psychological strain reduction as the group whom participated voluntarily (Weinberg, 2016).

Executive coaches fall into two categories: internal and external. Research conducted by the International Coach Federation and the Human Capital Institute (International Coach Federation, 2014) described a strategic "movement among organizations to develop a coaching culture" (p. 3). Organizations recognize the value of hiring either internal or external coaches to develop leadership and high-level managers and 43% of the organizations had internal coaching available for all employees and 60% have coaching for high potential employees.

According to Schalk and Landeta (2017), internal coaches are employed by the organization with which the executive works, external coaches are subcontracted by the organization. Organizations may utilize both internal and external coaches or have one or the other, depending on organizational needs. Typically, they asserted, large organizations with a high level of trust among its people and where confidentially is honored, a budget to support coaching, and the desire for ongoing training and development opt for internal coaches. They recommended external coaches for organizations with a small budget and for large organizations where there is a lack of trust and when the culture does not recognize the value of coaching.

Researchers noted two significant changes in executive coaching since its inception: (a) It was originally reserved for high level corporate leaders; however, it now includes individualized development for lower level management (Baron & Morin, 2009) and teams (Brennan, 2008), and (b) It was developed as a reactive solution for performance problems, whereas today it is also utilized as proactive support. Regardless of the changes, the consensus is that executive coaching is an effective intervention

(Bono et al., 2009) between the scientific, practitioner, and participant communities whether implemented as a proactive or reactive strategy. However, Kovacs and Corrie (2017) asserted that is difficult to evaluate executive coaching effectiveness due to the many variables that potentially impact both the executive and the organization.

Researchers indicated a significant increase in the use of executive coaching over the last decade (Grant, 2010; Grant, Curtayne, & Burton, 2009; Kombarakaran, Baker, Yang, & Fernandes, 2008). Organizations utilize coaches for a multitude of reasons, including sharpening skills in preparation for advancement and leadership transition (Bond & Naughton, 2011), to deal with psychological strain (Weinberg, 2016), and workplace bullying and intimidation (Fields, 2017). Some organizations incorporate coaching as a component of a developmental program (Segers et al., 2011), while Bono et al. (2009 specified that "behavior change is at the heart of most executive coaching" (p. 363). Levenson (2009) also highlighted the significance of behavior change, stating specific behaviors such as empathy, communication style, and anger management. Grant (2010) contended that in addition to personal change, the impact executive coaching has on organizational change is significant, and current research is beginning to focus on this impact of executive coaching.

Executive coaching is an individualized and customized learning plan that the coach and client codevelop, ensuring it aligns with organizational goals. Mack (2012) contended that customized learning plans are not only innovative but are the key to change because such plans "are both relevant and valuable to the user" (p. 39). When

something is both relevant and valuable it is also impactful, which is why executive coaching is a growing industry.

## Emotional Intelligence Background

Measuring cognitive ability, or Intelligence Quotient (IQ), was once regarded as the professional success standard (Mishra, 2012). Researchers challenged the notion that IQ equated to professional success; they contended there was something missing because often times high IQ does not parallel workplace success (Bar-On, Maree, & Elias, 2007; Emmerling & Goleman, 2003;). As Emmerling and Goleman (2003) stated, IQ is relevant when seeking a vocation, yet irrelevant in determining success once a position is secured. According to Rizeanu (2016), EI is a supplement to one's knowledge, skills, and abilities, it does not replace them as appropriate job qualifications are still critical. Twenty-five percent of job performance is based on IQ, and other factors, such as EI, explain the rest (Goleman, 1995). While most research on EI and performance indicated a statistically significant relationship, there are studies, such as the research conducted by Nath, Ghosh, and Das (2015), on the relationship between IQ, EI, and academic success among medical interns which revealed no significant correlation.

EI is regarded as that missing component and is considered the leading professional success standard - it took approximately eighty years for it to be recognized as such (Emmerling & Goleman, 2003; OIztimurlenk, 2012). EI is the foundation of communicating emotions effectively (Lanciano & Curci, 2015) and when emotional pressure runs high in organizational settings, without high EI (Alkozei, Schwab, & Killgore, 2017; Carone & Di Iorio, 2013;), leaders often fail because they do not have the

skills to handle emotions effectively. In technical professions, such as accounting, engineering, and the medical profession, where interpersonal and emotional skills, or soft skills were deemed as unimportant, now recognize that EI is a critical success factor (Golestein, 2014). Golestein (2014) found that higher EI was associated with higher job satisfaction. Because businesses recognize the importance of EI "business schools, such as Harvard, Notre Dame, Dartmouth and Yale have added EI as part of the core curriculum" (Coleman & Argue, 2015, p. 15). Universities are also adding EI to core curriculum in engineering schools, along with courses in teamwork, leadership, and presenting (Shekhawat & Bakilapadava, 2017; Tekerek & Tekerek, 2017). Universities themselves now expect their leadership to demonstrate high EI (Valeriu, 2017). Law schools and law firms are beginning to recognize the importance of EI (Tudor, 2013; Coleman & Argue, 2015).

There is a trend developing to create emotionally intelligent learning institutions from early childhood education to major universities (Carthy, 2017; Tominey, O'Bryon, Rivers, & Shapses, 2017). There are few, if any, professions that do not require human interaction and EI is an integral part one's personal and professional life and critical to success in both areas. Ackley (2016) contended that psychologists take EI seriously due to the extensive EI research by which it is validated.

Wei et al. (2015) asserted that "Over the last decade, emotional intelligence has become a topic of considerable interest to management scholars, psychologists, and managers" (p. 34). Baesu and Bejinaru (2015) contended that today's workplace does not accept the authoritarian leaderships styles of the past, today people expect respectful

leadership which includes empathy and a strong ability to manage their emotions and the emotions of others in the workplace. In other words, the workplace expects high EI from leadership. Leaders determine the culture of workplace environments, and, based on systems theory, emotionally intelligent leadership leads to emotionally intelligent management, which fosters an emotionally intelligent staff, thus, creating productive, positive work environments.

High EI is associated with the ability to handle stress effectively, which in turn leads to job satisfaction (Rizeanu, 2016). Adil and Kamal (2016) found that customer service representatives with high EI were able to regulate their emotions which were associated with better moods, better service, and a more positive workplace. Conversely, according to Sheldon, Dunning, and Ames (2014), low EI is associated with a lack of self-awareness and defensiveness when receiving constructive criticism during performance evaluations which, in turn, can contribute to a negative work environment.

EI is grounded in Thorndike's 1920 social intelligence theory (Bar-On et al., 2007; Perez et al. as cited in Schulze & Roberts, 2005). Although not stated by name, in 1964, Beldoch eluded to the concept of EI when studying how subjects detected emotions from nonverbal cues and voice tones. In 1983, Gardner proposed that mental ability alone cannot predict a person's success in life, rather, concepts such as spatial capacity, kinesthetic ability, musical giftedness, and personal intelligences must be considered.

Following Gardner, in 1983, Payne originated the term *emotional intelligence* in his dissertation. In 1985, Bar-On, coined the term "Emotional Quotient (EQ)" to describe his approach to assessing emotional and social competence" (Bar-On, 2017, para 3). Two

years later, in 1990, researchers Mayer and Salovey published their seminal research on EI (Caruso, 2003) where they introduced their four-branch EI framework (Mayer & Salovey, 1990) and defined the term (Salovey et al., 2004) as "the ability to monitor one's own and other's feeling and emotions, to discriminate among them and to use this information to guide one's thinking and actions" (p. 189). This work did not gain much attention, nor did their follow-up article which was published in 1993 (Caruso, Bhalerao, & Karve, 2016). In 1995 Goleman popularized the concept with the "popular press" (Caruso et al., 2016) in his book. While this book became a *New York Times* best seller, some EI researchers suggested that many assertions made in this book were unsubstantiated by scientific research and they were not peer reviewed (Caruso, 2003; Salovey, Brackett, & Mayer, 2004). Mayer (2004) stated "the popularization had seriously and strongly overstated the power of EI" (para 1).

While there are multiple EI theorists (Emmerling & Goleman, 2003), Mayer and Salovey, Goleman, and Bar-On are considered the leading EI experts (Ackley, 2016; Spielberger, 2004). According to Emmerling and Goleman (2003), while some consider multiple theories a weakness, others view it as strengthening the field of EI. With multiple theories come multiple definitions (Tripathi & Kohli, 2017). Tripathi and Kohli (2017) summarized the many definitions of EI as "the set of abilities (verbal & nonverbal) that enable a person to generate, recognize, express, understand, and evaluate their own, and others, emotions in order to guide thinking and action that successfully cope with environmental demands and pressures" (p, 100). Bar-On developed the Emotional Quotient Inventory (EQ-i), Goleman and Boyatzis, developed the Hay Group

Emotional Competence Inventory (ECi), and Mayer, Salovey and Caruso, developed the Mayer-Salovey-Caruso Emotional Intelligence Test (MSCEIT).

## Executive Coaching and Emotional Intelligence

Organizations are becoming increasingly aware of the importance of highly developed EI (Blattner & Bacigalupo, 2007; Stein & Book, 2011; Trehan & Shrivastav, 2012; Turner & Goodrich, 2010); EI is an integral component of an executive's success within an organization. Consequently, the last decade marked increased EI research as related to business and management, in addition to increased training of EI skills in organizations, as many experts view EI as a necessary component of healthy organizations (Allameh, Nouri, Tavakoli, & Shokrani, 2011). One study measured the change in participant EI post intervention, resulting in a correlation between a rise in EI and an increase in the quality of relationships and mental and physical health, and a decrease in somatic complaints and cortisol levels; the results lasted over a year post intervention (Kotsou et al., 2011). Such results piqued the interest of the professional community causing leaders to focus on EI development in their organizations.

Nadler (2011) contended that while one's IQ and professional expertise contribute to getting a job, EI determines length and quality of employment in addition to promotion opportunities. Colfax, Rivera, and Perez (2010) contended that relationships sustain business longevity, not one's experience or education, thus supporting Nadler's assertion. Despite the evidence supporting the importance of high EI to one's professional success, research indicated that many top executives have low EI, which, Nadler (2011) attributed to seniority-based promotions and organizational expertise, versus one's ability to work

effectively with others. Many executives lack the necessary skills to maximize individual, team, and organizational growth. Consequently, the last 2 decades included increased research on success (Colfax et al., 2010), much of which included EI research as related to business and management, and, as previously stated, increased EI training in organizations (Allameh, Nouri, Tavakoli, & Shokrani, 2011).

Executive coaching is a highly sought strategy for increasing EI in organizations. It is a one-with-one or group/team intervention, designed to meet the sponsor's needs as well as those of the client. Emotion coaching, as some describe it, helps executives better understand and manage their emotions, as well as the emotions of others (Keaton & Kelly, 2008). Keaton and Kelly (2008) stated, "given the centrality of emotion to the human experience, the skills of emotional intelligence play a crucial role in people's relationships through the interpretation and management of emotions" (p. 105). Bar-On (2006) stated that high EI equates to higher personal and professional accomplishments. According to Quick and Macik-Frey (2004), an executive's EI skills can either positively or negatively impact the bottom-line. Kenworthy et al. (2014) asserted that emotional intelligence is a common coaching topic.

