Two Kinds of Presence: A Comparative Analysis of Face-to-Face and Technology-Based Mediated Communication Methods and the Executive Coaching Experience

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to explore patterns of the executive coaching experience among clients who use both face-to-face and technology-based mediated communication methods. A cross-sectional survey was conducted using a 24-item instrument administered to 108 female ($n = 56$) and male ($n = 52$) participants, ranging in age from 27 to 68. Univariate inferential tests were used to address 8 research questions concerning whether coaching clients experience significantly different levels of presence, self-disclosure, commitment, and engagement in each modality of coaching. According to study results, coaching clients reported a greater ability to self-disclose and greater levels of presence, commitment, and engagement during face-to-face coaching compared to mediated coaching. Contrary to expectations, technology use did not differ between executive coaching clients who preferred face-to-face and those who preferred mediated coaching. Likewise, attitudes toward technology did not differ among coaching clients who preferred face-to-face versus mediated coaching. Finally, there was a trend such that clients who prefer mediated coaching are younger than those who prefer face-to-face coaching.

Key words: *Face-to-face, technology-based mediated communication, executive coaching,* and *modality.*

Dedication

This is dedicated to William, Mascre, Emma Jean, Julia Mae, Lawrence Sr., Keaton, and Semya. Each of you inspire me every day that I live.

And last, but not least, sincere thanks to my dissertation chair, Jason Ohler you are the best! I am so grateful that you took me on. Please know, I could not have completed this without your guidance and support.

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Statement of the Problem

Media are pervasive throughout society and, given the fast-paced, high-tech world of information sharing and exchange, technology-based mediated communication has emerged as a viable alternative to face-to-face contact for engaging others in conversation, social support, and collaboration. Within both psychology and communications literature, there are widely held views about modality preference; however, the literature is generally devoid of studies or experiments on the influencers of modality preference and whether individuals can be present and engaged whether they are communicating face-to face or using technology-based mediated communication (Lawrie, 2008; Otte, Bangeter, Britsch, & Wüthrich, 2014). There is also a lack of empirical research on understanding a client's experience and the modality the client uses to engage his or her executive coach.

While a growing number of researchers have been investigating executive coaching over the last 10 years, many of the scholars have focused on the practice of coaching or its practitioners (Howatt, 2000; Mahler, 1964; Richard, 2003; Vail, 2004) in the areas of management, consulting, learning and development, and consulting psychology (Douglas & Morley, 2000; Grant, 2011; Hill, 2010; McLaughlin, 2013) rather than exploring factors that influence a client's executive coaching experience (Passmore, Peterson, & Freire, 2013).

Purpose of the Study

In this study, I examined the phenomenon of executive coaching though a media psychology lens in an attempt to determine the differences that exist between a client's executive coaching experience using both face-to-face and technology-based mediated

communication methods. While scholars have examined aspects of coaching research, more study is needed on this topic, specifically individual preference of varied modality methods that can be generalized to the population of those who have engaged an executive coach (Passmore et al., 2013).

This study could provide insight into a movement that already exists within health care (Cipresso et al., 2012), education, (Tavangarian, Leypold, Roser, Nolting, & Voight, 2004), counseling (Young, 2005), and clinical psychology (American Psychologist, 2013), in which the traditional face-to-face interaction and its respective service delivery models are morphing into a more wide-spread use of mediated communication modalities. Technology and media convergence is moving away from communicating through distinct media channels and more towards common media platforms that are more shared (Jenkins 2006; Nayer, 2010) and allow for unique user access and experiences (Rutledge, 2013), all of which could lead to a shift in how practitioners in each of these disciplines establish and maintain interpersonal communication with their constituencies.

Over time, the number of research studies concerning coaching has grown. Scholars who have studied this area have focused on (a) the practice of coaching, its practitioners, and the coaching industry, including how coaches are trained; (b) how coaching impacts and outcomes; and (c) research on special populations, including gender issues in business and executive coaching (Stout-Rostron, 2011).

Given this historical context, the purpose of this study was to examine face-to-face and technology-based mediated communication methods of executive coaching and the differences in those modalities that influence a client's coaching experience. The objective

was to add not only to the empirical coaching literature, but also to the media psychology and communication literature with the aim of improving the understanding of what researchers can learn by examining existing literature to gain insight into how psychology and communication theory are converging in an executive coaching environment. In this study, I explored the following questions.

RQ_1: Will clients who receive both face-to-face and technology-mediated executive coaching experience significantly different levels of presence in each modality of coaching?

RQ_2: Will clients who receive both face-to-face and technology-mediated executive coaching experience significantly different levels of self-disclosure in each modality of coaching?

RQ_3: Will clients who receive both face-to-face and technology-mediated executive coaching experience significantly different levels of commitment in each modality of coaching?

RQ_4: Will clients who receive both face-to-face and technology-mediated executive coaching experience significantly different levels of engagement in each modality of coaching?

RQ_5: Is preferred modality of executive coaching related to attitudes about technology?

RQ_6: Is preferred modality of executive coaching related to experience with technology use?

RQ_7: Is preferred modality of executive coaching related to gender?

RQ_8: Is preferred modality of executive coaching related to age?

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

The literature review contains two sections on the historical context and foundational theories that gave rise to coaching. I will also examine two theoretical constructs that provide insight into answering my central research question. In the first section, I focus on the origins of coaching and the foundational models and schools of thought that shaped both the historical and recent evolution of coaching as a practice. I will then describe coaching and the overlapping characteristics that it shares with mentoring, counseling, and coaching psychology, which has created a dichotomy in practice and scholarship within the coaching community.

Some scholars argue that, because of the myriad of definitions and descriptions, expanding the quality and quantity of empirical research about coaching has been impeded, specifically research concerned with coaching outcomes, which if available, would serve to further validate coaching impact and effectiveness (Theeboom, Beerma, & van Vianen, 2014). Not only is there debate about a definition of coaching within coaching circles, but differences also exist within the coaching community about the coaching competencies that are necessary for a professional coach and how these competencies best guide a coaching practice. I will examine these questions of competency and rules of engagement for the coach and client by presenting models and standards that were developed in collaboration with practitioners, scholars, and client companies and are now advocated by two of the most influential coaching organizations within the coaching profession: The International Coach Federation (ICF) and The Executive Coaching Forum (ECF).

I then provide frameworks for both coaching competencies and the coaching processes that have been accepted among those who have received professional coaching certifications and credentials within the coaching profession and who are members of one of several respected organizations among coaches, including the ICF, the ECF, and the European Mentoring and Coaching Council (EMCC). I conclude this section by discussing several genres of coaching, highlighting both the differences of each and their respective characteristics before describing coaching efficacy and coaching effectiveness.

In the second section of this review, I discuss the theoretical models that underpin this study, providing insight, perspective, and focus on the study variables that correspond to the theory and instrument design. The first set of theoretical models are centered in media psychology, which is defined as the scientific study of human behavior, thoughts, and feelings experienced in the context of media use and creation (Dill & Nathan 2013). Media psychology informs not only the overall purpose of the study, but also the historical and emerging psychological models with communications theory and practice. Media psychology is also used to understand influencers of behavior and relationships between an executive coaching client and the medium.

Using media psychology as a foundation, I will explore the uses and gratification theory (UGT), which has traditionally been defined as the search for understanding why and how individuals seek and/or adopt certain media in order to satisfy specific needs (Papacharissi & Rubin, 2000; Ruggiero, 2000). This theory can be used to understand media behavior in the context of executive coaching usage behavior, as well as modality choice.

Further, within this theory, I will explore the relationships between self-disclosure, engagement, and presence within an executive coaching environment.

Finally, I conclude my consideration of the media psychology construct by discussing channel expansion theory (CET; Carson & Zmud, 1999), which is used to explain the relationship between the frequency and use of media, but differs from UGT in that it is used to examine the experience an individual has with his or her communication partner (coach/client) and message content (e.g., self-disclosed information) which enhances the individual's perception of that medium (D'Urso & Rains, 2008). The more a person uses a media channel or experiences it, the more positive he or she perceives the channel to be (Carson & Zmud, 1999). A client's use of a particular modality (i.e., face-to-face) effects his or her perception of the modality and his or her view of the executive coaching experience. Additionally, a client's media use experience can be influenced by a number of other factors as well, including channel, topic, executive coach, and organizational context (Timmerman & Madhavapeddi, 2008).

The last section of the chapter includes the applicable theoretical models of computer-mediated communication systems (CMCS), defined as any communication that occurs through the use of multiple electronic- or technology-based media (McQuail, 2005). In this section, I discuss multiple communication theories that are relevant to addressing the various research questions posed for this study. The subtheories that I describe under the CMCS construct concern the benefits of both face-to-face and technology-based mediated communication, which present a more holistic view of the influencers of preference or media

selection of a particular modality, frequency of use, and self-disclosure when engaging in coaching in a mediated environment.

Within CMCS theory, I discuss three theories that will inform the study: (a) social presence theory, which posits that media is differentiated in its ability to transmit both verbal and nonverbal messages and that the fewer the cue systems available, the less warmth and engagement the sender and receiver experience; (b) the theory of electronic propinquity (TEP; Walther & Bazarova, 2008; Walther & Parks, 2002) whose central argument is concerned with the psychological closeness that can be experienced between the sender and the receiver who are using technology-based media communicated versus close proximity interpersonal communication, such as face-to face (e.g., experiencing coaching when the client and coach are not meeting face-to-face); and (c) social penetration theory (Tang & Wang, 2012), which was selected because of its emphasis on self-disclosure, which is often vital to the coaching/ client relationship and goal attainment by the client.

Social penetration theorists posit that individuals assess the cost/benefit relationship of self-disclosure. Benefits such as mutual disclosure between the coach and client may be considered, while cost could include emotional risk due to increased vulnerability.

Coaching Origins

The word coach is an English term meaning transport, which is linked to the Hungarian word *kocs*i meaning carriage, which is also the village where a coach was first constructed (Online Etymology Dictionary, 2014). While the word has evolved in both its use and meaning since the early 19th century, the description used to define coaching is the definition that Oxford University coined in the 1830s where coach meant an academic

instructor/trainer, but was described in slang as a tutor or someone who "carried" a student through an exam (Online Etymology Dictionary, 2014).

Coaching's history is linked to the era of Socrates, who some scholars suggest believed that learning occurs best when an individual recognizes or is aware of a problem and assumes ownership of and takes responsibility for the problem (Fielden, 2005). In contemporary society, coaching is a new discipline; however, the concept of coaching has existed since humans began devising ways in which to communicate with one another. Whether this communication occurred through primitive forms of media or media artifacts, this inquiry and response was followed by two human beings engaging in means of discourse, like the quest to discover how to hunt or cook, or even during the process of childbirth. Some form of coaching was occurring that resulted in the sharing and exploration of how to use what humans innately knew in order to uncover different methods of solving a problem.

Although it is difficult to pinpoint when the practice of coaching began, it is more important to understand the lineage of the coaching phenomenon and how it has been used throughout time in elements such as psychodynamics, behavior change, and the historical accounts of conversations and interpersonal communication between philosophers such as Plato and Socrates (Brock, 2014). Coaching, as it has evolved over time, has been influenced by the theoretical platforms of humanistic and positive psychology, adult development, and cognitive theory, which spawned ideologies formed in the 1960s known more popularly as the self-help/human potential movement (Wildflower, 2013).

Scholars who have studied the origins of coaching claim that the history of various intervention and helping relationships has shaped, and continues to influence, the modern day practice of coaching (Wildflower, 2013). As executive coach Rogers has suggested, "as coaches we should know where our ideas and theories about coaching come from" (as cited in Wildflower, 2013, p. 5). In this chapter, I will examine in more detail the effects that this phenomenon has, and continues to have, on the professional practice of coaching.

Coaching Foundations and Evolution

Humanistic/ Behavioral Psychology

In an earlier section, mention was made of the link between the origins of coaching and humanistic psychology, which is often characterized by its five core principles: (a) human beings (e.g., the person) are holistically greater than the sum of their parts; (b) human beings are aware, and human consciousness always includes awareness of oneself; (c) human beings are intentional, seek meaning, and are capable of exercising creativity; (d) human beings exercise a degree of choice, and the choices that are accompanied by a sense of responsibility; and (e) human beings have their existence in a uniquely human context, but also exist in the cosmic ecology (Greening, 2006).