Duffell and Lawton-Smith (2015) asserted that "it may, in fact, be almost impossible to operate as a coach without dealing with client emotion" (p. 33). EI is central to individual and organizational success, and executive coaching plays a vital role in assisting in EI development. The success of EI growth through coaching is contingent on the coaches EI, and more specifically, the coach's ability to empathize with the client. Greenburg (2015) stated that "the coach's own emotional intelligence is critical to

helping a client improve his or her emotional intelligence" (p. 33). If a coach cannot clearly recognize emotions, they will miss opportunities to empathize and to understand their clients. Additionally, it is imperative that coaches have the skill and ability to gage the emotions of their clients in order to optimize the coaching experience. Schutte et al. (2008) found that "those with higher emotional intelligence may be more receptive to emotional cues, challenges and opportunities presented by high emotional affordance situations and thus experience more success in these situations" (p. 110). Because both coaches and executives frequently find themselves in high emotion situations, having high EI is critical for professional success, for example, with issues such as workplace bullying and intimidation on the rise, it is imperative that executive coaches are emotionally equipped to help leadership on eliminating such concerns (Fields, 2017). Field's grounded research, consisting of 10 executive coaches with masters or doctoral degrees, revealed that after organizational leaders worked on EI development with an executive coach in areas such as self, other awareness and situational awareness, managing emotions, and constructive, solution-focused language that they felt empowered and capable of addressing workplace bullying and intimidation.

EI is now the leading criteria for assessing professional success, outweighing the significance of IQ which was the previous standard (Seyal & Afzaal, 2013) in the business world. Researchers indicated a significant relationship between an employee's EI and performance (Gondal & Husain, 2013). EI surpasses skills and experience in determining employee long-term success (Seyal & Afzaal, 2013). I could not locate any empirical data on the relationship between EI and performance among executive coaches.

Having a pool of qualified external coaches to call on, or staffing qualified internal coaches, is imperative for optimal executive development as well as optimal organizational return on investment. Nadler (2011) and Colfax et al. (2010) asserted that professional expertise contributes to getting a job; however, EI determines factors such as employment effectiveness and longevity. Based on the aforementioned research, it is evident that EI is also an effective criterion for hiring/staffing executive coaches and assessing their performance. While Dagley (2010) did not specifically assess EI, the findings indicated that exceptional executive coaches demonstrated higher levels of EI in areas such as empathy, flexibility, connection, maintaining their emotions and recognizing client emotions than do weaker coaches. Having an understanding of executive coaches EI and utilizing EI as a criterion for hiring executive coaches would directly benefit the client and the organization's return on investment. Based on systems theory, the benefits of this investment filter throughout the organization and positively impact multiple stakeholders.

## International Coach Federation and Emotional Intelligence

The International Coach Federation is world's first (Brennan, 2008) and largest coaching association (Griffiths & Campbell, 2008), established in the mid-1990s, (Brennan, 2008) with 29,139 members at year end in 2016. Of those members, 21,590 held an ICF credential (ICF, 2017). According to Griffiths and Campbell (2008), the ICF leads the coaching industry "in the promotion and regulation of professional coaching standards" (p. 19) and all members are expected to adhere their standards.

Just as high EI is critical to the executive's long-term success, it is also critical to executive coaches' success. Most of the ICF's Core Competencies (2017) relate to EI, for example Competency 3, *Establishing Trust and Intimacy with the Client*, cannot be achieved without high EI. Competency 4.7 stated, "Demonstrates confidence in working with strong emotions and can self-manage and not be overpowered or enmeshed by client's emotions." Competency 5, *Active Listening*, Competency 6, *Powerful Questioning*, and Competency 7, *Direct Communication*, each related to EI. Furthermore, as previously stated, organizations often want coaches to assist in assessing and enhancing their leadership's EI.

In addition to membership abiding by the professional standards established in the core competencies, the ICF also requires that all ICF approved and accredited coaching schools align their curriculum with the core competencies (ICF, 2017). The core competencies are "used as the foundation for the ICF credentialing process examination" (ICF, 2017, para 2), all of which illustrated the importance of EI in coaching according to a leading entity in the coaching industry.

Mayer et al. (2004) asserted that EI is deeper than emotional recognition and management, it also involves utilizing emotions effectively to enhance intellect and increase emotional development. If one is not astute at managing their own emotions effectively, it is difficult, if not impossible, to aid others in increasing their emotion management skills, which is a common expectation of the executive coach. To assist a client in their EI development a coach, at minimum, would have a solid understanding of EI and how to maximize the use of emotions in others. At best, one would expect a coach

to exhibit high EI skills in addition to having the ability to coach others successfully in this area. EI is, after all, one's awareness and management of their emotions *and* the emotions of others, which is essential for quality coaching.

The ICF's emphasis on EI, combined with the high demand for executive EI coaching within organizations, exemplifies the significance of EI. Landy (2005) asserted that the popularity and demand of EI coaching is in large part due to "The enthusiasm of the business community" (p. 412). Landy also contended that the business community's interest has been the catalyst for multiple psychological tools such as personality testing and goal setting. McKee, Tilin, and Mason (2009) asserted that it is EI, rather than IQ, that differentiates average and exceptional leaders, and this undoubtedly captures organizational attention, increasing the demand for EI coaching.

A gap existed in the literature regarding executive coaches' EI, so too did a gap exist in the literature regarding the relationship between EI and performance among executive coaches. As a result, I focused on investigating the relationship between EI and performance among executive coaches with EI determined by the MSCEIT.

## Executive Coaching, Emotional Intelligence, and Performance

A general search was conducted for full text, peer reviewed journal articles between 1946 and 2018 on EBSCO Host where I ran a search on all data bases with the key words *emotional intelligence* and *performance* which resulted in 2,668 articles. Narrowing that search to the years between 2012 and 2018 showed results of 1,441 articles, over half the articles on EI and performance were conducted over that last 6 years. The EI and performance related research included sales people, medical

undergraduates, students, executives, managers, construction workers, nurses, and leaders, for example. When I added the words *executive coaching* and *executive coaches* no publications appeared which illustrated a research gap and the need for this research and future research on this topic.

Some specific examples on research related to EI and performance included Liam and Kirby's (2002) empirical study that examined 304 undergraduates' emotional reasoning ability in the areas of perceiving, understanding, and regulating emotions as well as their general intelligence. The findings indicated that "the ability to perceive and regulate emotions explained individual performance over and above the level attributable to general intelligence" (p. 141), while understanding emotions did not have a significant impact on performance. According to the researcher's, had the study focused on interpersonal performance rather than cognitive performance the results for understanding emotions could have looked different, which the researchers deemed a study limitation.

Mishra and Das Mohapatra (2010) examined 90 Indian public and private sector executive's EI to determine if a relationship existed between emotional intelligence and performance among this group. EI positively correlated to scores on a performance scale, even when they took demographic variables gender, academic qualifications, and work experience into consideration (Mishra & Das Mohapatra, 2010). According to Mishra and Das Mohapatra, work experience was the only factor that could influence job performance aside from EI, with more experienced executives scoring higher on EI scales (Mishra & Mohapatra, 2010), they concluded that EI was potentially a robust predictor of

performance. In light of these findings, Mishra and Das Mohapatra contended that managers can assist employees in increasing performance because EI equips people to effectively "control impulses and manage distressing moods" (p. 59). Based on this conclusion, perhaps this finding could be applied to the relationship between executive coaches and their clients.

Both Mishra and Mohapatra (2010) and Lam and Kirby (2002) described the emotional process as activating quicker than the mental process, which illustrated the importance of EI, emotions, when poorly managed, can escalate rapidly and wreak havoc on performance. When challenges are not addressed effectively negative emotions could spread, as was described in EC theory, and escalate, sometimes to the point of violence. The same then, could be said for executive coaches, those with high EI could be better equipped to assist their clients in performance enhancement, as well as being better equipped to increase their own performance as compared to those coaches with lower EI.

O'Boyle, Humphry, Pollack, Hawver, and Story (2011) concluded that EI helped managers effectively work with staff. They asserted that although most professions require varying levels of interpersonal contact, EI is particularly helpful in the service sector where interaction is high. O'Boyle et al. asserted that "either no evidence, or very limited evidence, of publication bias in the EI and job performance literature" (p. 804). A recent study on the relationship between management's EI and employee sales performance indicated a correlation between high EI managers and increased sales performance (Wilderom, Hur, Wiersma, Van Den Berg, & Lee, 2015).

There were many examples of existing research on the correlation between EI and performance and which supported the rationale for this research regarding the relationship between EI and the performance of executive coaches. Based on previous research it appeared evident that EI could have the potential to be an effective hiring and assessment tool. It seemed as though companies could potentially benefit from providing EI training to improve interpersonal relationships within organizations – which in turn could impact performance. Such findings provided a glimpse into how interpersonal relationships could be enhanced even outside of the organizational setting. Generalizations from such findings could be applied to other professions such as the coaching industry which has a tremendous impact on society - thus, came the rationale for this research.

## Summary and Conclusions

After establishing the theoretical foundation for this study and reviewing related literature on EI theories, system theory, and EC theory I presented the background of the coaching industry, followed by a review of executive coaching and a review of EI. Next, I analyzed executive coaching and EI. Lastly, a review of EI and performance illustrated the gap in literature as it specifically related to the EI of executive coaches' and their performance.

The literature reviewed supported the assumption that executive coaches play an integral role within organizations. Not only do coaches contribute to the professional growth and development of their client, they are part of the interrelated organizational system once they begin the triadic/multi-stakeholder partnership with the client and

sponsor as illustrated through open-systems theory. Being part of this holistic system, EC theory suggested executive coaches have the ability to spread and increase positive emotions, as well as the ability to pass and increase negative emotions, their ability to contribute negatively or positively to the emotional atmosphere is based on their EI, or their ability to identify their emotions and their client's emotions, use emotions to generate emotion, such as empathy, to understand emotions, such as how they progress from one emotion to another, and to effectively manage their emotions and their client's emotions (Mayer & Salovey, 2004). A review of performance literature indicated that EI impacted performance, and specifically that of executives, however, I did not find research specifically addressing EI and executive coaches' performance, and thus this work intended to contribute to the coaching profession by addressing that void.

Chapter 3 is a description of how I began to connect the gap regarding the relationship between executive coaches' EI and their performance through quantitative research utilizing the MSCEIT.