According to the humanistic theory, a person is more aware of him/herself than the professional therapist and possesses a more informed and unique understanding of the problems he or she is facing (Wildflower & Brennan, 2011). This theory is linked to coaching and this study because coaches believe that the clients can and do make choices and are generally aware and seek meaning in life's occurrences. Humanistic epistemology is

central to the practice of coaching and to this study because I sought to understand a client's

behavior and experience during a coaching engagement, regardless of the modality.

Behaviorism

A forerunner to the theoretical construct of humanistic psychology was the theory of

behavioral psychology, also known as behaviorism. Behaviorism is a theory of learning

based on the idea that all behaviors are acquired through conditioning and that learning can

best be explained through observable behavior (O'Donnell, 1985). Behavioral theories by

Watson (Wildflower, 2013) and Skinner (Wildflower, 2013) dominated psychology during

the first half of the 20th century. Both Skinner (Wildflower, 2013) and Watson (Wildflower,

2013) claimed that behavior change could occur if environmental conditions were altered.

However, other behaviorist theorists such as Ellis (Wildflower, 2013) and Beck (1996), who

are considered the fathers of cognitive behavior therapy (CBT), have suggested that behavior,

and change in behavior, was more about thinking and feeling than environment.

Several studies have been conducted on behavioral theories and coaching. Stein

(2009) identified and defined multiple roles taken by coaches in the course of dialogue.

Ballinger (2000) and Luebbe (2005) identified factors in coaching perceived as important in

contributing to behavioral change. Grant and Zackon (2004) conducted a large-scale survey

of coaches' knowledge base, theories, techniques, and outcomes using the responses of 2,529

members of the International Coaching Federation.

Humanistic psychological theories that were authored by clinical psychologist Rogers

acted as a counterpoint to Freud's psychoanalytic thesis and Skinner and Watson's theory of

behaviorism (Wildflower & Brennan, 2011). Rogers' person- centered approach offered a

dichotomous alternative to the pathological ideology that Freud advanced and the environmental-influenced behavior model popularized by behaviorists (O'Donnell, 1985).

All of the aforementioned foundational theories (e.g., positive psychology, adult development, behavioral psychology) have contributed to the practice of coaching. However, humanist theorists examine more the internal emotional processes that are important to understanding human sense-making in the coaching environment. In this context, the study's results might offer an understanding of feelings of commitment and a coaching client's willingness to engage when he or she is using technology-based mediated communication methods versus face to-face interaction.

Positive Psychology

Positive psychology is concerned with the science of well-being and optimal human functioning (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000). Positive psychology is linked to coaching, in large part because of the way many coaches approach their practice and because the system of positive psychology offers distinct differences in coaching from its mainstream counterpart with the same name. Unlike pathology, whose focus is on damage, positive psychologists identify and build upon virtues and strengths (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000). Coaching includes this approach as well (Wildflower & Brennan, 2011).

Seligman, Steen, Park, and Peterson (2005) developed a formal classification of 24 character strengths that include creativity, curiosity, open-mindedness, love of learning alongside six virtues (i.e., wisdom, courage, humanity, justice, temperance, and transcendence) as a framework to better understand happiness. Using these classifications to form a coding system, researchers are able to measure strengths in a quantitative manner,

which led to the validations of interventions that can facilitate what Seligman et al. characterized as *lasting happiness*.

The Values in Action Inventory of Strengths (VIA-IS) was developed based upon this work and is used today (Linley et al., 2007). However, some psychologists have ignored the importance of such positive emotions as hope, resilience, goals, and meaning and purpose as qualities that can produce happiness and lead to an individual's ability to function more productively (Biswar-Diener & Dean, 2007; Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000). The theory of positive psychology and its use in coaching are germane to understanding the impact of this coaching approach during intervention and should prove instructive in answering the research question.

Adult Development

Erikson (1997) and Kegan (2009) discussed the adult stage models that are used to characterize how adults work their way through life and, depending on the stage of development, results in behavior that represents how they make sense of the world. With respect to coaching, the better a coach can understand where his/her client might be in the cycle of adult development, the better the coach can help the client accept the mode of change that will be necessary to improve personal or professional satisfaction or move through transition (Bridges, 2003).

The challenge for coaches is to determine how they can assist the client in pinpointing his/her stage of development. A number of scholars have suggested that there is a stage of adult development that can lead to acceptance, or as Bridges (2003) suggested, their willingness to move from the *neutral zone* to *new beginnings*.

While Erikson's (1997) and Vaillant's (1993) models are useful in examining adult stages, scholars have not determined a method or a form of inquiry that assists a coach in detecting the stage of adult development an individual is experiencing. Thus, Axelrod's (2005) development and awareness theory is a more relevant approach for methods that modern coaches can use, particularly executive coaching, whether the coaching is conducted face-to-face or using mediated communication. Axelrod posited that, the higher degree of self-awareness an individual has, the higher the ability a person has to change, regardless of age or stage of development or consciousness, which is the center of Kegan's (2009) theoretical intersections of age, meaning, and complexity. Rogers (2012) suggested that helping the client stretch for higher degrees of reflection and self-awareness can help the client and the coach detect the appropriate adult stage, and thus identify her/his willingness to change and or transition.

Self-Help

The practice of coaching is rooted in positive and humanistic psychology, and its framework is derived from a cadre of overlapping traditions and theories (Wildflower, 2013). However, within these theories and traditions are the humanistic transformational properties of self-awareness and self-discovery, both of which are central ingredients to what are largely U.S. phenomena, like the human potential movement (HPM) and the self-help movement.

Horney (1942) defined self-help as "To find a mountain path all by one's self gives a greater feeling of strength than to take a path that is shown, though the work that is put in is the same and the results are the same" (p. 34). Combe (1841) examined the concept of self-help by advocating for personal responsibility and self-improvement through education and

self-control. Emerson (1841) claimed that every human in his or her lifetime needed to "thank his or her faults" and "acquire habits of self-help" as "our strength grows out of weakness" (p. 22).

However, the modern day version of self-help emerged in the 1960s with the concept that within each individual lays extraordinary, untapped human capacity (Di Carlo, 1996; Wildflower, 2013). Self-help or self-improvement (VandenBos, American Psychological Association 2007) is about individual personal development. Smiles pointed out "the spirit of self-help is the root of all genuine growth in individuals" (as cited in VanderKam, 2012, p.1). The self-help U.S. culture has grown into an industry where 2013 revenue was estimated to exceed $13 billion (Schulz, 2013).

Consumerists of self-help purchase numerous publications and collateral materials and attend motivational speaking conferences led by authors such as John Maxwell, Tony Robbins, Wayne Dwyer, Jack Canfield, and Mark Victor Hansen (Canfield & Hansen, 1983). Carnegie's (1936) *How to Win Friends and Influence People* has sold over 15 million copies (Valiunas, 2010), offering what is often characterized as common sense advice on dealing with personal or social/professional issues.

Not all U.S. scholars or authors see value in embracing the messages of the self-help culture. Salerno (2005) categorized the culture of self-help into two categories: empowerment and victimization, using the latter as the primary catalyst to support the claim that the messages and interventions such as Alcoholic Anonymous or CBT (both of which have been researched and practiced and are supported by empirical data) are more harmful than helpful to those who subscribe to their content.

However, Combe (1841), Emerson (1841), and Salerno (2005) focused on the thematic and practical relationship of self-help literature; interventions on the practice of coaching; and how the restoration of inner self-confidence, increased self-awareness, and self-discovery represent components of the coaching process and helping relationship that each coach has with his or her client.

Human Potential Movement

During the mid-20th century, a movement important to coaching's evolution emerged that attracted an eclectic cadre of scholars, authors, philosophers, and entertainers from around the world. The theory of humanistic psychology and coaching were linked; proponents claimed that, within each individual, there is significant, untapped human potential (Wildflower, 2013). The movement became known as the human potential movement and was influenced by Maslow's (1968) theory on a human's hierarchy of needs. Maslow, while originally a follower of Freudian tradition, emphasized the more positive side of human nature (Wildflower, Brennan, 2011).

Maslow (1968) sought to capture a more holistic view of humankind and the latent potential that resides within. Maslow posited that there were five human stages of need that were both psychological and physiological in nature and began with (a) love and belongingness; (b) achievement, status, responsibility, and reputation; (c) a need for self-esteem and esteem from others; (d) personal growth and fulfillment; and (e) self-actualization. Maslow stressed that movement across these various psychological and physiological stages were not linear, and the journey to self-actualization stage was unique to each individual.

Although Maslow's (1968) theory influenced the human potential movement,

(HPM), Leonard (2010) is credited with providing the impetus behind what would become

known as the HPM. Leonard defined HPM and foretold the social and political idealism that

was about to occur for the next 2 decades. This awakening and counter-cultural

reexamination of U. S. societal values also paralleled the founding of the Esalen Institute, a

commune-like gathering place located in Big Sur, California where some of the world's

intellectuals of that era gathered. Because of Esalen's philosophical proximity to the

founding of humanistic psychology, which is identified later in this paper as one of the

theoretical models for this study, Leonard eventually joined the Esalen founders as the

institute's director of research. It was during this time that the HPM, driven in part by

Maslow, Perls, Satir, and Rodgers, became more than just an ideological movement at

Esalen. These actors, and many who worked there, were responsible for crafting the tenets of

the movement, and they became the source of energy that made the coaching framework

actionable (Wildflower, 2013).

While each of the aforementioned theories, events, and actors at Esalen formed the

foundation for what is now referred to as coaching, it is important to understand how

coaching is being discussed and defined by both scholars and practitioners, particularly

between those who consider themselves coaches and those who are identified as executives.

Coach Genres

Life/Personal Coaching

Life /personal coaching draws upon numerous disciplines that may include sociology,

adult development, and career counseling as a means to help the client to achieve his or her

personal and professional goals (Sherman, 2014). Life coaches may have degrees and credentials in psychological counseling, hypnosis, dream analysis, or business. A life/ personal coach may be viewed by regulators as akin to psychotherapy, which could prove problematic because life/ personal coaches are not viewed by regulators in the state in which they operate as providing therapy, which in most states requires licensure (Sherman, 2014).

While empirical studies about coaching continue, literature related to life/personal coaching remains limited. However, Sparrow (2007) conducted a study of life coaching in the workplace by exploring coaching outcomes across small- and medium-sized organizations. Sparrow indicated that life/personal coaching is less understood than performance-based coaching. Further, while the holistic nature of life/personal coaching may have a role in the workplace, questions remain on whether life /personal coaching represents a more effective helping paradigm or if coaching is best done as a part of a performance-based coaching model.

Health/Wellness Coaching

With rising health care costs, a health/wellness coach is emerging as a viable option for individuals who are interested in achieving a higher standard of health and wellness. Health/ wellness coaches operate within the traditional framework of establishing a helping relationship by promoting partnership and teamwork with a client (Robertson, 2014). However, health/wellness coaches are not to be confused with personal trainers or yoga instructors.

Consistent with the coaching tradition and its humanistic psychology roots, health/wellness coaches do not fix their clients; rather, they seek to empower their clients

with support and guidance that allows them to reach their mutually agreed upon objectives (Brantley, 2013). Brantley (2013) described a holistic approach that embodies six dimensions of health and wellness that include an individual's (a) physical, (b) intellectual, (c) emotional, (d) spiritual, (e) social, and (f) occupational health. A component of coaching involves the participation in methods of inquiry that allows the coach to engage in discourse throughout the coaching session.

In health/wellness coaching, there is an opportunity to conduct what has been characterized as motivational interviewing (MI) to encourage behavioral change. MI is best known for its applications in the realm of substance abuse (Martins & McNeil, 2009). Health/wellness coaches, who are primarily those who already work in health care-related professions, are most likely to have the credentials to work with a client across most all of the aforementioned dimensions; however, Well Coach, the only health/wellness coaching certification endorsed by the American College of Sports Medicine, also offers a certification program for those who have a desire to become a health/wellness coach.

However, binary opposite research, which is defined as research concerned with contrasting and comparing a pair of related items that are opposite in meaning (Marques Sampaio, 2009), is also limited in literature concerning coaching and as such opens the possibility of exploring various groups, such as groups identified by gender or age who have experienced executive coaching either face-to-face or through an opposite modality.

Definitions

Executive

Kilburg (2000), and others such as the Executive Coaching Forum (2004), refer to an

executive as persons who are at the top and upper level of leadership positions or who

occupy roles of authority in their organization and lead others who are managers of teams.