# Chapter 3: Research Method

## Introduction

The purpose of this quantitative research was to determine if a statistically significant relationship between EI and performance existed among executive coaches. Grant (2007) found that executive coaches could benefit from being emotionally intelligent; however, I did not find any studies that used a quantitative, qualitative, or mixed-methods approach to determine if a relationship did indeed exist between the EI and performance of executive coaches.

In this chapter, I provide a discussion of the methods used to conduct this study. This includes the research method and design, as well as participant sampling. Instrumentation is then presented along with data collection methods, validity, sample size, reliability, the operational definition of the variables, data analysis methods, and ethical assurances.

## Research Design and Rationale

I considered multiple scientific research approaches for this work: qualitative methods (meta-analysis), mixed-methods approach (interviews and EI assessment), and quantitative methods (quantitative correlational designs). Each method had strengths, but because the focus of this research was to determine if a relationship existed between EI and performance among executive coaches, I selected the quantitative approach. Because the purpose of this study aligned with the correlational research design, it was the optimal choice for this work. A number of group comparisons of means were conducted in this study to determine if a statistically significant relationship existed between EI and

performance and the control variables of age, gender, education, coach training, coaching experience, and ICF credentials. In this study, performance was quantified by the number of coaching clients secured in 2015.

The goal of this work was to contribute to existing executive coaching research by determining if a relationship existed between EI and the performance among that population. A potential outcome for this research, had a relationship been found, was to provide data-based evidence for coach training schools to better prepare executive coaches for their profession. Another possible outcome was to provide executive coaches with empirical research to support their continued education choices. Lastly, had a relationship been determined, organizations could use the findings as scientifically-based hiring criteria. When appropriately trained and educated coaches whom are highly emotionally intelligent work with members of society, everyone benefits.

## Methodology

### Population

The target population for this study was internal and external executive coaches, both male and female. The minimum age requirement was 18-years-old; there was not a maximum age limit. Participants had to have the ability to read English fluently, as the MSCIET and demographic/performance questionnaire were in English. The participants could be from the United States and abroad. I required between 48 and 66 participants, and I obtained 50.

**Setting and Sample**

I used an online research setting, as the MSCEIT and demographic/performance questionnaire were administered online. I used this setting to obtain a cross-section of the executive coach population throughout the United States and abroad. Online assessments allowed for more participants and increased confidentially. Eligibility to partake in this research required that participants were internal or external executive coaches, 18-years-old/older, and read English fluently.

My original plan was to obtain participants solely from United States' ICF chapters. I selected this group because, according to ICF North America Key Contact, K. Kelly, there were 9,851 ICF members in the United States (personal communication, March 26, 2015), which indicated a large pool of potential participants for this study. On June 17, 2016, I contacted 46 U.S. ICF Chapter presidents via e-mail and asked if they would participate in the study by inviting chapter members to participate, on my behalf. Of those 46 chapters contacted twice, four confirmed that they would send the request on my behalf via newsletter, e-mail, and/or social media to their membership.

Following each *yes* response, I sent the ICF chapter presidents an invitation for them to e-mail their members and post on their chapter website and chapter newsletters a PDF of the informed consent form. The invitation contained the link to Survey Monkey where the informed consent form and demographic/performance questionnaire were located. When the informed consent was completed, the participants were led to the MHS website for the MSCEIT.

By September, I had two qualified respondents who completed both the demographic/performance questionnaire and the MSCEIT. I posted an invitation on my LinkedIn page for my over 400 connections to view, which consisted of coaches, coach-related businesses, groups, and organizations. In addition to expanding participation beyond ICF members, the study was also no longer limited to U.S. participants, as my LinkedIn network contained connections world-wide.

Data collection ended when I obtained 50 qualified participants, which took a total of 13 months. I used convenience sampling, and although a risk of this type of sampling was that the participants may not represent the population of executive coaches, given that coaches' world-wide had an opportunity to participate, this risk was minimized.

A power analysis was conducted using G*Power 3 software (Faul, Erdfelder, Buchner, & Lang, 2009) to determine the power of the test; I assumed a one-way ANOVA procedure with a large effect size $f = .40$, an alpha significance level of .05, and six predictor variables. A test power was set at 80 percent, which determined a minimum sample size of 66 executive coaches. Another power analysis was run to determine the power of the test, assuming cross-tabulation procedure with a large effect size of $f = .50$, an alpha significance level of .05, six predictor variables, and a test power set at 80 percent; I determined a sample size of 48. The sample size range for this study was between 48 and 66.

## Data Collection

### Time Frame, Actual Recruitment, Response Rate

Data collection began on June 17, 2016, when I sent my first request inviting 46 U.S. ICF chapter presidents to share my research information with their membership, along with instructions on how to participate in the study. On July 23, 2016, I sent a second request to the aforementioned group. The outcome of the two correspondences resulted in four confirmations stating that they would send the request on my behalf via newsletter, e-mail, and/or social media to their membership. By September 2016, there were two qualified respondents whom completed both the demographic/performance questionnaire and the MSCEIT. Inclusion criteria were internal or external executive coach, at least 18-years-old, and the ability to read English fluently.

Due to low response rates, I expanded my participant base in October 2016 by using LinkedIn to reach potential participants. I posted an invitation on my LinkedIn page, which consisted of coaches, coach-related businesses, groups, and organizations; at the time, I had over 400 contacts. At the end of July 2016, I obtained 50 qualified participants whom completed both the demographic/performance questionnaire, and the MSCEIT and data collection concluded.

Based on the power analysis, I required between 48 and 66 participants. My initial goal was to reach the maximum sample size of 66; however, obtaining participants was more difficult than anticipated. I concluded with 50 participants whom had completed the demographic/performance questionnaire and the MSCEIT.

**Data Collection Discrepancies**

The original plan for analysis was based on the expectation that collection of the demographic and coaching performance data would create some variables that could be scaled as continuous variables for a multiple regression analysis. In developing questions for the online demographic/performance questionnaire; however, questions were unintentionally created as both nominal and ordinal scales; multiple regression was inappropriate. Rather, in order to test the hypotheses, a number of group comparisons of means were conducted.

I planned to sample only external coaches; however, due to the lack of participants, I opened the study to both external and internal coaches; this research reflected the responses of both. Originally, I stated that I was going to limit participates to people residing in the United States; however, due to the lack of participants, the sample included participants from the United States and abroad. Due to the low response rates, categorical questions related to credentials, education, coaching experience, and education on the demographic/performance questionnaire were condensed to form smaller, more meaningful groups for analysis.

## Research Questions and Hypotheses

Research Question 1. Is there a statistically significant relationship between emotional intelligence and performance among executive coaches?

$H_0$1*:* There is not a statistically significant relationship between emotional intelligence and performance among executive coaches.

$H_1$1: There is a statistically significant relationship between emotional intelligence and performance among executive coaches.

Research Question 2a. Is there a statistically significant relationship between age and performance among executive coaches?

$H_0$2a*:* There is not a statistically significant relationship between age and performance among executive coaches.

$H_1$2a*:* There is a statistically significant relationship between age and performance among executive coaches.

Research Question 2b. Is there a statistically significant relationship between age and emotional intelligence among executive coaches?

$H_0$2b*:* There is not a statistically significant relationship between age and emotional intelligence among executive coaches.

$H_1$2b*:* There is a statistically significant relationship between age and emotional intelligence among executive coaches

Research Question 3a. Is there a statistically significant relationship between gender and performance among executive coaches?

$H_0$3a*:* There is not a statistically significant relationship between gender and performance among executive coaches.

$H_1$3a*:* There is a statistically significant relationship between gender and performance among executive coaches.

Research Question 3b. Is there a statistically significant relationship between gender and emotional intelligence among executive coaches?

$H_0$3b*:* There is not a statistically significant relationship between gender and emotional intelligence among executive coaches.

$H_1$3b*:* There is a statistically significant relationship between gender and emotional intelligence among executive coaches.

Research Question 4a. Is there a statistically significant relationship between education and performance among executive coaches?

$H_0$4a*:* There is not a statistically significant relationship between education and performance among executive coaches.

$H_1$4a*:* There is a statistically significant relationship between education and performance among executive coaches.

Research Question 4b. Is there a statistically significant relationship between education and emotional intelligence among executive coaches?

$H_0$4b*:* There is not a statistically significant relationship between education and emotional intelligence among executive coaches.

$H_1$4b*:* There is a statistically significant relationship between education and emotional intelligence among executive coaches.

Research Question 5a. Is there a statistically significant relationship between coach credentials and performance among executive coaches?

$H_0$5a: There is not a statistically significant relationship between coach credentials and performance among executive coaches.

$H_1$5a*:* There is a statistically significant relationship between coach credentials and performance among executive coaches.

Research Question 5b. Is there a statistically significant relationship between coach credentials and emotional intelligence among executive coaches?

$H_0$5b: There is not a statistically significant relationship between coach credentials and emotional intelligence among executive coaches.

$H_1$5b: There is a statistically significant relationship between coach credentials and emotional intelligence among executive coaches.

Research Question 6a. Is there a statistically significant relationship between years of coaching experience and performance among executive coaches?

$H_0$6a: There is not a statistically significant relationship between years of coaching experience and performance among executive coaches.

$H_1$6a*:* There is a statistically significant relationship between years of coaching experience and performance among executive coaches.

Research Question 6b. Is there a statistically significant relationship between years of coaching experience and emotional intelligence among executive coaches?

$H_0$6b*:* There is not a statistically significant relationship between years of coaching experience and emotional intelligence among executive coaches.

$H_1$6b*:* There is a statistically significant relationship between years of coaching experience and EI among executive coaches.

Research Question 7a. Is there a statistically significant relationship between coach training and performance among executive coaches?

$H_0$7a*:* There is not a statistically significant relationship between coach training and performance among executive coaches.

$H_1$7a*:* There is a statistically significant relationship between coach training and performance among executive coaches.

Research Question 7b**.** Is there a statistically significant relationship between coach training and emotional intelligence among executive coaches?

$H_0$7b*:* There is not a statistically significant relationship between coach training and emotional intelligence among executive coaches.

$H_1$7b*:* There is a statistically significant relationship between coach training and EI among executive coaches.

## Data Collection and Analysis

The data were collected through the use of an online MSCEIT assessment via Multi-Health Systems (MHS), Inc. Assessment Center. According the MHS (2015), this tool was "developed by academics at Yale and the University of New Hampshire in cooperation with MHS" (para 1) in the 1990s and updated in 2002 (Maul, 2012); the most current version is called the MSCEIT v2.0. I found that the MSCEIT was used in current research to measure EI and how it related to other variables; for instance, the MSCEIT was used to identify a relationship between the effects of intranasal oxytocin and the perception of facial expressions (Cardoso et al., 2014); Lanciano and Curci (2015) used the MSCEIT to study the relationship between EI and psychological well-being; and Omoregbee, Morrison, and Morrison (2016) used the MSCEIT to study the relationship between EI and performance on tasks and grade point average on undergraduate students.