They are also described as individuals who have the potential of making a significant

contribution to the mission and purpose of the organization (Executive Coaching Forum,

2004; Kilburg, 2000). While these definitions imply that the word executive applies only to

business or industry it is important to add that executive coaching is focused on the *executive*

behaviors that encompass leadership, decision-making, cooperation, collaboration, and an

individual's capability to accept personal and professional responsibility for an individual or

organizational task.

Coaching/ Executive Coaching

Not unlike the term executive, there is also not a singularly recognized description of

coaching that is accepted by either researchers or practitioners with respect to defining either

coaching or specifically executive coaching. Passmore et al. (2013) suggested that this lack

of congruence reflects the immaturity of the profession that remains in its infancy, despite the

fact that over the last 2 decades, there has been an increase in the amount of literature written

about executive coaching (Garman, Whiston, & Zlatoper, 2000; Grant, 2011; Kampa-Kokesh

& Anderson, 2001). The number of coaching practitioners, according to the ICF (2012), has

grown 36.8% between 2007 and 2012.

However, prior to 2000, the lack of congruence related to coaching is reflective of its

immature state. The lack of a consistent definition of coaching has been an impediment to

the amount of empirical research that is available concerning coaching (Grant, 2011; Kampa-

Kokesh & Anderson, 2001). An added complexity is the often confusing comparisons with

mentoring, coaching psychology, and counseling, each of which are often described as

"helping relationships" that have similar characteristics and overlapping properties

(Passmore et al., 2013), making it difficult to distinguish one helping relationship (e.g.,

coaching) from another.

Peterson (2006) described the purpose of coaching as altering behavior, and coaching

a client should not be an attempt to "fix" the client, but to help them. Proponents of the

behaviorist approach to coaching posit that changes in people's behavior may also alter their

thinking (Wildflower & Brennan, 2011). Peterson also pointed out that a coaching

engagement should center on an important question to the individual being coached (i.e.,

"What are you going to do differently?" p. 51). Further, Peterson and Hicks (1996)

suggested that coaching "is the process of equipping people with the tools, knowledge, and

opportunities they need to develop themselves and become more effective" (p. 14). Coaches

help their clients develop frameworks that lead them to their own solutions.

> The ICF, the largest association of coaches globally, indicated that

> Coaching is partnering with individuals in a thought-provoking and creative process that inspires them to maximize their personal and professional potential. Professional coaches provide an ongoing partnership designed to help clients produce fulfilling results in their personal and professional lives. Coaches help people improve their performance and enhance the quality of their lives. Coaches are trained to listen, to observe and to customize their approach to individual needs. The coach's job is to provide support to enhance the skills, resources, and creativity that the client already has. (p. 1)

Coaching psychology is a derivative method of coaching practice that has gained

popularity in the United Kingdom, Australia, and Europe. Its practitioners indicate that the

coaching psychology approach is markedly different than the more widely known practice of

coaching because its practitioners are psychologically trained (Passmore et al., 2013). Grant

and Palmer (2002) defined coaching psychology as "Coaching psychology is for enhancing performance in work and personal life domains with normal, non-clinical populations, underpinned by models of coaching grounded in established therapeutic approaches" (p. 4).

There remains debate about the phrase used in coaching psychology's definitions of *normal and nonclinical populations*, implying that there is a universal definition of normal and nonclinical or, as some described "mentally healthy," and, as such, is considered impractical and unethical (Cox, Bachkirova, & Clutterbuck, 2014). Whitmore (1992) suggested that coaching "is the unlocking of people's potential to maximize their own performance. It is helping them more than teaching them" (p. 10), while Gallwey (1974) claimed that the self is the key ingredient to reaching an individual's potential, and the real opponent is more in the mind of the individual.

Douglas and Morley (2000) posited a broader more interpretative approach to coaching and executive coaching by offering a compilation of ideological definitions of several scholars and practitioners by writing: Executive coaching is the process of equipping people with the tools, knowledge, and opportunities they need to develop themselves and become more effective (Peterson & Hicks, 1996).

Executive coaching involves teaching skills in the context of a personal relationship with the learner and providing feedback on the executive's interpersonal relationships and skills (Sperry, 1993). Coaching is an ongoing series of activities tailored to the individual's issues or problem and is designed by the coach to assist the executive in maintaining a consistent, confident focus as he or she tunes strengths and manages shortcomings (Tobias, 1990).

Kilburg's (2000) approach to defining coaching and executive coaching has been widely cited (Dagley, 2007; Graham, 2012; Paige, 2002; Passmore et al., 2013). Kilburg characterized executive coaching as

> A helping relationship formed between a client who has managerial authority and responsibility in an organization and a consultant who uses a wide variety of behavioral techniques and methods to help the client achieve a mutually identified set of goals to improve his or her professional performance and personal satisfaction and, consequently, to improve the effectiveness of the client's organization within a formally defined coaching agreement. (p. 67)

Stern (2004) further offered, "Executive coaching is an experiential, individualized, leadership development process that builds a leader's capability to achieve long-term and short-term goals. It is conducted through one-to-one interactions driven by data and multiple perspectives, and based on mutual trust and respect" (p. 154).

While both Kilburg (2000) and Stern (2004) provided a definitional structure, Peltier (2010) presented a perspective on executive coaching that more closely resembles this study's objectives and the survey instrument that has been designed to improve the likelihood of addressing the study's central research question. Peltier provided a directional marker of executive coaching that links the theoretical platforms of psychology and the practice of individual and organizational executive coaching:

> Psychological skills and methods are employed in a one-on-one relationship to help someone become a more effective manager or leader. These skills are typically applied to present-moment work-related issue (rather than general problems or psychopathology) in a way that enables the client to incorporate them into his or her permanent management or leadership repertoire. (p.xxxi)

> However, while Peltier's and Stern's description is accurate, a combined definition that values the use of psychological skill and methods but includes the more humanistic view is more inclusive. Cox, Bachkirova, and Clutterbuck's (2014) defined coaching as a human

development process that involves a structured, focused interaction and use of appropriate tools and techniques to promote desirable and sustainable change for the benefit of the client and other stakeholders.

While it is important to understand the commonalities of each of the definitions that permeate literature about the coaching phenomenon, the primary focus of this study is on executive coaching and, therefore, the intent is to first examine a number of descriptors within a variety of definitions that best fit the interest of the study. Defining coaching remains complex; however, coaching's epistemology is rooted in humanistic psychology, behavioral, and cognitive theory, each of which are foundational to the genre of executive coaching.

The Practice of Executive Coaching

Approximately $2 billion is spent on business and executive coaching services each year, with about 50% of this amount dedicated to executive and business coaching (Gold, 2012). However, executive coaching participants are often senior managers, business executives, or leaders of large or small organizations. Therefore, along with being high-results- and goal-oriented, an executive's confidence in procuring coaching is predicated in large measure on the efficacy evidence of success and value. However, because there is a lack of systemic empirical research on coaching outcomes (Theeboom et al., 2014), as indicated in Figure 1 (Grant, 2011), the industry is still not achieving its potential.

Types of Outcome Study 1980- 1st Jan 2011 (N = 234)
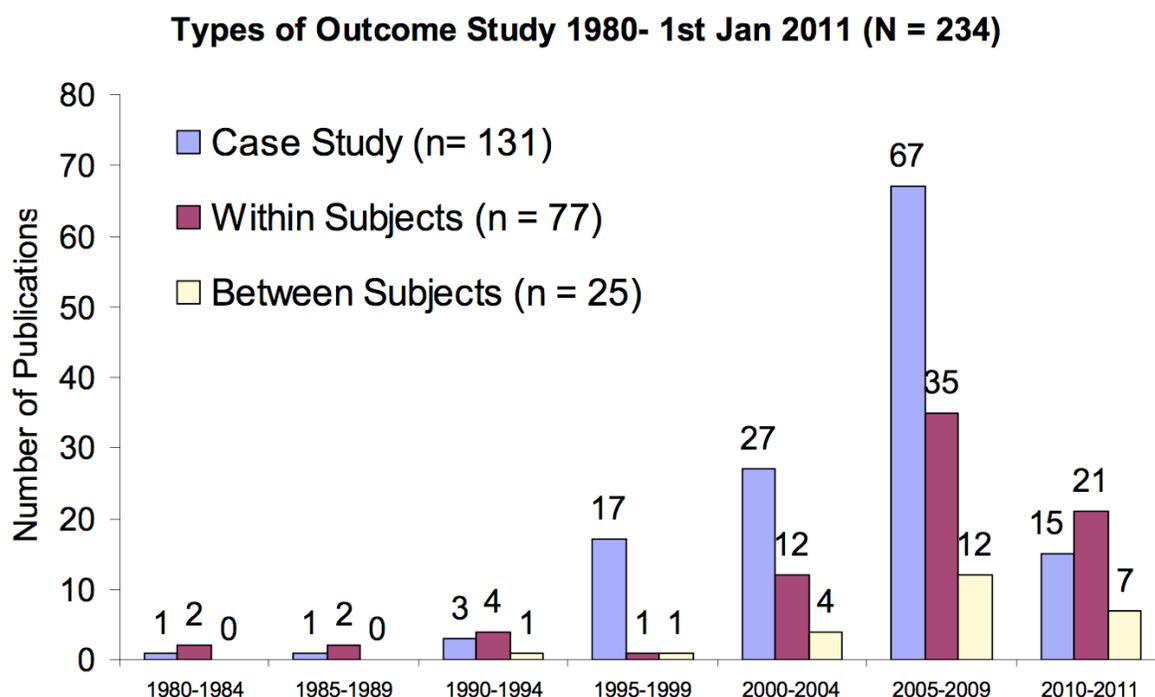
Figure 1. Research on coaching outcomes. Adapted from "Workplace, Executive and Life Coaching: An Annotated Bibliography from the Behavioral Science and Business Literature," by A.M. Grant, 2011. Copyright by Coaching Psychology, University of Sidney Australia.

This may explain why executive coaching is viewed as an emerging discipline: It is practiced by many, but is not universally recognized as a profession (Kampa-Kokesh & Anderson, 2001). Additionally, a large number of coaching practitioners often do not rely on empirical research as the basis for guiding their coaching practice. The result is that the practice of coaching, and its various approaches, are both inadequately defined and poorly regulated (Kampa-KoKesh & Anderson, 2001).

Kampa-Kokesh and Anderson (2001) examined executive coaching and indicated that studies on this topic have included primarily three areas: psychological (e.g., Brotman, Liberi, & Wasylshyn, 1998; Diedrich, 1996), training and development (e.g., Filipczakon, 1998; Koonce, 1994; Thach & Heinselman, 1999), and management (Darling, 1994; Dutton,

1997; Peterson & Hicks, 1999). However, some scholars have analyzed other areas, such as coaching efficacy (e.g., Coutou & Kauffman, 2009; Zaccaro et al., 2011), where the design is related to actual case studies and intended outcomes, along with virtual coaching (Passmore et al., 2013), which refers to a coaching engagement that is done with participants who are not located in the same physical space, aided by mediated communication tools such as e-mail, mobile/ smartphone, telephone, and texting (Bowles & Picano, 2006; Passmore et al., 2013; Zaccaro et al., 2011). Coaching is also often described as a subdiscipline of consulting, referred to as consulting psychology (Kilburg & Diedrich, 2013).

However, despite the plethora of books and articles written about coaching, the advancement of the profession will be stunted as long as there remains a limited amount of empirical research related to coaching in general and executive coaching specifically. In addition, few scholars have examined executive coaching in a technology-based, mediated communication platform (Berry, 2005; Bowles & Picano, 2006; Charbonneau, 2002; Frazee, 2008; Ghods, 2009; Wang, 2008; Wilson & Hannum, 2006; Young & Dixon, 1996).

Another challenge for executive coaching is the dichotomy that arises when coaching and mentoring are discussed as equal, rather than as parallel kinds of activities (Peterson, 2006). O'Connor and Lages (2007) suggested that coaches are not mentors, but that many discuss them as if they were interchangeable. Mentors are those who are experienced in a particular industry or profession and offer answers, advice, and counsel to people who work in their specific area. Mentors in other situations may be peers, mature adults, or friends who are considered knowledgeable or experienced in social relationships (O'Connor & Lages, 2007). While coaching's origins are rooted in humanistic and positive psychology, it is

important to describe what coaching is not – that is, "not mentoring and definitely not therapy or counseling" (Wildflower & Brennan, 2011, p. 1). There are distinctive characteristics that are unique to the coaching profession, such as formal training and certification, industry experience, and professional degrees that could include graduate and postgraduate study (Wildflower & Brennan, 2011). Those who have a desire to describe themselves as coaches can do so without any training, certification, or academic credentials. The services of a professional coach are often contracted and paid for by a client, as opposed to mentoring, which is most often voluntary. Coaching could occur in a mentoring situation, whereas, given the nature of mentoring, the opposite is less likely.