I used the MSCEIT to measure the relationship between EI and performance among executive coaches in this study. Permission to use this tool was provided in the appendix section.

The participants were originally invited to participate in this study, on my behalf, via ICF Charter chapter presidents, prior to the beginning of data collection. I wrote an invitation for the presidents to e-mail to members, post on their chapter website, and add to chapter newsletters, on my behalf. The invitation contained a brief summary of the study, including its purpose, what was expected from the study participants, what data would be collected and how it would be used. The invitation contained a link to Survey Monkey. The IRB approved that up to three follow-up invitations could be e-mailed to membership by chapter presidents reminding members of the opportunity to participate in the research.

Interested participants were asked to click on a link inserted in the e-mails/website/newsletters, which directed them to Survey Monkey and the informed consent form for the study. The informed consent form outlined the privacy and participant protection policies that were implemented for the study. These policies and procedures were discussed in more detail in the Ethical Assurances section of this chapter. At the bottom of the informed consent form, interested participants clicked a button that indicated their willingness to participate in the study. This button allowed them to view the Survey Monkey demographic/performance questionnaire. The demographic/performance information collected consisted of thirteen questions. Due to a

lack of participant responses the internal/external and US resident variables were not examined.

After completing the demographic/performance questionnaire participants were thanked for participating and they followed another link to the MSCEIT on the MHS site (MHS did not allow the completion of the MSCEIT on Survey Monkey). Participants were informed that they could not receive individual MSCEIT results but could receive a copy of the completed dissertation upon request.

Because only four chapters confirmed they would send the request to participate on my behalf via newsletter, website, e-mail, and/or social media to their membership and because after 3 months I had two qualified respondents that completed both the demographic/performance questionnaire and the MSCEIT, I posted an invitation on my LinkedIn page that consisted, in part, of coaches, coach related businesses, groups, and organizations. After 13 months I obtained 50 qualified participants.

## Operationalization of Variables

In this study, the variables included performance (dependent variable) and emotional intelligence (independent variable) of executive coaches. I analyzed the relationship between these variables. In this study the relationship of the demographic variables - age, gender, education level, coach training, years of coaching experience, and ICF credentials - with EI and performance were also considered.

**Performance**

For this study, the dependent variable, performance, was quantified by the number of coaching clients in 2015. This information was quantified as a continuous variable and was provided directly by the participants on the demographic questionnaire.

**Emotional Intelligence**

In this study, EI was defined as a person's ability to identify their own feelings and other's feelings, the ability to use emotions as data and to generate other emotions such as empathy and moods, as well as the abilities to understand and manage emotions all of which are integrated with thinking to enhance thought (Cherniss, 2010; Mayer et al., 2000). EI was measured using the MSCEIT. There were 141 items on the MSCEIT and the total EI score was computed as the sum of the responses to these items. According to Mayer et al. (2008), the total EI score from the MSCEIT possessed high reliability with internal consistency reliability coefficients ranging from .79 to .90 across a variety of samples.

**Demographic Control Variables**

Demographic control variables were included to control for individual characteristics that might have impacted EI and performance. These variables were as follows:

- Age
- Gender
- Education
- Coach Credentials
- Coaching Experience

- Coach Training

The data on these variables were collected using the demographic/performance questionnaire. Babbie (2012) indicated that demographic addendums with straightforward questions and answers do not require pilot testing. Participants were also asked the number of client's secured (coached) in 2015.

## Data Analysis

The analysis of the above variables took place in two phases as recommended for correlational modeling studies (Babbie, 2012). First, the descriptive statistics were analyzed. Descriptive statistics of dependent (performance) and independent (emotional intelligence) variables were summarized in terms of the frequency distribution and measures of central tendency (Bryman, 2012). In the frequency distributions, the number and the percentage of occurrence of the study variables were summarized. The measures of central tendency included the mean, standard, deviation, and minimum and maximum values for the study variable. Descriptive statistics differed from inferential statistics in that descriptive statistics described what the data set displayed; whereas, inferential statistics drew conclusions about the population from the sample statistics (Plonsky & Gass, 2011).

The data for this study included the scores for the dependent variable, performance, and the independent variable, EI, as well as control variable scores from the demographic/performance questionnaire. An *F*-test was conducted to determine if there was a relationship between EI and performance, performance quantified by the number of coaching secured clients in 2015.

## Instrumentation and Materials

I used one survey instrument designed to examine EI, the MSCEIT, and a demographic/performance questionnaire based on control variables and the number of client's coached in 2015. The information obtained using the MSCEIT and questionnaire helped examine the relationship between the EI and performance among executive coaches. Data collection for the demographic/performance information was facilitated by Survey Monkey, an online survey site, which led participants to the MHS Assessment Center site to complete the MSCEIT.

Prior to any form of data collection, potential participants indicated they read and understood the information presented on the informed consent form. Those whom agreed to participate were asked to indicate informed consent using an online form, which had to be acknowledged prior to redirection to the demographic questionnaire and MSCEIT. Once participants acknowledge their informed consent, they obtained access to the demographic questionnaire on Survey Monkey, and upon completion were directed to MHS site to complete the MSCEIT.

## Validity and Reliability

During the data collection process, the MSCEIT was used to quantify the EI of executive coaches. The MSCEIT v2.0, developed in 2002, measures an individual's overall EI score, along with their ability to assess EI in the following four areas, based on Mayer and Salovey's Four-Branch Model: (a) Perceiving/Identifying Emotion, (b) Using Emotions to Facilitate Thought, (c) Understanding Emotions, and (d) Managing Emotion, and scores obtained have demonstrated adequate reliability: appraisal and expression of

emotion (split half reliability = 0.90), the use of emotion to enhance cognitive processes and decision making (split-half reliability = 0.79), knowledge about emotions (split-half reliability = 0.80), and management of emotions (split-half reliability = 0.83). The MSCEIT includes 141 items that are divided among eight tasks, faces and pictures, facilitation and sensations, changes and blends, and emotional management and emotional relations, two for each branch of the model (Mayer et al., 2008). The test takes 30 - 35 minutes to complete and is a B-level assessment.

Because this ability model tested intelligence, MSCEIT responses are evaluated on a level of correctness scale (Caruso & Salovey, 2004) and measures maximum performance whereas mixed models assess typical performance, and gather self-reported data (MacCann, Matthews, Zeidner, & Roberts, 2003). The ability model is more accurate then self-report assessments because there is a significant difference between one's perceived and actual intelligence. MacCann et al. (2003) concurred, stating that, "performance-based tests for EI appear to be more promising than self-report questionnaires" (p. 268) despite the challenges they presented such as cost, time, and the current scoring system.

Age, gender, education, coach credentials, years of coaching experience, coach training were potentially extraneous threats to the internal validity of this study. These were addressed as control variables and were included on the demographic/performance questionnaire. External validity, how representative the sample population of executive coaches was of the general population of executive coaches – was addressed by keeping the criteria to participate as broad as possible without compromising the study.

Participation criteria were as follows: (a) At least 18 years-old, (b) reads English fluently, and (c) is an executive coach.

## Protection of Human Participants

In order to adhere to Walden University's ethical standards in research, informed consent and confidentiality forms were provided to each human participant when they logged on the Survey Monkey site. Prior to permitting participant access to demographic/performance questionnaire, they indicated they read the information and understood the study well enough to make a decision regarding involvement by clicking the link which indicated they agreed to the terms described in informed consent form.

Collected data were secured on a password protected computer. I designed anonymous consent and data collection procedures so that identities were completely protected. A 5-year retention period of all data and documentation used in this study began on the date of submission, as per Walden University. Participants were asked to enter a letter or number code on the demographic questionnaire that correlated with the MSCEIT, this was the only identifying information and it was only known by the participant. If a participant requested that information be deleted prior to this period or that they wanted their survey results removed from the study or after study completion, that request would have been honored. Only aggregate and statistical data from the study was available upon request. Walden University's approval number for this study was 06-11-15-0124371.

## Dissemination of Findings

All participating ICF Chapter presidents were offered a written summary of the research results and a PDF of the entire dissertation, additionally, I offered to present the results to ICF Chapters located in Northern California. All ICF Chapter members and non-participating Chapters could request a copy of the summary and dissertation PDF. A summary of the research, along with a PDF completed dissertation, was posted on my business website (www.lifestudio5.com) and LinkedIn page (https://www.linkedin.com/in/valerieecharles/).

## Summary

This chapter was an explanation of the methodology that was implemented to conduct this quantitative correlational study. The choice of research design was discussed in this chapter along with a review of the research purpose. The goal of the study was to investigate if a relationship existed between performance and EI among executive coaches. Demographic variables were also analyzed to determine if there was a significant relationship between those variables and EI and performance. The source for participant recruitment and data collection was ICF Chapters throughout the United States as well as coaches, coaching schools, coach related groups and organization located on LinkedIn. A sample between 48 and 66 executive coaches was the target for this study – data collection concluded with 50 participants. Data collection instruments included the MSCEIT and a demographic/performance questionnaire. Somers' *d*, *F*-tests, and ANOVAs were used to analyze data. Chapter 4 of the study provided the predictive

modeling procedure for this study. The results and findings of the data are presented and discussed in Chapter 5.

# Chapter 4: Results

## Introduction

The purpose of this quantitative study was to investigate the relationship between EI and performance among executive coaches. Performance was quantified by the number of coaching clients secured in 2015. Data were gathered through a demographic/performance questionnaire and the MSCEIT in order to address the central research question. Six other hypotheses were tested to investigate if performance was related to the following variables: age, gender, education, coach credentials, coaching experience, and coach training. Additionally, six more hypotheses were tested to determine if EI correlated with the aforementioned variables.

In this chapter, I discuss the data collection processes, including time frame, actual recruitment, and response rates. I also address discrepancies in the data collection plan presented in Chapter 3. Furthermore, I provide a presentation of the results, including a report on descriptive statistics, an evaluation of statistical assumptions, and statistical analysis findings. Lastly, I provide a summary of the chapter.

## Results

### Descriptive Statistics

Ninety-eight percent ($n$ = 49) of the respondents replied to the question "Is your defined coaching niche executive coaching?" Two percent ($n$ = 1) did not respond to this question. Fifty-six percent of the sample ($n$ = 28) reported that they were U.S. residents, 22 percent ($n$ = 11) indicated that they were nonresidents, and 22 percent ($n$ = 11) of the

sample did not answer this question. Due to the missing values and the need to obtain a large enough sample, this variable was omitted from the statistical analysis.

Of the 50 respondents, 8 percent ($n$ = 4) indicated that they were ICF chapter members, 90 percent ($n$ = 45) were not chapter members, and 2 percent ($n$ = 1) did not respond to this question. Due to the lack of response from ICF chapter members, the study became open to a broad range of coaches rather than keeping it exclusive to ICF chapters; thus, this variable was also omitted from analysis.

Thirty-two percent of the participants were female ($n$ = 16), 69 percent were male ($n$ = 33), and 2 percent ($n$ = 1) did not respond to this question. Fifty-eight percent of the respondents were self-employed external coaches who subcontracted to organizations ($n$ = 29), 40 percent ($n$ = 20) were internal executive coaches, and 2 percent ($n$ = 1) did not respond to this question. Because this study became open to both internal and external coaches this variable was omitted from analysis. Forty-six percent ($n$ = 23) of the participants had no formal coach training, eight-teen percent ($n$ = 9) received training from a non-ICF associated school, and thirty-two percent ($n$ = 16) received training from an ICF approved or accredited school.

Twenty-six percent ($n$ = 13) of the respondents worked 5 hours or less a week coaching, 24 percent ($n$ = 12) worked 6 to 10 hours a week coaching, 28 percent ($n$ = 14) spent 11 to 20 hours per week coaching, 18% ($n$ = 9) spent 21 to 35 hours per week coaching, and 4 percent ($n$ = 2) did not respond to this question. Ninety-eight participants ($n$ = 49) responded to the question “What is your highest level of education?” with 12 percent ($n$ = 6) having some college/associate degree, 40 percent ($n$ = 20) held a

bachelor's degree, and 46 percent ($n$ = 23) held a graduate degree. The credentialed distribution consisted of 78 percent non-credentialed respondents ($n$ = 39), 18 percent ($n$ = 9) ICF credentialed respondents, and 4 percent ($n$ = 2) did not respond to this question. Lastly, 42 percent ($n$ = 21) responded that they coached up to five clients in 2015, while 20 percent ($n$ = 10) coached six to 10 clients and 36 percent ($n$ = 18) coached between 11 and 35+ clients. Table 1 shows the descriptive statistics for the executive coaches whom participated in the study.

Table 1

*Summary of Sample Descriptive Characteristics (*N = *49)*

| Variable | *n* | % |
|---|---|---|
| Executive Coach | | |
| Yes | 49 | 98.0 |
| Missing | 01 | 2.0 |
| | | |
| United States Resident | | |
| Yes | 28 | 56.0 |
| No | 11 | 22.0 |
| Missing | 11 | 22.0 |
| | | |
| ICF Chapter Member | | |
| Yes | 04 | 8.0 |
| No | 45 | 90.0 |
| Missing | 01 | 2.0 |
| | | |
| Gender | | |
| Female | 16 | 32.0 |
| Male | 33 | 66.0 |
| Missing | 01 | 2.0 |
| | | |
| External Coach | | |
| Yes | 29 | 58.0 |
| No | 20 | 40.0 |
| Missing | 01 | 2.0 |
| | | |
| Hours Work Per Week | | |
| 0 - 5 | 13 | 26.0 |
| 6 - 10 | 12 | 24.0 |
| 11 – 20 | 14 | 28.0 |
| 21 – 35 + | 10 | 20.0 |
| Missing | 01 | 2.0 |
| | | |
| Education | | |
| Some College/Associate Degree | 06 | 12.0 |
| Bachelor's Degree | 20 | 40.0 |
| Graduate Degree | 23 | 46.0 |
| Missing | 01 | 2.0 |
| | | |
| Credential | | |
| Associate/Professional | 09 | 18.0 |
| No Credential | 39 | 78.0 |
| Missing | 02 | 4.0 |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Number of Clients Coached 2015 | | |
| 0 – 5 | 21 | 42.0 |
| 6 – 10 | 10 | 20.0 |
| 11 – 35 + | 18 | 36.0 |
| Missing | 01 | 2.0 |
| | | |
| Age | | |
| 34 – 44 | 13 | 26.0 |
| 45 – 54 | 18 | 36.0 |
| 55- 64 | 15 | 30.0 |
| 65 – 74 | 03 | 6.0 |
| Missing | 01 | |
| | | |
| Coach Training | | 46.0 |
| No Training | 23 | 18.0 |
| Non-ICF Training | 09 | 32.0 |
| ICF Associated Training | 16 | 2.0 |
| Missing | 01 | 2.0 |
| | | |
| Years of Experience | | |
| 1 – 3 | 13 | 26.0 |
| 4 – 7 | 17 | 34.0 |
| 8 – 12 | 08 | 16.0 |
| Over 12 | 08 | 16.0 |
| Missing | 01 | 8.0 |

**Validity**

In order to create internal validity, I analyzed other possible influences on performance, which included the following six control variables: age, gender, education level, coach training, coaching experience, and credentials. I also tested the relationship of the same six variables with EI to determine what variables potentially influenced executive coaches' EI. Performance may have been influenced by additional variables that I did not consider; internal validity could have been jeopardized. To ensure external validity (how representative the sample population of executive coaches was of the general population of executive coaches), I kept participation criteria as broad as possible by using the following criteria: (a) at least 18-years-old, (b) reads English fluently, and (c) was an executive coach. However, there were a disproportionate number of males to females in the sample, 33 males and 16 females; this potential limitation could have threatened external validity because, based on the ICF's Global Coaching Study (2016), "Females account for 67% of coach practitioners and 66% of mangers/leaders using coaching skills" (p. 9). LinkedIn offered a diverse group of executive coach participants, which also helped ensure external validity. To ensure construct validity, I used the MSCEIT to measure EI.

**Statistical Assumptions**

A one-way ANOVA was conducted to determine if the MSCEIT was different for the three coaching performance groups. Prior to the analysis, the assumptions of a one-way analysis of variance were examined. There were no outliers as assessed by boxplots; data were normally distributed for the low performance group (zero to five clients), as

assessed by Shapiro-Wilk test ($p > .05$). However, Shapiro-Wilk did not indicate normality of the MSCEIT scores for the medium and high performing groups ($p$'s $< .05$). The results of the ANOVA be interpreted with caution when considering differences among the groups. There was homogeneity of variances, as assessed by Levene's test of homogeneity of variances ($p = .120$).

Tests of association, Somers's *d*, were conducted to test the remaining hypotheses. In order to conduct Somers's *d*, several assumptions were met. It was assumed that the analysis was based on one independent and one dependent variable and that the variables were both ordinal scale variables. The relationship between the variables involved were monotonic, meaning that the connection between them was linear. Examinations of scatterplots between all the pairs of variables were tested in each hypothesis and did not show any significant divergence from monotonic form.

Research Question 1. Is there a statistically significant relationship between emotional intelligence and performance among executive coaches?

$H_0$1*:* There is not a statistically significant relationship between emotional intelligence and performance among executive coaches.

$H_1$1*:* There is a statistically significant relationship between emotional intelligence and performance among executive coaches.

Hypothesis 1 stated there were significant differences in EI (MSCEIT scores) between performance groups (zero to five clients, six to 10 clients, 11 or more clients) among executive coaches. This hypothesis was tested by conducting a one-way ANOVA to examine the differences in MSCEIT scores (continuous scale variable) by performance

level groups (nominal variable). The three groups of coaching performance level (zero to five clients, six to 10 clients, 11 or more clients) were treated as the groups for mean comparisons of the MSCEIT scores across groups. Significant differences found in MSCEIT scores between the three coaching performance groups would lead to the rejection of the null hypothesis. The *F*-test revealed no differences in EI that were associated with the coach performance variable, $F(2,46) = .20$, $p = .804$. The means for the three groups were as follows: 0 – 5 clients ($M = .48$, $SD = .06$, $n = 21$; six to 10 clients ($M = .48$, $SD = .60$, $n = 10$; ($M = .47$, $SD = .09$, $n = 18$). The means and standard deviations for the one-way ANOVA were presented in Table 2. The nonsignificant result led to the failure to reject the null hypothesis.

Research Question 2a. Is there a statistically significant relationship between age and performance among executive coaches?

$H_0$2a*:* There is not a statistically significant relationship between age and performance among executive coaches.

$H_1$2a*:* There is a statistically significant relationship between age and performance among executive coaches.

Research Question 2b. Is there a statistically significant relationship between age and emotional intelligence among executive coaches?

$H_0$2b*:* There is not a statistically significant relationship between age and emotional intelligence among executive coaches.

$H_1$2b*:* There is a statistically significant relationship between age and emotional intelligence among executive coaches

Hypothesis 2a stated that there would be a significant association between age group (35 to 44 years, 45 to 54 years, 55 years or more) and performance level group (zero to five clients, six to 10 clients, 11 or more clients) among executive coaches. This hypothesis was tested by calculating Somers's *d* for the association between age and performance level. Both age group and performance level group were treated as ordinal variables. There was not an association between the two variables ($d = .104$, $p = .425$). The null hypothesis was not rejected.

Hypothesis 2b stated that there was a significant association between age group (35 to 44 years, 45 to 54 years, 55 years or more) and emotional intelligence among executive coaches. The means for the four groups were as follows: 35 to 44-years-old ($M = .48$, $SD = .05$, $n = 13$); 45 to 54 ($M = .50$, $SD = .05$, $n = 18$); 55 to 64 ($M = .44$, $SD = 1.0$, $n = 15$); 65 to 74-years-old ($M = .47$, $SD = .06$, $n = 3$). An ANOVA was conducted to determine if there was a difference in EI based on age. I found there was a marginally significant difference between age groups on the MSCEIT. Those in the 55 to 64-year age group had lower EI scores than the 45 to 54 age group, $F(3, 45) = 2.5$, $p = .07$.

Research Question 3a**.** Is there a statistically significant relationship between gender and performance among executive coaches?

$H_0$3a: There is not a statistically significant relationship between gender and performance among executive coaches.

$H_1$3a*:* There is a statistically significant relationship between gender and performance among executive coaches.

Research Question 3b. Is there a statistically significant relationship between gender and emotional intelligence among executive coaches?

$H_0$3b*:* There is not a statistically significant relationship between gender and emotional intelligence among executive coaches.

$H_1$3b*:* There is a statistically significant relationship between gender and emotional intelligence among executive coaches.

Hypothesis 3a stated that there was a significant association between gender (male, female) and performance level group (zero to five clients, six to 10 clients, 11 or more clients) among executive coaches. This hypothesis was tested by calculating Somers' *d* to examine the association between gender and performance level. Gender was treated as a nominal variable, and performance level was treated as an ordinal variable. There was a positive correlation between gender and performance level for coaches, which was statistically significant ($d = .333$, $p < .035$). The null hypothesis for this research question was rejected.

Hypothesis 3b stated that there would be a significant association between gender (male, female) and emotional intelligence. There was a marginally significant difference between males and females on the MSCEIT, $t\ (47) = -1.80$, $p = .078$. The females were somewhat higher on EI ($M = .50$, $SD = .05$, $n = 16$) than males ($M = .46$, $SD = .08$, $n = 33$).

Research Question 4a**.** Is there a statistically significant relationship between education and performance among executive coaches?

$H_0$4a*:* There is not a statistically significant relationship between education and performance among executive coaches.

$H_1$4a: There is a statistically significant relationship between education and performance among executive coaches.