Executive Coaching Face-to-Face

Executive coaching face-to-face takes place when the coaching interaction is attended by both the client and the coach in-person (e.g., physical presence), or where the face-to-face interpersonal communication such as Face-time, Skype, Web-ex, Go-to Meeting, or videoconferencing is used.

Executive Coaching Using Technology-Based Mediated Communication

Executive coaching using technology-based mediated communication is taking place when both the coach and client are engaged using e-mail, instant messaging (IM), mobile/smartphone telephone, tablet, or texting.

While the primary task of this study is to understand how a client experiences executive coaching when using both the face-face and mediated communication and how thinking and behaviors change or remain the same, the competencies of the coach, and the tools and skills that are deployed to influence the client's thinking and behavior, are central

to further understanding of the practice of coaching. Moreover, despite the various characterizations of the coaching phenomenon, they collectively provide the foundation for psychologists and media psychologists to search for insight and relevancy in this interconnected world about how best to understand the intersection between technology-based, mediated communication and psychology in the context of executive coaching.

While media is pervasive in most people's daily lives, it is often overlooked in much of the psychological research (Okie et al., 2014). Between 1998-2002, in a content analysis of four peer-reviewed journals in social and developmental psychology, Roskos-Ewoldsen (2004) revealed that less than 1.5% of the published articles were media-related. Given the meager empirical research between mediated communication and psychology, it seemed logical to investigate the convergence of psychological theories (e.g., media psychology, and computer-mediated communications systems theories) in order to provide insight about how best to explain the differences in executive coaching when a client is using the traditional face-to-face model or the socially connected phenomenon of technology-based mediated communication (Walther, 2011).

In the final analysis of the coaching modality, each description of the coaching phenomenon implies that the scope of the coach/client relationship, whether individual or organizational, rests on their mutual interest and the client's desire and willingness to take actions that are intended to improve his or her personal and or professional performance development outcomes (Grant, 2011).

Coaching Competencies

Competence implies that an individual possesses the appropriate skill and ability in a particular area to complete the required task in an effective and or efficient manner. Because of the immature state of coaching as a professional practice and its dearth of empirical evidence-based literature (Blumberg, 2014; Kampa-Kokesh & Anderson 2001) in certain areas such as coaching outcomes (Grant, 2011), there remains debate among practitioners and scholars concerning the one definition of coaching.

The lack of consensus on defining coaching has also been linked to coaching practitioners, scholars, and researchers who are unable to determine the necessary coaching competencies that are proven commodities when measuring a coach's effectiveness. Even the various coaching credentialing and certification organizations such as ICF and International Coach Federation, Graduate School Alliance For Executive Coaching (GSAEC), while sharing some commonalities within their respective coaching competencies models, struggle to define coaching.

In a review of studies on coaching competencies, Blumberg (2014) found that while several attempts by authors, scholars, and experts have been made to address the lack of consensus on coaching competence, of the 23 studies, few of them were based on empirical evidence. Those empirical studies that have been conducted did not involve the study of objective expert coaches or use Brannick and Levine's (2006) competency model, which suggested that there are four categories of job requirements: (a) knowledge, (b) abilities, (c) skills, and (d) other characteristics often referred to as KASO. Until such time that scholars, expert practitioners, and coach training professionals engage in designing, implementing, and

testing a competency model that gains wider consensus in both use and application, it will continue to be difficult to advance the practice of professional coaching (Blumberg, 2014).

Theoretical Models

Media Psychology

Media psychology is defined as the scientific study of human behavior, thoughts, and feelings experienced in the context of media use and creation (Dill & Nathan, 2013). Media psychology informs not only the overall purpose of this study, but links historical and emerging psychological models with communications theory and practice, as well as provides a path towards understanding influencers of behavior and relationships between an executive coaching client, the medium, and modality preference.

Dill and Nathan (2013) wrote, "Psychology and communication are two fields that are most foundational to the emerging field of media psychology" (p. 6). Further, the authors suggested that communications and psychology often draw upon literature that is specific to their respective disciplines, even when examining the same phenomenon; however, in this study, I endeavor to examine what knowledge can be gained from both bodies of literature when I examine how communication and psychological theories converge and connect to understand what influences the client's modality choice and their experience in an executive coaching environment.

Uses and Gratification Theory

UGT has traditionally been defined as the search for understanding why and how individuals seek and/or adopt certain media in order to satisfy specific needs (Papacharissi & Rubin, 2000; Ruggiero, 2000). In this study, I will use the UGT to focus on what media does

to an individual. I will then offer, in contrast, UCT theory to examine media use and gratification to better understand what individuals do with media (West & Turner, 2007), specifically in an executive environment.

Ruggiero (2000) contended that UGT is not as rigorous as other social science theories by asserting that the emergence of CMC offers scholars an opportunity to consider UGT to explore more contemporary media concepts, such as interactivity, demassification, hypertextuality, and asynchroneity as a means of understanding mediated communication more holistically. While UGT was originally concerned with communication on a mass media scale (West & Turner, 2007), modern theorists have been developing applicative theories that are predictive for motivation of use (Leung & Wei, 2000). Researchers have begun to focus their attention on new technologies, such as mobile communication.

The UGT theory is differentiated from other media consumption theories, such as (a) mass society theory, which suggests that people are manipulated by media and are helpless victims of mass media or propaganda produced by large media companies and (b) individual differences perspectives, which assumes that intelligence and self-esteem are the key drivers of media selection because the individual has the power to discern the media they consume and, therefore, makes a conscious choice about which media they choose to satisfy their need (West & Turner, 2007).

Channel Expansion Theory

Channel expansion theory (CET) is used to explain experiential factors and use of a medium to examine how a client's knowledge-building (e.g., the features and capabilities of the medium) of media use experience, and perception of the medium, can be influenced by

multiple factors including (a) channel, (b) topic, (c) message partner/ coach, (d) and organizational context (Carson & Zmud, 1999; Timmerman & Madhavapeddi, 2008).

According to CET, media richness is dictated more by media use and experience, thus leading to both media selection and frequency of use, whereas media richness theory (MRT) indicates that media richness travels along a continuum: When more certain properties of the medium are available (e.g., cue systems, immediacy of feedback, etc.), the richer the media, which in turn determines an individual's perception of the medium and selection (Walther, 2011).

In an executive coaching context, CET allows for a more flexible application of media richness, particularly as it relates to media selection and frequency of use. Despite the criticism of the CET's authors because their theoretical construct involved experimentation with a single medium e-mail, D'Urso and Rains (2008) pointed out that new mediums, such as IM and other forms of technology-based mediated communication, have increased the relevance of experiential use and application as a means of determining media selection and frequency of use (Daft & Lengal, 1986).

D'Urso and Rains conducted an experiment to test CET in the context of new and traditional media by soliciting 339 respondents (*N*=339) to participate in a stratified random questionnaire that identified usage and interaction with e-mail, IM, face-to-face, and telephone at work while also being asked to complete measures of perceived social influence and media richness. D'Urso and Rains concluded that the CET can be applied to new forms of technology-based mediated communication; however, more studies are needed to improve

the understanding of how the human element effects the selection and use of these mediums of communication.

Computer-Mediated-Communication Systems Theories

Computer-mediated communication (CMC) has become integral in the manner in which society interacts and is defined as any communication that facilitates communication through the use of multiple electronic devices (McQuail, 2005). Almost all CMCs technologies and channels (e.g., computers, tablets, mobile/telephones, twitter, e-mail) use the Internet to facilitate human interaction and social relationships. These technology-based communication mediums have altered the interpretation of messages that are sent and received between individuals and groups of people (Walther, 2011). However, how best to understand the features, benefits, and implications of CMC systems is a topic that continues to be debated among scholars (AmichaiHamburger, 2003; Baym, 2010; Joinson, McKenna, Postmes, & Reips, 2007). Much of the discourse around CMC systems is centered not in just the theoretical ideologies that explain their existence, but also the human adaptive behavior that chooses, responds to, and engages with these new technology-based forms of communication.

One way to classify types of CMCs is based on whether the communication is synchronous or asynchronous. Synchronous communication occurs when members of the communication interaction are able to interact in real time and each participant is simultaneously a sender and receiver, such as what happens when people speak by telephone (Konijn, Utz, Tanis, & Barnes, 2008).

Asynchronous communication occurs when the communication interaction includes

delays and each participant must take turns being the sender and receiver, which generally

occurs when a person sends or receives e-mail (Konijn et al., 2008). However, for the

purposes of this study, rather than define whether the modality is synchronous or

asynchronous, my focus is on the use, interaction, and nuances of CMC systems when

engaged in executive coaching either in virtual or physical face-to face environments versus

executive coaching conducted in environments facilitated by mediated communication

modalities. Therefore, the research interest of this study was primarily focused on exploring

the experiential nature of executive coaching, rather than the synchronicity of the modality

used.

Social Presence Theory

Coaching is rooted in positive and humanistic psychology that was shaped by

scholars such as Rodgers and Perls (Wildflower & Brennan, 2011). However, executive

coaching is nuanced and, in order to answer the research questions more fully, it is important

to adopt a holistic view of both psychology and communication theory. This approach

should be adopted because psychological, cognitive, and behavioral theories are linked to the

concept of social presence and interpersonal communication theory. Technology-based

mediated communication or face-to-face communication in the context of executive coaching

is not superior or inferior to one another; rather, it is important to understand the nuanced

differences of each as experienced by clients. A more thorough understanding of the social

presence theory offers a perspective on what technology-based media does not offer as a

counterpoint to the benefits of face-to-face engagement.

Social presence theory is constructed on the basis of a one-dimensional continuum,

where the degree of awareness and interaction between individuals becomes the

measurement of social presence (Sallnäs, Rassmus-Grohn, & Sjostrom, 2000). Social

presence is most effective when it has met the necessary level of interpersonal interaction

required for a given task. On a continuum, face-to-face is considered to have the highest

social presence, with written and text communication having the least (Short, Williams, &

Christie, 1976).

Proponents of social presence theory argue that various form of communication differ

in their ability to convey nonverbal cues (Short et al., 1976). The less the medium can offer

detection and meaning to the interaction between individuals, the less effective it is. The

effectiveness is linked to what Culnan and Markus (1987) identified as *cues filtered out*,

which not only accounts for the social presence theory, but also shares other theories where

the benefits of nonverbal cues are included (Table 1).

Table 1

Benefits of Nonverbal Cues

Social Presence	Non-verbal communication Proximity and orientation Physical appearance	Person perception Intimacy/ immediacy Interpersonal relations
Reduced Social Cues Approach	Non-verbal communication Visual contact Status cues Position cues	Normative behavior Social influence Person awareness
Social Identity Model of Deindividuation Effects (SIDE)	Individuating cues Social categorizing cues	Social influence

Note. Adapted from "Two Faces of Anonymity: Paradoxical Cues to Identity in CMC," by M. Tanis, and T. Postmes, 2007, *Computers in Human Behavior, 23,* p. 955-970.

The Theory of Electronic Propinquity

The theory of electronic propinquity (TEP) is concerned with the psychological closeness that can be experienced between the sender (e.g., coach) and receiver (e.g., client) when using technology-based mediated communication and its relationship to the psychological closeness felt during interpersonal communication, such as face-to face (e.g., experiencing coaching when the client and coach are not meeting face-to-face).

Korzeny (1978) postulated that individuals who communicate using electronic media could experience a similar sense of closeness to those who are in physical proximity of their communication partner. Korzeny also observed that a consequence of the accelerated use of mediated-communication technologies was its impact on the meaning of proximity or "nearness in place." Proximity and propinquity could be referred to as synonymous terms (Korzeny, 1978).

Korzeny (1978) suggested that a range of factors impact propinquity, including media bandwidth (capacity of the medium to convey multiple cue systems), communication skills (both the sender and receiver), information complexity (task difficulty in context), feedback (e.g., the immediacy of feedback), and media selection (modality choice). Walther and Bazarova (2008) conducted an experiment to test how the presence of alternate forms of communication media impact an individual's feeling of "nearness." Walther and Bazarova concluded that the TEP framework is applicable to CMC and certain factors, such as communication skills and increased propinquity; however, task difficulty reduced it. Factors such as communication skills are important in improving the sense of nearness when using mediated communication.