Research Question 4b**.** Is there a statistically significant relationship between education and emotional intelligence among executive coaches?

$H_0$4b: There is not a statistically significant relationship between education and emotional intelligence among executive coaches.

$H_1$4b*:* There is a statistically significant relationship between education and emotional intelligence among executive coaches.

Hypothesis 4a stated that there was a significant association between education-level group (some college, bachelor's degree, graduate degree) and performance-level group (zero to five clients, six to 10 clients, 11 or more clients) among executive coaches. This hypothesis was tested by calculating Somers's *d* for the association between education-level group (some college, bachelor's degree, graduate degree) and performance-level group (zero to five clients, six to 10 clients, 11 or more clients). Both education-level group and performance-level group were treated as ordinal variables. The result was not significant; thus, the null hypothesis was not rejected. There was not a relationship between the two variables ($d$ = -.033, $p$ = .796).

Hypothesis 4b stated that there would be a significant association between education (some college, bachelor's degree, graduate degree) and EI. An ANOVA was conducted to determine if there was a difference in EI based on education groups. The means for the three groups was not significantly different: some college or associate

degree ($M$ = 47, $SD$ = .07, $n$ = 6), bachelor's degree ($M$ = .46, $SD$ = .09, $n$ = 20), graduate degree ($M$ = .49, $SD$ = .05, $n$ = 23).

Research Question 5a. Is there a statistically significant relationship between coach credentials and performance among executive coaches?

*H5a$_0$:* There is not a statistically significant relationship between coach credentials and performance among executive coaches.

*H5a$_1$:* There is a statistically significant relationship between coach credentials and performance among executive coaches.

Hypothesis 5a stated that there would be a significant association between the possession of ICF credentials (yes, no) and performance level group (0 to 5 clients; 6 to 10 clients; 11 or more clients) among executive coaches. This hypothesis was tested by calculating Somers' $d$ to examine the association between the possession of ICF credentials and performance level ($d$ = .476, $p$ < .013). Possession of credentials was treated as a nominal variable, and performance level, as an ordinal variable. The result was significant, there was a relationship between having ICF credentials and performance level, those with no credentials had more clients.

Research Question 5b. Is there a statistically significant relationship between coaching credentials and EI among executive coaches?

*H5b$_0$:* There is not a statistically significant relationship between credentials and EI among executive coaches.

*H5$_{b1}$:* There is a statistically significant relationship between credentials and EI among executive coaches.

There was not a significant difference between those who had credentials and those whom did not on the MSCEIT measure, $t$ (46) = -.548, $p$ = .586. The means indicated that those with no credential had similar emotional intelligence scores to those who had credentials (no credential; $M$ = .48, $SD$ = .06, $n$ = 39; credential; $M$ = .49, $SD$ = .04, $n$ = 9).

Research Question 6a. Is there a statistically significant relationship between years of coaching experience group (number of years coaching) and performance among executive coaches?

*H6a$_0$:* There is not a statistically significant relationship between years of coaching experience and performance among executive coaches.

*H6a$_1$:* There is a statistically significant relationship between years of coaching experience and performance among executive coaches.

Hypothesis 6a stated that there would be significant association between coaching experience group (1 to 3 years; 4 to 7 years; 8 or more years) and performance level group (zero to five clients; six to 10 clients; 11 or more clients) among executive coaches. This hypothesis was tested by calculating Somer's $d$ for the association between coaching experience group (1 to 3 years; 4 to 7 years; 8 or more years) and performance level group (low - zero to five clients; medium - six to 10 clients; high - 11 or more clients). Both coaching experience group and performance level group were treated as ordinal variables. The result was not significant ($d$ = .054, $p$ =.659), there was not relationship between the two variables, thus, the null hypothesis was not rejected.

Research Question 6b**.** Is there a statistically significant relationship between years of coaching experience and emotional intelligence among executive coaches?

*H6b*$_1$*:* There is not a statistically significant relationship between years of coaching experience and EI executive coaches.

*H6b*$_2$*:* There is a statistically significant relationship between years of coaching experience and emotional intelligence among executive coaches.

The *F*-test revealed no differences in EI that were associated with the coach experience variable*, F* (3,42) = .767, p = .519

The means for the four groups were as follows: *M* = .49, *SD* = .05, *n* = 13 for coach experience group of 1 to 3 years; *M* = .47, *SD* = .07, *n* = 17 for coach experience group of 4 to 7 years; *M* = .47, *SD* = .06, n = 8 for 8 or more years of coach experience, and for more than 12 years of coach experience *M* = .44, *SD* = .12, *n* = 8. The nonsignificant result led to the failure to reject the null hypothesis.

Research Question 7a**.** Is there a statistically significant relationship between coach training and performance among executive coaches?

*H7a*$_0$*:* There is not a statistically significant relationship between coach training and performance among executive coaches.

*H7*$_{a1}$*:* There is a statistically significant relationship between coach training and performance among executive coaches.

Hypothesis 7a stated that there would be a significant association between coach training group (no formal coach training; non-ICF training; ICF approved or accredited

training) and performance level group (zero to 5 five clients; six to 10 clients; 11 or more clients) among executive coaches. This hypothesis was tested by calculating Somers's *d* to examine the association between coach training and performance level in this sample. Coach training was treated as an ordinal variable, as was performance level. There was a positive correlation between coach training and performance level for coaches, which was statistically significant ($d = .305$, $p < .010$). This finding indicated that the null hypothesis for this research question was rejected. Those with a higher level of training (ICF approved or accredited school) had more coaching clients than those with no formal coach training.

Research Question 7b. Is there a statistically significant relationship between coach training and emotional intelligence among executive coaches?

*$H7b_0$:* There is not a statistically significant relationship between coach training and emotional intelligence among executive coaches.

*$H7b_1$:* There is a statistically significant relationship between coach training and emotional intelligence among executive coaches.

There was no significant difference between those coach's trained in an ICF approved or accredited school and those who were not trained in an ICF associated school or those not formally trained at all, with regard to EI, MSCEIT measure. The means indicated that those with no formal training had similar EI scores to those who had formal training, and those who had formal training at ICF associated schools (no formal coach training: $M = .48$, $SD = .06$, n = 23; training from a non-ICF associated school; *M*

=.42, *SD* =.18, *n*= 9; training from an ICF approved or accredited school *M* = .49, *SD* = .053, *n* = 16).

Table 2

*Cross Tabulation Between Characteristics of Coaches and Levels of Coaching Performance*

| Coach Characteristics | Subgroup | Coach Performance Level Groups *N* (%) | | | Total *N* (%) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | 0 to 5 Clients | 6 to 10 Clients | 11or more Clients | |
| Age Group | | | | | |
| | 35 to 44 years | 7(14.3%) | 4(8.2%) | 2(4.1%) | 13(26.5%) |
| | 45 to 54 years | 5(10.2%) | 5(10.2%) | 8(16.3%) | 18(36.7%) |
| | 55 plus years | 9(18.4%) | 1(2.0%) | 8(16%.3) | 18(36.7%) |
| Total for Age Group | | 21(42.9%) | 10(20.4%) | 18(36.7%) | 49(100%) |
| Education Group | | | | | |
| | Some College | 1(2.0%) | 2(4.1%) | 3(6.1%) | 6(12.2%) |
| | Bachelor's | 11(22.4%) | 2(4.1%) | 7(14.3%) | 20(40.8%) |
| | Graduate | 9(18.4%) | 6(12.2%) | 8(16.3%) | 23(46.9%) |
| Total for Education Group | | 21(42.9%) | 10(20.4%) | 18(36.7%) | 49(100%) |
| Training Group | No Training | 15(31.3%) | 3(6.3%) | 5(10.4%) | 23(47.9%) |
| | Non-ICF | 2(4.2%) | 1(2.1%) | 6(12.5%) | 9(18.8%) |
| | ICF School | 4(8.3%) | 5(10.4%) | 7(14.6%) | 16(33.3%) |
| Total for Training Group | | 19(41.3%) | 9(19.6%) | 18(39.1%) | 46(100%) |
| Credential Group | No Credential | 20(41.7%) | 8(16.7%) | 11(22.9%) | 39(81.3%) |
| | Associates or Professional | 1(2.1%) | 2(4.2%) | 6(12.5%) | 9(18.8%) |
| Total for Credential Group | | 21(43.8%) | 10(20.8%) | 17(35.4%) | 48(100%) |
| Gender Group | Male | 17(34.7%) | 7(14.3%) | 9(18.4%) | 33(67.3%) |
| | Female | 4(8.2%) | 3(6.1%) | 9(18.4%) | 16(32.7%) |
| Total for Gender Group | | 21(42.9%) | 10(20.4%) | 18(36.7%) | 49(100%) |

## Summary

This chapter provided the results of this quantitative correlational study. Data collection was discussed in this chapter along with the time frame, actual recruitment, and response rates. I discussed data collection discrepancies, sample representations and descriptive characteristics. I addressed statistical assumptions and provided a statistical analysis of the data collected as well as test of hypotheses.

For the primary research question, is there a statistically significant relationship between emotional intelligence and performance among executive coaches? The data revealed no differences in EI associated with the coach performance variable. The data revealed that EI was marginally related to age and gender - more than half of the male participants reported a small number of clients (five clients or fewer), while more than half of the female participants reported having many clients (11 or more clients). Those in the 55 to 64-year age group had lower EI scores than the 45 to 54 age group. Regarding performance and gender, the data indicated a statistically significant positive correlation. With regard to coach training and performance the data revealed a positive correlation between coach training and performance level for coaches, which was statistically significant - those with a higher level of training (ICF approved or accredited school) had more coaching clients. Lastly, data revealed a relationship between credentials and performance, those with no credentials had more clients.

The purpose of this research was to bridge a gap in the executive coaching literature and contribute to the coaching profession by examining the relationship between EI and performance among executive coaches, and in doing so benefit society as

a whole. Six other hypotheses were tested to investigate if performance was related to the following variables: age, gender, education, coach credentials, coaching experience, and coaching training. Six more hypotheses were tested to determine if EI correlated with the six aforementioned variables. Chapter 5 of the study provided a discussion of the research, conclusions and recommendations.

# Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

The purpose of this research was to bridge a gap in the executive coaching literature and contribute to the coaching profession by examining the relationship between EI and performance among executive coaches. Six hypotheses were tested to investigate if performance was related to the following variables: age, gender, education, coach credentials, coaching experience, and coach training. Six more hypotheses were tested to determine if EI correlated with the six aforementioned variables. Performance was quantified by the number of coaching clients secured over the course of a year. I obtained data on the variables from a demographic/performance questionnaire that 50 participants completed on line via Survey Monkey, and EI data were collected via the MSCEIT, which was also accessed online through the MHS website.

In this chapter, I present key findings of the study and provide an interpretation of these findings. I also discuss the limitations of this study, recommendations for further research, and the implications for social change, as well as the conclusion to this work.