The idea of *nearness,* which is foundational to the theory of electronic propinquity (TEP), is relevant in the context of executive coaching in that the *nearness* feeling may also be a client's willingness to self-disclose information about him/herself or their respective situation. While, this study does not address this directly, researchers may wish to explore this hypothesis in future research. However, I will explore the relationship between modality choice and a client's presence or nearness and how clients' feelings of nearness impact their coaching experience.

Social Penetration Theory

According to social penetration theory, an individual will assess the cost/ benefit relationship satisfaction and dissatisfaction as a result of his or her interaction with others (Tang & Wang, 2012). Mutual disclosure between the coach and client may be considered a benefit, while the cost could include emotional risk due to increased vulnerability. An important element of an effective relationship between a coach and his or her client often centers on a client's willingness to self-disclose information about him/herself.

Tang and Wang (2012) conducted a multivariate experimental design analysis to test the level of self-disclosure of bloggers to their target audiences (on-line, friends, parents, and best friends) on topics such as attitude, money, feelings, interests, and experience, with the experiment design while also addressing width and depth of disclosure. Tang and Wang found that the depth of self-disclosure of bloggers was greater among their (a) best friends, (b) parents, and (c) on-line friends, with their depth of expression greater on the topics of feelings, interest, and work versus other topics.

Tang and Wang found greater differences in depth of self-disclosure with best friends rather than parents and on-line audiences. Comparatively, while it is not likely a best friend could be compared to a coach, the coach/ client relationship does engender certain elements that yield higher degrees of self-disclosure.

CHAPTER THREE: OVERVIEW OF METHODOLOGICAL ANALYSIS

The intent of this study was to explore patterns in the executive coaching experience of clients using both face-to-face and technology-based mediated-communication methods. In this chapter, I describe information about the participants, measures used to address the research questions, and the procedures used for data analysis. A 24-item survey instrument was used to gather information about respondents' face-to-face and technology-based mediated executive coaching experiences and appears in the appendix. Data were collected through Qualtrics online survey software, recorded into an Excel file, then imported and analyzed using IBM SPSS version 21.0.

Participants

Qualified participants were adults who had received executive coaching within the past 4 years. Participants must have had coaching sessions delivered by both face-to-face methods (i.e., in person, Skype, WebEx, GoToMeeting, FaceTime, Video Conferencing) and mediated communication methods (i.e., e-mail, IM, mobile/telephone, SMS, tablet, telephone, and texting). Participants were recruited from the membership lists of professional coaching associations and from several certified coaches.

Through written requests, permission was obtained to solicit the memberships of professional organizations that, in some cases, required approval from their leadership and/or board. Permission was sought from several broad-based, multicultural, multigender, executive-level membership organizations including the Executive Leadership Council, Catalyst, HACR, the CEO Council, Nehemiah Enterprise Coaching, HOPE 360 Inc., International Coaching Federation, and various other coaching organizations. For the

purposes of this study, the inclusion criteria of the respondents were limited to individuals

who (a) were 18 years of age and over, (b) had received coaching services within the past 4

years, and (c) had experienced both face-to-face and technology-based mediated coaching.

Measures

The use of a self-report survey is a simple, quick, and effective means of gathering

information on a specific topic (Creswell, 2009). The survey instrument administered in this

study included modified questions from a scale developed by Rosen, Whaling, Carrier,

Cheener, and Rokkum (2013). The survey instrument has three distinct parts. Part I begins

(Q1) with a question on coaching modality preference followed by (Q2 to Q5) demographic

questions. Table 1 lists the survey questions in Part I.

Table 1

Part I Survey Questions

Q1	Which modality do you prefer during executive coaching sessions?
Q2	What is your gender?
Q3	What is your age? (in years)
Q4	Which of the following best describes your ethnicity?
Q5	Where do you currently live?

Part II consists of three questions about the frequency of executive coaching received using

certain modalities (Q6 to Q8) and four questions about the frequency of general technology

use (Q9 to Q12). A 7-point response scale was used, ranging from *Never* (1) to *Daily or*

Several Times a Day (7), such that a higher score indicated a higher frequency or a higher

level of use of technology. Four questions (Q13 to Q16) asked the respondents to rate their

attitudes concerning the use of technology, using a 5-point scale: *Strongly agree* (5), *Agree*

(4), *Neither agree nor disagree* (3), *Disagree* (2), *Strongly disagree* (1). These items were

coded so that 5 indicated the highest level of agreement, and 1 indicated the lowest level of

agreement. Table 2 shows Part II questions.

Table 2

Part II Questions

Q6	. Approximately how often do you interact with your coach using technology-based mediated communication methods such as e-mail, IM, mobile/smartphone, telephone, tablet, or text messaging?
Q7	Please indicate how often you read, send, and receive emails to or from your executive coach.
Q8	Approximately how often do you interact with your executive coach face-to-face including in person or using communication tools such as FaceTime, Skype, WebEx, GoToMeeting, and other video-conferencing methods?
Q9	Please indicate how often you check your e-mail.
Q10	Please indicate how often you use technology-based, mediated communication tools such as mobile/smartphone, telephone, e-mail, SMS, IM, tablet, or text messaging.
Q11	Please indicate how often you make and receive mobile phone calls.
Q12	Approximately how often do you read e-mail on your mobile phone?
Q13	Rate your agreement with this statement: Technology provides solutions to many of our problems.
Q14	Rate your agreement with this statement: The use of technology makes me feel more isolated.
Q15	Rate your agreement with this statement: I think it is important to keep up with the latest trends in technology.
Q16	Rate your agreement with this statement: The use of technology wastes too much time.

Questions 11-16 were selected from a 60-item Media and Technology Usage and

Attitudes Scale (MTUAS) developed by Rosen et al. (2013). These questions were selected

from four MTUAS subscales which were operationalized by the scale's developers by

averaging specified clusters of items scores. The reliability and validity of the four subscales

were tested by Rosen et al. (2013) using a sample of 942 participants in Los Angeles, CA.

The four subscales exhibited good internal consistency reliability (Cronbach's alpha $\geq$ .8) as

shown in Table 3. The validity of the four subscales was established by demonstrating that

they correlated strongly with the usage subscales (Smartphone Usage, General Social Media Usage, Internet Searching, E-Mailing, Media Sharing, Text Messaging, Video Gaming, Facebook Friendships, Phone Calling, TV Viewing), as well as responses to questions concerning daily media usage hours, technology related anxiety, and Internet addiction.

The items chosen from the Rosen et al. (2013) questionnaire were selected due to three factors: (a) the subscale questions selected were those that were most relevant to answering the research questions, (b) there were no viable scales within psychological research that could appropriately address the central research questions, and (c) the Rosen et al. subscales were shown to be both valid and reliable. Table 3 describes the MTUAS subscales.

Table 3

MTUAS Scale

Subscale	Number of items	Cronbach's Alpha	*M*	*SD*	*Description*
Positive Attitudes Toward Technology	6	.87	3.66	0.87	Scale ranges from 1 to 5 with higher scores indicating more positive attitudes toward technology.
Dependence on Technology	3	.83	1.09	0.83	Scale ranges from 1 to 5 with higher scores indicating more technological anxiety and dependence.
Negative Attitudes Toward Technology	3	.80	0.92	0.80	Scale ranges from 1 to 5 with higher scores indicating more negative attitudes toward technology.
Preference for Task Switching	4	.85	0.92	0.85	Scores range from 1 to 5 with lower scores indicating increased preference for task switching.

Note. Adapted from *"The Media and Technology Usage and Attitude Scale"* by Rosen, Whaling, Carrier, Cheener, and Rokkum (2013).

Part III of the survey included eight questions (Q17-Q24) that were intended to

provide insight into how participants experienced (a) presence, (b) commitment, (c)

engagement, and (d) self-disclosure during face-to-face and technology-based mediated

executive coaching experiences. Each item was scored using a 6-point scale with

participants responding either *Highly* (6), *Moderately* (5), *Somewhat* (4), *Somewhat not* (3),

Moderately not (2), or *Not at all* (1). These items were coded so that 6 indicated the highest

level of engagement, commitment, presence, and self-disclosure, and 1 indicated the lowest

level. Table 4 shows the Part III questions.

Table 4

Part III Questions

Q17. How engaged are you with your executive coach during your coaching sessions when you are interacting using technology-based mediated communication?
Q18. How engaged are you with your executive coach during your coaching sessions when you are interacting with your coach face-to-face?
Q19. How committed are you to achieving the mutually agreed upon goals and the coaching process and outcomes during your coaching session when using technology-based mediated communication?
Q20. How committed are you to achieving the mutually agreed upon goals and the coaching process and outcomes during your coaching session when interacting with your executive coach face-to-face?
Q21. What is your sense of presence (the feeling of "being there") when interacting with your executive coach face-to-face?
Q22. What is your sense of presence (the feeling of "being there") when interacting with your executive coach using technology-based mediated communication?
Q23. How likely are you to disclose information about yourself when interacting with your executive coach face-to-face?
Q24. How likely are you to disclose information about yourself when interacting with your executive coach using technology-based mediated communication?

Data Analysis

The internal consistency reliability of the items comprising two variables (Greater use of Technology and Positive Attitudes about Technology) was measured using Cronbach's alpha. Adequate reliability was indicated if alpha $\geq$ .6 (Creswell, 2009). See the results chapter for the outcomes of the reliability analyses. Paired *t*-tests, assuming a within-subjects design with one group of clients, were used to address RQ1, RQ2, RQ3, and RQ4, using the variables listed in Table 5. Independent samples *t*-tests were used to address RQ5, RQ6, and RQ8, and Pearson's chi-square test for association among cross-tabulated frequencies was used to address RQ7, using the variables listed in Table 6. The sample size ($N = 108$) provided sufficient power to conduct these univariate tests. The measurement levels and the conceptual and operational definitions of the variables used in the data analysis are outlined in Table 5.

Table 5

Measurement Levels, Conceptual and Operational Definitions of Variables

Variable	Level	Conceptual Definition	Operational Definition
Preference for Face-to-face or Mediated coaching	Nominal	Coaching modality that the participant prefers to use	Q1 Mediated = 1 Face-to-face = 2
Engagement	Interval/Scale	Describes the client's level of active participation (e.g., listening, speaking) in coaching sessions	Q17 = Mediated Q18 = Face-to-face Minimum score = 1 Maximum score = 6
Commitment	Interval/Scale	Describes the client's willingness to collaborate with the coach on mutually agreed upon goals or objectives and embraces both the experiences and the outcomes of the coaching process	Q19 = Mediated Q20 = Face-to-face Minimum score = 1 Maximum score = 6
Presence	Interval/Scale	A client has a sense of "being there" during a coaching session	Q21 = Face-to-face Q22 = Mediated Minimum score = 1 Maximum score = 6
Self-disclosure	Interval/Scale	A determination by client as to whether, when, how or how much they reveal about their personal or professional life	Q23 = Face-to-face Q24 = Mediated Minimum score = 1 Maximum score = 6
Greater use of Technology	Interval/Scale	Measures the frequency of use of technology tools such as e-mail, IM, mobile/smartphone, and text messaging	Sum of scores for Q9-Q12 Minimum score = 4 Maximum score = 28 Higher score means greater use of technology
Positive Attitudes about Technology	Interval/Scale	Measures the client's attitudes toward technology	Sum of scores for Q13, Q14 (reverse scored), Q15, Q16 (reverse scored) Minimum score = 4 Maximum score = 20 Higher score means more positive attitudes
Gender	Nominal	Male or Female	Score for Q2 Male = 1 Female = 2
Age	Interval	Age in Years	Response to Q3

Table 6

Variables and Tests for RQ₁, RQ₂, RQ₃, and RQ₄

Research Question	IV	DV	DV Measure	Test
RQ₁: Will clients who receive both face-to-face and technology-mediated executive coaching experience significantly different levels of presence in each modality of coaching?	Two modalities of coaching, experienced by one group of clients	Presence in Face-to-face (Q21) Presence in Mediated (Q22)	Interval: Scaled score (1 to 6)	Paired *t*-test
RQ₂: Will clients who receive both face-to-face and technology-mediated executive coaching experience significantly different levels of self-disclosure in each modality of coaching?	Two modalities of coaching, experienced by one group of clients	Self- disclosure in Face-to-face (Q23) Self-disclosure in Mediated (Q24)	Interval: Scaled score (1 to 6)	Paired *t*-test
RQ₃: Will clients who receive both face-to-face and technology-mediated executive coaching experience significantly different levels of commitment in each modality of coaching?	Two modalities of coaching, experienced by one group of clients	Commitment in mediated (Q19) Commitment in face-to-face (Q20)	Interval: Scaled score (1 to 6)	Paired *t*-test
RQ₄: Will clients who receive both face-to-face and technology-mediated executive coaching experience significantly different levels of engagement in each modality of coaching?	Two modalities of coaching, experienced by one group of clients	Engagement in mediated (Q17) Engagement in face-to-face (Q18)	Interval: Scaled score (1 to 6)	Paired *t*-test

The prescribed significance level was $\alpha = .05$, implying that the *t*-test was significant if $p < .05$ for the one-tailed *t*-test statistic. The use of $\alpha = .05$ assumes that one test is performed on one set of data, at one time; however, because four t-tests were performed, there was an inflated probability of a Type I error (i.e., incorrectly declaring the test to be significant). A commonly used procedure when conducting multiple tests is the Bonferroni correction (Abdi, 2007). If k consecutive tests are performed, then the significance level is corrected to .05/k. Accordingly, the significance level applied for the four paired *t*-tests was not $\alpha = .05$, but must be reduced to $\alpha = .05/4 = .0125$.