## Key Findings

The *F*-test revealed no differences in EI that were associated with the coach performance variable $F$ (2,46) = .20, $p$ = .804.

- An ANOVA was conducted to determine if there was a difference in EI based on age. I found that there was a marginally significant difference between age groups on the MSCEIT. Those in the 55- to 64-year age group had lower EI scores than the 45– 54 age group, $F$ (3, 45) = 2.5, $p$ = .07.

- Calculating Somers's *d* to examine the association between gender and performance level revealed a positive correlation between gender and performance level for coaches, which was statistically significant ($d$ = .333, $p < .035$)
- There was a marginally significant difference between males and females on the MSCEIT, $t$ (47) = *-1.80,* $p$ = .078. The females were somewhat higher on EI ($M$ =.50, $SD$ =.05, $n$ = 16) than males ($M$ =.46, $SD$ =.08, $n$ = 33).
- Calculating Somers's *d* to examine the association between the possession of ICF credentials and performance level ($d$ = .476, $p < .013$). The result was significant; there was a relationship between having ICF credentials and performance level, and those with no credentials had more clients.
- Calculating Somers's *d* to examine the association between coach training and performance level in this sample revealed a positive correlation between coach training and performance level for coaches, which was statistically significant ($d$ = .305, $p < .010$). Those with a higher level of training (ICF approved or accredited school) had more coaching clients.

## Interpretation of Findings

The main goal of this study was to determine whether or not a statistically significant relationship existed between performance and EI among executive coaches. The literature reviewed for this work was primarily related to performance, EI, and executive coaching. In order to interpret the findings of the main hypothesis, I referred to

the multitude of studies that were referenced in this work. I referred to some of the potential limitations of the study as possible explanations for diverging results.

In this work, I analyzed six control variables that could have impacted the performance of the executive coaches whom participated in this research; those variables were age, gender, education level, coach training, coaching experience, and ICF credentials. Research related to the variables was not included in this work. However, I explained diverging results and gained clarity of the findings by searching multiple databases for recent articles on the topics and related topics; additionally, I took into consideration the potential limitations of the study.

In this study, the *F*-test revealed no differences in EI that were associated with the coach performance variable $F$ (2.46) = .20, $p$ = .804; however, based on the reviewed literature, it was hypothesized that there would be a statistically significant relationship between EI and performance among executive coaches.

Mishra and Das Mohapatra (2010) indicated that work experience appeared to be the only factor that could influence job performance aside from EI, with more experienced executives scoring higher on EI scales. EI is potentially a robust predictor of performance. Wilderom et al. (2015) indicated a relationship between high EI managers and increased sales performance. Although most research on EI and performance indicated a statistically significant relationship between the two variables, Nath et al. (2015) examined the relationship between IQ, EI, and academic success among medical interns and revealed no significant correlation.

Scholars have indicated the significance of EI in executive coaching, which also guided the development of the hypothesis. For example, it was suggested that it was preferable for coaches to exhibit high EI levels in addition to successfully coaching others in the area of EI development (Peltier, 2010) and that EI knowledge, skills, and abilities are central to successful coaching (Bono et al., 2009). Kets de Vries (2014) contended that effective executive coaches understand two key factors about their clients: how they think and how they experience emotions. Duffell and Lawton-Smith (2015) contended that coaching effectiveness may be limited when client emotions are ignored.

Cox and Patrick (2012) stated, "Working with people invariably involves emotions" (p. 34). I found this statement insightful, as I could not think of any profession in which people work in complete isolation. If a person wanted to work or perform well with others, understanding and managing emotions is critical. Given that executive coaches not only work with others, but many are hired for EI coaching (Landy, 2005), I thought studying the relationship between EI and performance among executive coaches was vital.

The International Coach Federation's Core Competencies (International Coach Federation, 2017) stated that it is imperative for coaches to accurately identify, understand, and use their emotions, as well as understand, assess, evaluate, and appropriately respond to the emotions of others. Mishra and Das Mohapatra (2010) revealed there was "a significant relationship between emotional intelligence and work performance" (p. 59). Lam and Kirby (2002) indicated that ECs, such as effectively dealing with emotions and appropriate responses to emotions, had more impact on work

performance than maturity and sensitivity. High-level coaching requires the coach to have knowledge, skills, and abilities that includes EI. Mishra (2016) also identified a relationship between EI and performance.

Nadler (2011) contended that although a person's IQ and professional expertise contributed to getting a job, EI determined the length and quality of employment in addition to an individual's chances of getting promoted. Colfax et al. (2010) contended that positive relationships, which stem from high EI, sustain business longevity; not a person's experience or education. Peltier (2010) contended that it is preferable for the coach to exhibit high EI levels in addition to successfully coaching others in the area of EI development.

It was articles such as the aforementioned that brought to light the need for this research and from which I developed my hypotheses, as it appeared evident, based on previous research, that there was a relationship between EI and performance. Based on the literature, I concluded that without the strong ability to link thought and emotion it would be difficult for coaches to build rapport, create lasting connection, have empathy, understand emotions (one's own emotions as well as other's), and over-all relate well with people, all of which are vital for successful coaching engagements. Conducting research to determine if a relationship existed between EI and the performance among executive coaches was of great importance to me, as the results, should a relationship have been determined, could have had a tremendous impact on the coaching industry.

A potential explanation for this divergent finding was that participants were expected to rely on memory in order to respond to the question, "How many Executive

Coaching clients did you secure in 2015?" While they were given numerical groupings to select from, they may not have accurately reported the number of clients they coached due to incorrect recollection. A review of memory based court cases (Howe & Knott, 2015) discussed the limitations of memory and suggested that evidence based on memory should be weighted appropriately against other forms of evidence. The possibility of inaccurate recollection was also a potential limitation of this study and could have been a factor in the deviating results. Another possible reason for diverging results was unclear wording - rather than asking how many clients were secured, it could have been clearer had the question asked, "How many clients did you coach in 2015?" This was also a potential limitation of this study.

An ANOVA was conducted to determine if there was a difference in EI based on age. Of the four age groups, 35 to 44 years, 45 to 54 years, 55 to 64 years, and 65 to 74 years, the 45 to 54 age group scored highest on the MSCEIT. The results indicated that there was a marginally significant difference between those in the 55 to 64 and 45 to 54 year age groups, with the 55 to 64 group having lower EI scores than the 45 to 54 group, $F\,(3, 45) = 2.5$, $p = .07$.

The literature reviewed to guide this work did not address EI and age, as age was a control variable. However, in the literature review on Mayer and Salovey, it was mentioned that according to the researcher, EI develops along with age. To gain additional understanding of this finding I sought recent literature on EI and age. Each of the studies I read aligned with Mayer and Salovey and stated that EI increased with age, which was contrary to the findings in this work. In Cabello, Fernandez-Pinto, Sorrel,

Extremera, and Fernandez-Berrocal's (2016) cross-sectional study on age and gender differences in EI of the 12,198 Spanish adults whom completed the MSCEIT those in the 45 to 76 year-old age group scored higher in EI than those in the 17 to 31 year-old age group, which indicated older adults had higher EI than younger adults. Using the Wong and Law Emotional Intelligence Scale, Sliter, Chen, and Sliter (2013) studied 519 adults from the service industry between the ages of 18 and 68 years-old and found that those in the 45 to 76 year-old age group had higher EI scores than those in the 17 to 31 year-old age group. An explanation for the results of this study regarding age and EI could be the way the four age groups were categorized in this study, 35 to 44 years, 45 to 54 years, 55 to 64 years, and 65 to 74. Perhaps had they been categorized differently the outcome would have looked different.

There was a marginally significant difference between males and females on the MSCEIT, $t$ (47) = -1.80, $p$ = .078. The means indicated that females were somewhat higher on EI ($M$ =.50, $SD$ =.05, $n$ = 16) than males ($M$ =.46, $SD$ =.08, $n$ = 33). Gender and EI were not reviewed for this work; however, to gain understanding of the findings I sought current research on this topic. I found conflicting results regarding which gender demonstrated higher EI. For example, Shahzad and Bagum's (2012) comparative study on gender and EI used the Trait Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire to collect data from 100 university students. Their findings indicated that males demonstrated higher EI than the females. Nath et al. (2015) study revealed no difference between male and female EI scores, although the researchers concluded that their results were not generalizable. Valadez Sierra, Borges del Rosal, Ruvalcaba Romero, Villegas, and Lorenzo's (2013)

study had 129 students take the MSCEIT to determine which gender had higher EI and their results indicated that females were higher. Cabello, et al. (2016) also concluded that women had significantly higher EI scores on the MSCEIT than men.

This study revealed a positive correlation between coach training and performance level – those with a higher level of training (ICF approved or accredited school) had more coaching clients. While I did not find specific research on the relationship between coach training and coach performance, I found studies on the relationship of training and performance as related to the effectiveness of coaches coaching (training) others that aligned with this study's findings. For example, in Jones, Woods, and Guillaume's (2015) meta-analysis of 17 studies, conducted in seven countries, on executive coaching, a form of "employee learning, training, and development" (p. 25) implemented to enhance performance, revealed that coaching, by both internal and external coaches, had positive performance benefits. I found this study relevant because ICF accredited coach training programs involves theory and practice, meaning students learn by being coached (minimum of 10 hours mentor coaching) and coaching others (minimum of six sessions). In ICF approved programs there is a minimum of five coaching sessions and observations by credentialed instructors/observers (International Coach Federation, 2017). A significant aspect of ICF related coach training is feedback. Darekar, Sebastian, and Kaur (2016) reviewed the role of feedback in coaching and found that "the disparity between coaching and effective coaching lies in a constructive feedback" (p. 70). They suggested that when people experience constructive feedback they refined their skills and enhanced performance.

When coaches forgo training, they forgo valuable feedback that has the potential to help them hone their skills and performance.

Lastly, this study revealed a relationship between having ICF credentials and performance level - those with no credentials had more clients. In order to interpret this finding I sought research specifically related to ICF credentials and performance. According to the ICF's 2012 *Global Coaching Study*, "credentialed coaches reported a higher-than-average income worldwide compared to non-credentialed-coaches, with the exception of the Middle East and Africa" (para 5).

Nagy, Pollack, Rutherford, and Lohrke (2012) stated that credentials were indicators that those whom held them align with "widely recognized norms and expectations developed by stakeholders" (p. 944). Nagy et al. concluded that those in the high-credential situation stated higher levels of "perceived cognitive legitimacy…relative to participants in the low-credentials condition" (p. 952).

The deviation of this study's results compared with the ICF's findings and related literature could be explained by the small sample size and/or selection bias, "a distortion caused by non-representativeness of the participants" (Hanley, 2017, p. 4) due to the use of convenience sampling. Inaccurate recollection of how many client's participants coached over the course of the year could also be a possible explanation for this diverging result.