A Type II error (i.e., incorrectly declaring the test statistic to be not significant) may occur using *t*-tests if the sample size is too small to provide sufficient statistical power. A power analysis was conducted to determine the minimum sample size for one-tailed paired *t*-tests using G*Power (Faul, Erdfelder, Lang, & Buchner, 2007); however, because the effect size was unknown, the results were speculative. To achieve a power of 0.8, with $\alpha = .05$, and a moderate effect size ($d = 0.5$), the sample size should be $N = 27$. If the effect size is lower ($d = 0.3$), then the sample size must be higher ($N = 71$). The sample size for this study was $N = 108$. Table 7 shows the variables and tests to address the research questions.

Table 7

Variables and Tests to Address RQ$_5$, RQ$_6$, RQ$_7$, and RQ$_8$

Research Question	IV	IV Measure	DV	DV Measure	Test
RQ$_5$: Is preferred modality of executive coaching related to attitudes about technology?	Positive Attitudes about Technology	Interval: Scaled score (Q13-Q16)	Preferred modality of Coaching	Nominal: Mediated = 1 Face-to-Face = 2	Independent Samples *t*-test
RQ$_6$: Is preferred modality of executive coaching related to experience with technology use?	Greater use of Technology	Interval: Scaled score (Q9-Q12)	Preferred modality of Coaching	Nominal: Mediated = 1 Face-to-Face = 2	Independent Samples *t*-test
RQ$_7$: Is preferred modality of executive coaching related to gender?	Gender	Nominal: (Q2) Male = 1 Female = 2	Preferred modality of Coaching	Nominal: Mediated = 1 Face-to-Face = 2	Pearson's Chi Square Test
RQ$_8$: Is preferred modality of executive coaching related to age?	Age	Interval: (Q3) Years	Preferred modality of Coaching	Nominal: Mediated = 1 Face-to-Face = 2	Independent Samples *t*-test

CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS

This chapter is presented in 10 sections. In the first section, I describe the characteristics of the participants. The next eight sections provide the statistical evidence to address the eight research questions listed in Tables 6 and 7. The final section is a summary.

Characteristics of the Participants

The total number of respondents was $N = 116$; however, in screening for missing values, I found that 8 (6.9%) of the respondents did not complete all 24 questions. Four respondents completed only four questions, two respondents completed only five questions, one respondent completed 12 questions, and one respondent completed 23 questions. These eight respondents were excluded because their missing values could bias the results. The total number of participants providing cleaned data for the statistical analysis was $N = 108$, giving a final response rate of 108/116 = 93.1%.

The demographic characteristics of the participants are outlined in Table 7. The sample was approximately equal in gender, represented by females *(n = 56, 52%)* and males *(n = 52, 48%)*. Participants ranged in age from 27 to 68 years, with an average age of 49.2 years (SD = 9.3). The majority of the participants ($n = 80$, 74.1%) were aged between 41 and 60 years. Six ethnic groups were represented, of which the most frequent were African American ($n = 59$, 54.6%) and European American ($n = 38$, 35.2%). The participants were located across all regions of the United States, with about half ($n = 51$, 47.2%) in the Southeast and about one quarter ($n = 25$, 23.1%) in the Northeast. A small proportion ($n = 11$, 10.2%) lived outside the United States, including Mexico, Greece, South Africa, Kenya, and Madagascar.

Table 8

Demographic Characteristics of Participants (N = 108)

Characteristic	Category	Frequency	Percent
Gender	Female	56	51.9%
	Male	52	48.1%
Age (Years)	≤ 30	3	2.8%
	31-40	16	14.8%
	41-50	38	35.2%
	51-60	42	38.9%
	> 60	9	8.3%
Ethnicity	African American	59	54.6%
	European American	38	35.2%
	Hispanic/ Latino	4	3.7%
	African Caribbean	4	3.7%
	Multi-ethnic/other	2	1.8%
	Asian	1	0.9%
Location	United States Southeast	51	47.2%
	U.S. Northeast	25	23.1%
	Outside USA	11	10.2%
	U.S. Midwest	10	9.3%
	US. Western	6	5.6%
	Outside Southwest U.S.	4	3.7%

RQ1 Presence

A paired *t*-test was conducted to address RQ_1, which inquired whether clients who

receive both face-to-face and technology-mediated executive coaching experience

significantly different levels of presence in each modality of coaching. The descriptive and

inferential statistics, including the mean (*M*), standard deviation (*SD*), mean difference (M_D),

test statistic (*t*), degrees of freedom (*df*), and two-tailed *p*-value are presented in Table 9. The

mean rating for presence (on a scale from 1 to 6, where 6 = *highest level of presence*) when

receiving face-to-face coaching was significantly greater than when receiving technology-based mediated coaching.

Table 9

Comparison of Presence Experienced in Two Modalities of Coaching

Modality	*M (SD)*	M_D	*t*	*df*	*p*
Face-to-face	5.93 (0.30)	1.02	11.42	107	< .001
Mediated communication	4.91 (0.90)				

RQ2 Self-Disclosure

A paired *t*-test was conducted to address RQ$_2$, which asked whether clients who receive both face-to-face and technology-mediated executive coaching experience significantly different levels of self-disclosure in each modality of coaching. The mean rating for self-disclosure (on a scale from 1 to 6, where 6 = *the highest level of self-disclosure*) when receiving face-to-face coaching was significantly greater than when receiving technology-mediated coaching.

Table 10

Comparison of Self-disclosure Experienced in Two Modalities of Coaching

Question	*M (SD)*	M_D	*t*	*df*	*p*
Face-to-face	5.56 (0.65)	1.58	14.80	107	< .001
Mediated communication	3.98 (1.01)				

RQ3 Commitment

A paired *t*-test was conducted to address RQ3, whether clients who receive both face-to-face and technology-mediated executive coaching experience significantly different levels of commitment in each modality of coaching. The descriptive and inferential statistics are

presented in Table 11. The mean rating for commitment (on a scale from 1 to 6, where 6 =

the highest level of commitment) when receiving face-to-face coaching was significantly

greater than when receiving technology-mediated coaching.

Table 11

Comparison of Commitment Experienced in Two Modalities of Coaching

Modality	*M (SD)*	M_D	*t*	*df*	*p*
Face-to-face	5.78 (0.46)	0.44	6.24	107	< .001
Mediated communication	5.33 (0.79)				

RQ4 Engagement

A paired *t*-test was conducted to address RQ4, whether clients who receive both face-

to-face and technology-mediated executive coaching experience significantly different levels

of engagement in each modality of coaching. The descriptive and inferential statistics are

presented in Table 12.

Table 12

Comparison of Engagement Experienced in Two Modalities of Coaching

Modality	*M (SD)*	M_D	*t*	*df*	*p*
Face-to-face	5.89 (0.34)	0.92	9.56	107	< .001
Mediated communication	4.97 (0.96)				

The mean rating for engagement (on a scale from 1 to 6, where 6 = *the highest level*

of engagement) when receiving face-to-face coaching was significantly greater than that

when receiving technology-mediated coaching.

RQ5 Positive Attitudes about Technology

An internal consistency reliability analysis was conducted on the scores for the four

items comprising the "positive attitudes about technology" variable. These items were

agreement ratings of the following statements: Technology provides solutions to many of our

problems (Q13); The use of technology makes me feel more isolated (Q14 reverse scored); I

think it is important to keep up with the latest trends in technology (Q15); and The use of

technology wastes too much time (Q16 reverse scored). Each item was scored from 1 to 5,

where 5 = *strongest level of agreement*. The internal consistency reliability of the scores for

the four items was adequate (Cronbach's alpha = .706). As Table 13 indicates, deleting an

item did not improve the value of Cronbach's alpha, so all four items were retained and

summed for the variable.

Table 13

Reliability Analysis for Positive Attitudes about Technology

Item	M	SD	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
Q13. Technology provides solutions to many of our problems	4.26	0.80	.667
Q14. The use of technology makes me feel more isolated (Reversed)	3.62	1.00	.594
Q15. I think it is important to keep up with the latest trends	4.27	0.68	.659
Q16. The use of technology wastes too much time (Reversed)	3.98	0.81	.641

Because the internal consistency reliability of the four items was adequate, it was

justified to sum the scores to operationalize the variable "positive attitudes about

technology." The composite scores were normally distributed (skewness = -0.39; M = 16.04;

Mdn = 16.00) and ranged from 10 to 20, where the highest scores indicated more positive

attitudes about technology. An independent samples t-test was conducted to address RQ$_5$,

which asked whether the preferred modality of executive coaching related to attitudes about

technology. The descriptive and inferential statistics are presented in Table 13. Equal

variances were assumed because Levene's statistic (F = 0.20, p = .658) was not significant.

Table 14

Comparison of Positive Attitudes about Technology by Preferred Modalities of Coaching

Preferred Modality	n	M	SD	df	M_D	t	p
Face-to-face	93	16.00	2.20	106	0.27	0.44	0.659
Technology-based mediated communication	15	16.27	1.94				

The preferred coaching modality of the majority of the participants (86.1%) was face-to-face, whereas relatively few (13.9%) preferred technology-based mediated

communication. The mean score for positive attitudes about technology for the participants

who preferred face-to-face coaching was similar to that of the participants who preferred

technology-based mediated coaching, resulting in a non-significant difference.

RQ6 Greater Use of Technology

Reliability analysis was conducted on the scores for the four items comprising the

"greater use of technology" variable. These items were: Please indicate how often you check

your e-mail (Q9); Please indicate how often you use technology-based mediated

communication tools, such as mobile/smartphone, telephone, e-mail, SMS, IM, tablet, or text

messaging (Q10); Please indicate how often you make and receive mobile phone calls (Q11);

and Approximately how often do you read e-mail on your mobile phone (Q12). Each item

was scored from 1 to 7, where 7 = *highest frequency of use (daily)*. The internal consistency

reliability of the scores for the four items was adequate (Cronbach's alpha = .612). As Table

15 indicates, deleting an item would not substantially improve the value of Cronbach's alpha,

so all items were retained and summed for the variable.

Because the internal consistency reliability of the four items was adequate, it was

justified to sum the scores to operationalize the variable greater use of technology. The

composite scores were not normally distributed (skewness = -3.37; *M* = 27.25; *Mdn* = 28.00)

and ranged from 17 to 28 where the highest scores indicated the greatest frequency of use of

technology. The scores were highly negatively skewed and truncated with a mode at 28

because the majority of the participants (73.1%) used e-mail and technology-based mediated

communication tools every day.

Table 15

Reliability Analysis for Greater Use of Technology

Item	*M*	*SD*	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
Q9. How often do you check your e-mail?	6.90	0.47	.594
Q10. How often do you use technology-based mediated communication tools such as mobile phones?	6.84	0.66	.411
Q11. How often do you make and receive mobile phone calls?	6.80	0.68	.527
Q12. How often do you read e-mail on your mobile phone?	6.73	0.80	.615

An independent samples *t*-test was conducted to address RQ$_6$, asking whether preferred modality of executive coaching is related to experience with technology use. Equal variances were assumed because Levene's statistic ($F = 3.92$, $p = .050$) was not significant. The results are presented in Table 16. The mean score for greater use of technology for the participants who preferred face-to-face coaching was similar to that for the participants who preferred technology-based mediated coaching resulting in a non-significant difference.

Table 16

Comparison of Greater Use of Technology by Preferred Modalities of Coaching

Preferred Modality	*n*	*M*	*SD*	*df*	*M$_D$*	*t*	*p*
Face-to-face	93	27.17	1.91	106	0.56	1.13	0.263
Mediated communication	15	27.73	0.59				

RQ7: Gender

Gender was cross-tabulated against preferred method of coaching, and a chi square test was conducted to determine if gender and preferred modality of coaching are significantly associated or dependent on each other. The cross-tabulation is presented in Table 17. The results of the chi-square test [χ^2 (1) = .015, p = .902] indicated that there was no statistically significant association between gender and preferred method of coaching.

Table 17

Cross-Tabulation of Preferred Modality of Coaching vs. Gender

Preferred Modality	Gender		Total
	Male	Female	
Technology-based mediated communication	7	8	15
Face-to-face	45	48	93
Total	52	56	108

RQ8 Age

An independent samples *t*-test was conducted to address RQ$_8$, asking whether preferred modality of executive coaching is related to age. Equal variances were assumed because Levene's statistic ($F = 0.153$, $p = .696$) was not significant. The results are presented in Table 18.

Table 18

Comparison of Age (Years) by Preferred Modalities of Coaching

Preferred Modality	*n*	*M*	*SD*	*df*	*M$_D$*	*T*	*p*
Face-to-face	93	49.91	9.15	106	5.18	1.13	0.044
Mediated communication	15	44.73	9.10				

The mean age (years) of the participants who preferred face-to-face coaching was greater than that of participants who preferred technology-based mediated coaching. This difference was below the conventional .05 significance level, but does not meet the stricter alpha level of .0125 set to reduce family-wise error.

Summary

A cross-sectional survey was conducted using a 24-item instrument to explore patterns in the coaching experience of clients using face-to-face and technology-mediated communication methods. The number of participants was 108. The sample group was approximately equally represented by males and females. The participants ranged in age from 27 to 68 years, with an average age of 49 years. Six ethnic groups were represented, of which the most frequent were African American and European American. About half of the participants were located in the Southeast United States. Univariate inferential tests were used to address eight research questions. The results are summarized in Table 19.

Results indicated that, among clients who use both F2F and mediated coaching modalities: (a) clients reported a greater ability to self-disclose and greater levels of presence, commitment, and engagement during F2F coaching, (b) technology use did not differ between clients who preferred F2F and those who preferred mediated coaching, and (c) there were no gender differences in coaching modality preference. However, there was a trend such that age seems to be related to coaching modality preference with younger clients showing preference for mediated coaching.

Table 19

Summary of Results

Research Question	Answer
RQ$_1$: Will clients who receive both face-to-face and technology-mediated executive coaching experience significantly different levels of presence in each modality of coaching?	Clients who received both face-to-face and technology-mediated executive coaching experienced significantly greater levels of presence in face-to-face coaching.
RQ$_2$: Will clients who receive both face-to-face and technology- based mediated executive coaching experience significantly different levels of self-disclosure in each modality of coaching?	Clients who received both face-to-face and technology-mediated executive coaching experienced significantly greater levels of self-disclosure in face-to-face coaching.
RQ$_3$: Will clients who receive both face-to-face and technology-based mediated executive coaching experience significantly different levels of commitment in each modality of coaching?	Clients who received both face-to-face and technology-mediated executive coaching experienced significantly greater levels of commitment in face-to-face coaching.
RQ$_4$: Will clients who receive both face-to-face and technology-based mediated executive coaching experience significantly different levels of engagement in each modality of coaching?	Clients who received both face-to-face and technology-mediated executive coaching experienced significantly greater levels of engagement in face-to-face coaching.
RQ$_5$: Is preferred modality of executive coaching related to attitudes about technology?	The preferred modality of executive coaching was not significantly related to attitudes about technology.
RQ$_6$: Is preferred modality of executive coaching related to experience with technology use?	The preferred modality of executive coaching was not significantly related to experience with technology use.
RQ$_7$: Is preferred modality of executive coaching related to gender?	There was no statistically significant association between gender and preferred modality of coaching.
RQ$_8$: Is preferred modality of executive coaching related to age?	The preferred modality of executive coaching showed a trend towards significance as it relates to the age of the participants, with older participants preferring face-to-face coaching.

CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY, CONCLUSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In a fast-paced, high-tech world of information sharing and exchange, mediated communication has emerged as a viable alternative to face-to-face contact for engaging in conversation, discourse, and collaboration. Within both psychology and communications literature, there are widely held views about modality preference; however, the literature is generally void of studies or experiments on the influencers of modality preference and/or whether individuals can be present and engaged whether they are communicating face-to-face or using technology-based mediated communication (Lawrie, 2008; Otte et al., 2014). This study has centered on understanding a client's experience and the modality the client uses to engage his or her coach.

Of particular interest to a media psychologist is the opportunity to study the intersection between mediated communication and human behavior. This study contained a broad examination of the literature concerning psychological and communication theories in order to provide insight into how best to explain the differences between socially connected, technology-based, mediated communications in executive coaching versus the face-to-face methods. In this study, I attempted to answer most of the aforementioned questions posed while providing clarity of purpose, theoretical constructs, and methods that will lead to a path to answering the central research questions.

Overview of the Conclusions

In reflecting upon both the central research question and the data analysis of the participant survey responses that followed, I reached six main conclusions: First, face-to-face executive coaching was reported as the preferred modality by a larger number of participants

($n = 93$) than the number who reported preferring mediated coaching ($n = 15$). Second, participants who selected face-to-face executive coaching as their preferred modality also experienced greater levels of presence, commitment, engagement, and self-disclosure than those participants who selected mediated forms of executive coaching. Third, the preferred coaching modality reported by participants was not related to their attitudes about technology. Fourth, the preferred coaching modality of the participants was not related to their use of technology. Fifth, there was no significant association between gender and the preferred modality of the survey participants. Sixth, the age of the participants was somewhat related to modality preference.

Conclusion 1: Face-to-Face Executive Coaching was the Preferred Modalit*y*

The majority of participants in the study (86%) reported that they preferred interacting with their executive coach face-to-face versus a small percentage (14%) who reported preferring to interact with their executive coach using technology-based mediated communication methods. It is not surprising that more participants reported preferring face-to-face coaching. Social presence theorists contend that the degree of awareness and interaction between individuals becomes the measurement of social presence (Sallnas et al., 2000), which raises the question of whether technology-based communication methods are as effective as face-to-face methods during an executive session. This question is addressed below.

Conclusion 2: Differences Exist Between Coaching Modalities

Across each of the measured variables, presence, self-disclosure, commitment, and engagement, differences were found in ratings of the executive coaching experience when

interacting face-to-face and when using technology-based mediated-communication methods. Executive coaching clients felt more of a sense of presence, or "being there," during face-to-face coaching. This finding supports Culnan and Markus' (1987) theory that suggests because *"cues are filtered out"* when using most forms of technology-based mediated-communication, face-to-face interaction results in a greater sense of presence. However, the theory of electronic propinquity (TEP) offers a different perspective on the findings related to presence.

TEP is concerned with the *psychological closeness* that can be experienced between the sender (e.g., coach) and receiver (e.g., client) when using technology-based mediated communication. Korzeny (1978) suggested that there are many factors that impact propinquity including the capacity to convey multiple cue systems (e.g., text, voice, photos) using certain mediums, the immediacy of feedback of the modality and media selection. Korzeny posited that individuals who communicate using electronic means could experience a similar sense of closeness or presence that resembles those who are in physical proximity (e.g., face-to-face). While this theory is not diametrically opposite of social presence theory, Korzeny postulated that "presence" or "nearness" can be felt without the "cues" that face-to-face provides. The results of this study related to the presence or nearness that directionally validates Korzeny's theory, in that participants did feel a sense of presence when they received executive coaching using mediated forms of communication; however, participants did indicate that it was still less than their experience when engaged in face-to-face coaching.

UGT scholars, such as Papacharissi and Rubin (2000) and Ruggiero posited that UGT is concerned with understanding why and how individuals seek and/or adopt certain

modalities in order to satisfy specific needs (e.g., engagement, commitment), meaning that the perception of the medium could be described as a motivating factor. Participants in this study indicated experiencing greater levels of both commitment and engagement when interacting with their executive coach face-to-face than when executive coaching occurred using technology-based mediated communication. While the participants did not claim perception to be a motive for selecting their preferred modality, the participants stated that the perception of mediated communication allows both commitment and engagement during executive coaching; however, it is less so when using a face-to-face modality.

Adherence to the rules of coaching engagement between coach and client limits the level of self-disclosure of the coach, particularly in the early stages of the coaching relationship. However, according to social penetration theory, an individual using technology- based mediated methods will often assess the cost/benefit relationship or satisfaction and dissatisfaction as a result of his or her interaction with others (Tang & Wang, 2012), and depending on certain factors, it would be normal for a client to disclose significant information about him or herself, regardless of the modality. Mutual disclosure between the executive coach and client is a benefit to the client and the coach, even though the cost could include emotional risk due to increased vulnerability. However, the cost/ benefit of self-disclosure is most often associated with trust, which Tang and Wang (2012) cited as an important factor that can influence the level of self-disclosure between an executive coach and his or her client. In this study, I found that, while the level of self-disclosure was evident in mediated environments, it was higher in a face-to-face modality. This however, may have less to do with the modality and more do with the level of trust

between coach and client, which I did not address in this study. In practice, executive coaches can benefit knowing that the modality in use is not an impediment to their client's willingness to self-disclose information that is important to helping relationship; however, they should also continue to recognize that when interacting with clients using technology-based mediated methods of communication, trust could play a more prominent role in motivating the client to self-disclose at an equal or greater level than he or she would when interacting using face-to-face methods of communication.

Conclusion 3: Modality Preference was Unrelated to Attitudes about Technology

The study design included questions regarding attitudes about technology to determine if a participant's attitude toward technology influenced his or her coaching modality preference. In this study, participants who preferred face-to-face or mediated executive coaching were not influenced by their attitudes toward technology. When juxtaposed against the CET, which is used to explain how a client's knowledge-building (e.g., features and capabilities) of a medium impact the use or experience of a given medium (Carson & Zamud, 1999; Timmerman & Madhavapeddi, 2008), the findings related to attitudes about technology were not surprising, primarily because the use of technology-based mediums such as mobile/ telephone use, e-mail, texting, and so on, are pervasive throughout society. While face-to-face coaching was the preferred method as reported by the participants in this study, technology-based mediated communication methods may influence the client's preference because of his or her attitude about technology. Executive coaches whose client's work schedules often preclude face-to-face meeting will become increasingly reliant on mediated methods because they are both comfortable with the technology and

because they are readily at their disposal. Therefore, in future studies, participants may respond differently when asked similar questions about how their knowledge and capability of medium influences their modality preference.

Conclusion 4: Modality Preference was Unrelated to General Use of Technology

The preferred coaching modality was unrelated to the participants' general use of technology. This finding could be considered predictable given the pervasive use of technology in most people's everyday lives and the use of e-mail, mobile/smartphones, telephone, and other technology-based tools in everyday life and in executive coaching. Executive coaches cannot assume that a client's frequent use of technology is an indicator of the client's preferred coaching modality. Coaches often discuss preferred and acceptable modalities of coaching with every client as a part of the early coaching.

Conclusion 5: Gender was Unrelated to Modality Preference

It was not surprising that gender was unrelated to coaching modality preference. I found that females are no more likely to prefer a particular modality than males. According to the International Coach Federation Global Coaching Study (ICF, 2012), 54% of coaching clients globally were female, while 46% were male. Further, 50% of coaches in North America reported interacting with their clients using mobile/ telephone (ICF, 2012), which is defined in this study as a mediated method of communication. However, because more females are involved in coaching than males, it may be difficult to determine if there is relationship between gender and preferred method of coaching. It is notable that the findings of the ICF study parallel recent research about gender behavior in online environments (Lesonsky, 2013), indicating that males and females are equally likely to engage in online

shopping, which could also suggest that modality preference is less likely to be gender-related.