## Limitations of Study

A limitation of this study was access to participants. Of the 46 U.S. ICF Chapter presidents contacted, four confirmed they would invite their members to participate in

this study. From July, 2015 to September, 2015, I obtained two qualified Survey Monkey respondents, one of whom completed the MSCEIT. After posting an invitation on LinkedIn had the potential to reach coach related groups, schools, businesses, and associations - I obtained 50 qualified participants at the end of July, 2016. A benefit opening this study to a more diverse group of coaches was that the findings expanded beyond ICF coaches and to the executive coaching population as a whole.

Because accessing participants was difficult it created another limitation, that being sample size. While the sample size fell within the parameters set by the Power G* analysis it was on the low side of the range. Perhaps the estimated time frame (approximately 35 minutes) to complete both the questionnaire and MSCEIT was a deterrent for some potential participants. Brodaty et al. (2013) discovered that a lack of time was the primary barrier to participation.

It was also possible that technology was a limitation to this study. Participants accessed the demographic/performance questionnaire via Survey Monkey and upon completion of the questionnaire were directed to a link that took them to the MSCEIT located on the MHS website. If participants lost connection when taking the questionnaire they were not able to go back to Survey Monkey to complete it, as the questionnaire was not allowed to be taken more than once from the same device. Sometimes links do not work, it was also possible that the link to the MSCEIT could have failed.

The transition from the questionnaire on Survey Monkey to the MHS site was not stream lined. The following was stated at the end of the questionnaire (Charles, 2017):

> Please create and enter a six to 10-digit personal code that you will ENTER in the FIRST and LAST NAME FIELDS for the MSCEIT (emotional intelligence assessment) you will NOT enter your name, as you will remain anonymous. ***Write your personal code down before proceeding***

This code was used to match participants with Survey Monkey and the MSCEIT. If they did not know their code or did not understand how to use their code to access the MSCEIT they would not be able to continue with the EI assessment.

## Recommendations for Future Research

While this study presented limited information on EI and performance among executive coaches it was a step forward in the advancement of the coaching profession, as it set a compelling stage for further inquiry. To my knowledge there was no research on the relationship between EI and performance among executive coaches. With EI suggested as a significant criterion for determining professional success (Seyal & Afzaal, 2013) continued research in this area could have a profound impact on the coaching industry. Bozer, Sarros, and Santora (2014) suggested a more in-depth knowledge base of empirical evidence was needed to help legitimize the coaching profession. Continued research would lend more credibility to the field.

Significant contributions could be made to the coaching profession when, and if, a relationship between EI and the performance of executive coaches was statistically determined. Such data could provide scientific evidence to inform curriculum for coach training institutions thus providing additional credibility to programs while providing more credibility to the coaching profession as a whole by potentially producing better

educated and trained coaches. Based upon the results of this work, combined with the need for additional empirical data, it was recommended that future research address this gap in the literature while considering the limitations of this study. Additional research could also build upon future findings.

There was also a gap in the literature specifically related to coach training and performance. Bozer et al. (2014) studied the relationship between executive coaches' academic background in psychology and success as a coach. However, I did not find research directly related to coach specific education or training and its relationship to success as a coach. de Hann, Duckworth, Birch, and Jones (2012) asserted that the time has come to identify the key components of effective executive coaching if the profession was to advance. Additional research in this area could help determine if training is a key component of executive coaching and specifically what areas of training were most important to this success. Future research in this area could be valuable to coaches, coach training institutions, as well as to the organization whom may eventually hire executive coaches. Perhaps such data could also provide insight to decision makers regarding the regulation of coaching institutions and the coaching profession as a whole.

## Implications for Future Practice

The coaching industry is unregulated, meaning anyone can work as a coach, executive or otherwise. The ICF's 2016 Global Coaching Study reported that the primary concern of leaders and managers who use coaching skills in their profession is "untrained individuals who call themselves coaches" (p. 19). A primary motivation for this study was to provide organizations with data supported evidence to guide executive coach

hiring practices. With the 2016 total annual coaching revenue in North American equaling $955 million, which was up from $707 million reported in the ICF's 2012 Global Coaching Study (p.8), it was evident that organizations, as well as individuals, spend a significant amount of money on coaching each year. It was critical that organizations have scientific based standards to guide their hiring decisions to help insure that they utilized the most qualified coaches to work with their key talent. Having an understanding of executive coaches EI and utilizing EI as a hiring criterion could directly benefit the client, the organization, and the organization's return on investment.

## Implications for Positive Social Change

The primary purpose for this study was to determine if a relationship existed between EI and the performance of executive coaches, secondarily, I investigated the potential relationships between EI and performance and six variables: age, gender, education, coach training, coaching experience, and coaching credentials. The main element of this study that was expected to present a direction for social change was the possibility of a relationship between EI and performance. Had a connection been revealed it could have provided a solid platform for the coaching industry, organizations, coach certification programs, individual coaches, all of which would benefit society as suggested by systems theory. Further inquiry could reveal different results that would provide a framework to guide curricula development for coach training schools, provide a structure that informs organizational hiring practices, and could guide individual coaches' professional growth and development, all of which would have a positive societal impact. It was strongly recommended that research in this area continue.

The social change aspect of this study may come from the finding that those with a higher level of training (ICF approved or accredited schools) had more coaching clients. This finding had the potential to influence current coaches who have not obtained formal training, and future coaches who were deliberating as to whether or not formal training was a sound investment. It could provide businesses with valuable information when hiring executive coaches which could equate to hire returns on their coaching investment. Because the coaching industry is currently unregulated, meaning that anyone, regardless of their credentials, can coach people, this finding could be used to support the need for formal coach training, thus having had a tremendous impact of society because it would protect consumers from hiring unqualified coaches. Lastly, the more coaches obtained formal training the credibility of the coaching industry as a whole could be strengthened.

## Conclusions

I conducted this study to examine the relationship between EI and performance among executive coaches and the results indicated that a significant relationship does not exist. While this finding was contrary to existing literature on EI and performance related to other professions and this study did not fill the deficiencies in the literature related to EI, performance, and executive coaching, through this research many areas of potential inquiry for future research emerged. Analyzing the variables age, gender, education, coach credentials, coaching experience, and coach training and EI and performance resulted in finding more research gaps related to coaching and revealed potential areas of future study. Findings from this study may be used to further research on EI and performance, as well as inquiry into the relationship of age, gender, education, coach

credentials, coaching experience, and coach training of EI and performance to provide additional knowledge in these areas. This research had the ability to contribute to executive coaches, organizations, and society in unexpected ways.

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# Appendix A: Letter to ICF Presidents

Greetings,

My name is Valerie Charles, I was the ICF Oregon Charter Chapter 2014 Director of Programs. I'm currently working on my dissertation where I'm researching the relationship between emotional intelligence and performance among executive coaches. I'm honored for the opportunity to help advance the coaching profession by adding to the empirical data on executive coaches – and I would like to invite your Chapter to be a part of this exciting research.

Sometime this summer I will begin collecting data for my dissertation research – I'm wondering if you will consider assisting me in the following ways:

- On my behalf, send my invitation to participate in the study via email with the link to the assessment site
- On my behalf, post my invitation to participate in the study on your website with a link to the assessment site
- On my behalf, add my invitation to participate in the study in your newsletter with a link to the assessment site

Participants will be asked to do the following:

- Read/sign an Informed Consent form
- Take an online demographic questionnaire
- Complete a complimentary MSCEIT (Mayer-Salovey-Caruso, Emotional Intelligence Test)
- All participants will remain anonymous (thus, individual results will not be accessible)

Here's a link to my LinkedIn page if you would like to learn more about me: https://www.linkedin.com/pub/valerie-charles-phd-abd/10/21/997

**If you would like to include your chapter in this research to help advance the coaching profession, please let me know and I will send you the invitation to share with your members (email, chapter website, and newsletter).**

I will share my findings with your chapter upon completion of my dissertation, via a written summary as well complete dissertation. If it works out, I may be able to visit your chapter as well!

Thank you for considering my request.

Cheers!

Valerie Charles

# Appendix B: Follow-Up Letter to ICF Presidents

Dear Presidents,

I recently reached out to you regarding a request for your chapter's participation in my doctoral research that will help advance the coaching profession, and allow me to complete my doctoral work in Organizational Psychology. I am researching the relationship between executive coaches' emotional intelligence and performance.

I am contacting you, along with every United States ICF Chapter president, to ask if you would be willing to send an invitation to your membership, on my behalf, as well as post the invitation to participate on your chapter website, and in your chapter newsletter.

Please let me know if you would like to invite your members to participate in this exciting opportunity! Feel free to contact me with any questions you may have. Below is what I would ask you to provide to your membership on your chapter website, and/or in your chapter newsletter, and/or in a membership email, and/or social media:

Opportunity to Participate in Exciting Coach Related Research

> On behalf of fellow coach and ICF member, Valerie Charles, we invite, on Valerie's behalf, all qualified coaches to participate in her exciting research to help advance the coaching profession and assist Valerie in fulfilling a requirement to complete her PhD program. Her dissertation research investigates the relationship between emotional intelligence and performance among executive coaches. Read more…
>
> The hyperlink address is www.eiresearch.blogspot.com, created for the sole purpose of this research, with the full invitation and consent form, along with a link to Survey Monkey so they can begin participating immediately, if they choose.

Yours in Coaching,

Valerie Charles

## Appendix C : Demographic/Performance Questionnaire

### Survey Monkey Demographic/Performance Questionnaire

1. Do you read English fluently?
    - Yes
    - No
2. Is you defined coaching niche Executive Coaching?
    - Yes
    - No
3. Are you a resident of the United States?
    - Yes
    - No
4. Are you a self-employed external coach who subcontracts to organizations?
    - Yes
    - No
5. Are you an United States ICF Chapter member?
    - Yes
    - No
6. What is your age?
    - 18 to 24
    - 25 to 34
    - 35 to 44
    - 45 to 54
    - 55 to 64
    - 65 to 74
    - 75 or older
7. How many Executive Coaching clients did you secure in 2015?
    - 0 to 5
    - 6 to 10
    - 11 to 15
    - 16 to 21
    - 21 to 25
    - 26 to 30
    - 31 to 35
    - Over 35
8. What is your gender?
    - Female
    - Male

9. What is the highest level of education completed?
    - Graduated from high school/Equivalent

- Some college
- Associate's Degree
- Bachelor's Degree
- Master's Degree
- Doctorate Degree

10. What kind of coach training did you receive?
    - No formal coach training
    - Training from a non-ICF associated school
    - Training from and ICF approved or accredited school
11. How many years of Executive Coaching experience do you have?
    - Less than 1 year
    - 1 to 3 years
    - 4 to 7 years
    - 8 to 12 years
    - More than 12 years
12. What ICF credential do you currently hold?
    - I do not hold an ICF credential
    - I am an Associate Certified Coach (ACC)
    - I am a Professional Certified Coach (PCC)
    - I am an Master Certified Coach (MCC)