Conclusion 6: Age is Related to Modality Preference

Although marginally significant based on a strict alpha level, I found that participants who preferred face-to-face coaching were significantly older than the participants who preferred technology-based mediated coaching. These results are similar to other research on technology-based usage. The Pew Research Internet Project (2008) indicated that 89% of people between the ages of 18-29 use the Internet to access and engage with social networking sites, while only 82% of those between the ages of 30-49 use the Internet to engage socially. Further, only 65% of those aged 50-64 use the Internet to access social networking platforms. The implications for executive coaching is that all trends point toward a younger workforce occupying leadership roles across all sectors as the Baby Boomer generation retires. As such, executive coaching clients will be younger, and technology-based mediated methods of communication will be in greater use including executive coaching. According to the Pew Research Internet Project (2008), of those who were identified as employed, 62% were considered "networked" workers, who are defined as those who use the Internet, e-mail, or both in the workplace. Networked employees are not only connected in the workplace, but are more likely to own or have access to technology-based devices, such as mobile/ smartphones, tablets, laptops, and so on, and are more likely to use features such as IM and texting. This continued transformation of how individuals communicate could not only impact the communication modality preference of coaching, but

other helping professions as well where technology-based communication may become an even more viable delivery model than face-to-face interaction.

Limitations and Directions for Future Research

Limitations of the Study

In this study, I examined the differences of the executive coaching experience of clients receiving both face-to-face and media-mediated coaching modalities. Despite my best efforts, there are several limitations that must be considered. First, the results were self-reported by the participants who responded from recall, with some participants recalling their experience as far back as 4 years. Therefore, accuracy of recall could have affected the findings. Second, because few respondents reported preferring technology-based mediated coaching, my ability to draw definitive conclusions about differences based on preferred coaching modality is limited; in other words, the study's survey design did not allow for questions that could be used to probe for motivation. Third, because I am a coaching practitioner and the primary researcher for this study, there is the possibility that my professional practice experience might have influenced the interpretation of the findings despite my best efforts to remain unbiased.

Recommendations for Future Research

While this study provided a participant profile that was gender-balanced, somewhat ethnically diverse, and geographically dispersed, in the final analysis, the executive coaching clients who responded to this study have provided some insight that could serve as the basis for future studies about the executive coaching experience. However, future researchers should address the limitation of participants recalling their experience as far back as 4 years

by gathering information as close to real-time as possible using both quantitative and qualitative methods of inquiry. This approach would allow the participants to provide a fresher recollection of their executive coaching experience. Secondly, future researchers should address a number of questions including a deeper examination of the executive coaching client's modality preference focused on arriving at a better understanding of the motivation for participants' modality preference. Scholars could also frame additional questions pertaining to the effectiveness (which would have to be well defined) of executive coaching within each modality to better understand if one modality is more effective than the other or if both are equally effective.

Answers or insights into these areas might be gained by the use of a mixed methods study that involves both quantitative and qualitative analysis (e.g., phenomenological or grounded theory), which could provide a broader understanding into the modality, choice, preference, and motivation of executive coaching clients regarding face-to-face interaction with an executive coach and the use of technology-based, mediated-communication tools during an executive coaching session.

Finally, future researchers should involve scholars who are not involved in the professional practice of executive coaching. Involving scholars outside the executive coaching profession has several benefits, including (a) an objective voice during both the data-gathering and data analysis stages, (b) valuable external insight to the study design, and (c) assistance in developing specific measurements that emphasize both the conceptual ideas that the studies of this nature wish to examine, while providing greater validity and reliability to the mathematical outcomes.

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APPENDIX A

(Recruitment Letter)
E-mail solicitation to individuals or coaching organizations

To Whom It May Concern:

As Chairman and Chief Operating Officer of HOPE 360° Inc, a firm that specializes in organizational effectiveness, executive coaching, and leadership development, I am conducting an independent research study on *executive coaching* and *mediated communication* in conjunction with my doctoral dissertation at Fielding Graduate University.

The study is **entitled:** *Two Kinds of Presence: A Comparative Analysis of Face-to- Face and Technology-Based Mediated Communication Methods and The Executive Coaching Experience.*

The study involves a brief *confidential on-line survey* that consists of *24 questions* targeting participants who have engaged an executive coach either personally or through their company or organization and have interacted with their coach using *face-to-face methods* (In person face-to- face, Skype, Web-Ex, Go-to-Meeting, FaceTime) and *mediated communication methods* (e-mail, mobile/telephone, texting) methods. *The survey should take no more than 10-15 minutes to complete.*

For the purposes of this study all participants must meet the following qualifications:
1. *Must be 18 Years and over*
2. *Must have received coaching services within the past 4 year(s).*
3. *Must have experienced both face-to face and technology-based mediated coaching.*

Please use this link to access the survey access
        (https://qtrial2014.az1.qualtrics.com/SE/?SID=SV_9SIBQAqgubzGOqN)

The survey will be released on November 2, 2014 and remain active for responses until November 6, 2014.

Please read the survey directions carefully to insure the accuracy of your answers. For your information I have also listed below examples of questions that may be asked as part of the on- line survey.

Q1. Which Modality (method) of coaching do you prefer during executive coaching sessions?   (1) Technology –based mediated communication (2) Face-to-face

Q2. Please indicate how often you use technology-based mediated communication tools such as mobile/smartphone, telephone, e-mail, SMS, IM, tablet or texting

- Never
- Once per month
- Several times a month
- Once per week
- Several times a week
- Once per day
- Several times a day

Should you have any questions, I can be reached at ████████ or at ldrakeii@email.fielding.edu

Again, thank you in advance for participating in this ground- breaking research study.

Sincerely,

Appendix B: Survey Instrument

This survey is for individuals who have worked with an executive coach in sessions that involve *meeting with your coach face-to-face* (i.e. In person, Skype, WebEx, GoToMeeting, FaceTime, Video Conferencing) and have also used *technology-based mediated communication* methods (i.e. mobile/telephone, e-mail, IM, tablet or text messaging) during a coaching session. All survey responses are strictly anonymous.

Part I. This section of the survey attempts to learn about (a) *you* (b) *your preference of engaging your coach face-to-face* (f2f) *or using technology-based mediated communication a*

Part II. This consists of questions that inquire about *the frequency with which you work with your coach in each modality followed by questions that ask you to rate your agreement or disagreement with statements concerning the use of technology and your attitude about certain technologies.*

Part III. This section includes questions that will assist the researcher in understanding what factors influence your level of *presence, commitment, engagement*, and *self - disclosure during an executive coaching session when using face-to-face and technology- based mediated communication methods*.

For purposes of this survey we have defined certain words or terms in the following manner:

Executive Coaching: *is an experiential individualized, leadership development process built on trust and mutual respect that is designed to build a leader's capability to achieve both short-term and long-term personal and professional goals. It is usually conducted in one-on- one interactions but can also be done in a group setting. The coaching process integrates data and multiple perspectives and insights that result in learning alternatives to problem solving and decision-making*

Executive Coaching face-to-face: means that the executive coaching interaction is *attended by both the client and the coach in person or using face-to-face interpersonal communication such as Face-Time, Skype, Web-Ex, GoToMeeting and other video-conferencing methods.*

Executive Coaching using technology-based mediated communication: includes non-face-to- face forms of communication such as the use e-mail, IM, mobile/ smartphone, telephone, tablet, SMS, and text messaging.

Commitment: a willingness to take action on the goals and objectives that have been mutually agreed to by you and the coach.

Engagement: actively listening and responding appropriately during the coaching session.

Self-disclosure: sharing information that helps the coach better understand you by demonstrating your willingness to be "transparent" during the coaching session.

Presence: the feeling of "being there" with the coach regardless of whether the interaction occurs face-to-face or through technology-based mediated communication.

Preference: greater liking for the use of face-to-face coaching or technology-based mediated coaching.

Part I

Q1. Which modality do you prefer during executive coaching sessions?
       Technology-based mediated communication
       Face-to-face

Q2. What is your gender?
       Male
       Female

Q3. What is your Age? (In years)

Q4. Which of the following best describes your ethnicity?
       Caucasian
       Hispanic/Latino
       African-American/ Black
       African/Caribbean
       Asian or Asian-American
       Asian/ Pacific Islander
       Native American
       Multi-ethnic
       Prefer not to answer

Q5. Where do you currently live?
       US- Northeast
       US- Midwest
       US-Western
       US- Southeast

US-Southwest
US Territory (e.g. Puerto-Rico)
Outside the US (please identify home country)

Part II

Q6. Approximately how often do you interact with your coach using technology-based mediated communication methods such as e-mail, IM, mobile/smartphone, telephone, tablet, or text messaging?

Never
Less than once a month
Once a month
2-3 times a month
Once a week
2-3 times a week
Daily

Q7. Please indicate how often you send, receive, and read e-mails to or from your executive coach.

	Send-e-mails	Receive e-mails	Read-e-mail
Never	O	O	O
Once per month	O	O	O
Several times a month	O	O	O
Once per week	O	O	O
Several times a week	O	O	O
Once a day	O	O	O
Several times a day	O	O	O

Q8. Approximately how often do you interact with your executive coach face-to-face including in person or using interpersonal communication tools such as FaceTime, Skype, WebEx, GoToMeeting, and other video-conferencing methods?

- Never
- Less than once a Month
- Once a month
- 2-3 Times a month
- Once a week
- 2-3 times a week
- Daily

Q9. Please indicate how often you check your e-mail.

- Never
- Once a month
- Several times a month
- Once per week
- Several times a week
- Once per day
- Several times a day

Q10. Please indicate how often you use technology-based mediated communication tools such as mobile/smartphone, telephone, e-mail, SMS, IM, tablet or text messaging.

- Never
- Once a month
- Several times a month
- Once per week
- Several times a week
- Once per day
- Several times a day

Q11. How often do you make and receive mobile phone calls?

- Never
- Once a month
- Several times a month
- Once per week
- Several times a week
- Once per day
- Several times a day

Q12. Approximately how often do you read e-mail on your mobile phone?

- o Never
- o Once a month
- o Several times a month
- o Once per week
- o Several times a week
- o Once per day
- o Several times a day

Q13. **Rate your agreement with this statement:** Technology provides solutions to many of our problems.

- o Strongly agree
- o Agree
- o Neither agree nor disagree
- o Disagree
- o Strongly disagree

Q14. **Rate your agreement with this statement:** The use of technology makes me feel more isolated.

- o Strongly agree
- o Agree
- o Neither agree nor disagree
- o Disagree
- o Strongly disagree

Q15. **Rate your agreement with this statement:** I think it is important to keep up with the latest trends in technology

- o Strongly agree
- o Agree
- o Neither agree nor disagree
- o Disagree
- o Strongly disagree

Q16. **Rate your agreement with this statement:** The use of technology wastes too much time.

o Strongly agree
o Agree
o Neither agree nor disagree
o Disagree
o Strongly disagree

Part III

Q17.   How engaged are you with your executive coach during your coaching sessions when you are interacting using technology-based mediated communication?

o Highly engaged
o Moderately engaged
o Somewhat engaged
o Somewhat not engaged
o Moderately not engaged
o Not engaged at all

Q18.   How engaged are you with your executive coach during your coaching sessions when you are interacting with your coach face-to-face?

o Highly engaged
o Moderately engaged
o Somewhat engaged
o Somewhat not engaged
o Moderately not engaged
o Not engaged at all

Q19.   How committed are you to achieving the mutually agreed upon goals and the coaching process and outcomes during your coaching session when using technology-based mediated communication?

o Highly committed
o Moderately committed
o Somewhat committed
o Somewhat not committed
o Moderately not committed
o Not committed at all

Q20. How committed are you to achieving the mutually agreed upon goals and the coaching process and outcomes during your coaching session when interacting with your executive coach face-to-face?

- o   Highly committed
- o   Moderately committed
- o   Somewhat committed
- o   Somewhat not committed
- o   Moderately not committed
- o   Not committed at all

Q21. What is your sense of presence (the feeling of "being there") when interacting with your executive coach face-to-face?

- o   Highly present
- o   Moderately present
- o   Somewhat present
- o   Somewhat not present
- o   Moderately not present
- o   Not present at all

Q22.   What is your sense of presence (the feeling of "being there") when interacting with your executive coach using technology-based mediated communication?

- o   Highly present
- o   Moderately present
- o   Somewhat present
- o   Somewhat not present
- o   Moderately not present
- o   Not present at all

Q23.   How likely are you to disclose information about yourself when interacting with your executive coach face-to-face?

- o   Highly likely
- o   Moderately likely
- o   Somewhat likely
- o   Somewhat not likely
- o   Moderately not likely
- o   Not likely at all

Q24.   How likely are you to disclose information about yourself when interacting with your executive coach using technology-based mediated communication?

- o Highly likely
- o Moderately likely
- o Somewhat likely
- o Somewhat not likely
- o Moderately not likely
- o Not likely at all