

THE PERCEIVED IMPACT OF SOMATIC COACHING ON COACH EFFECTIVENESS

BY

CHRISTINA CASWELL

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SIGNATURE PAGE

This dissertation has been examined and approved.

<u>Susan D. Cathcart, Ph.D.</u> <small>Susan D. Cathcart, Ph.D. (Jun 24, 2025 13:10 EDT)</small>	06/24/2025
Susan Cathcart, PhD, Committee Chair	Date
<u>Dr. Kathy Richie</u> <small>Dr. Kathy Richie (Jun 25, 2025 16:45 CDT)</small>	06/25/2025
Kathy Richie, DM, Committee Member	Date
<u>Dr. Elizabeth Fountain</u> <small>Dr. Elizabeth Fountain (Jun 25, 2025 07:22 PDT)</small>	06/25/2025
Elizabeth Fountain, PhD, Committee Member	Date
<u>Dr. Vicki Butler</u>	06/25/2025
Vicki Butler, EdD, Dean	Date

## **DEDICATION**

This study is specially dedicated posthumously to Dr. Elaine Sealock, my treasured friend and colleague. Elaine earned her PhD in economics at age 60. I thank you, dear friend, for your inspiration, love, and light. You showed me that it is never too late to learn.

This work is also dedicated posthumously to the late John Keys III, former Commissioner of the Bureau of Reclamation. Commissioner Keys was a dedicated public servant who demonstrated effective leadership in his role as Commissioner and previously as the Pacific Northwest Regional Director of the Bureau of Reclamation. John not only knew people's names; he knew their stories, and he cared. John was a champion of education who, along with his family, uplifted others. I extend tremendous gratitude to John for his support and for believing in me.

Lastly, I dedicate this work to Richard Strözzi-Heckler and to other leaders, coaches, and practitioners committed to advancing transformative approaches in leadership development. May this work honor those who explore and integrate somatic coaching and other embodied practices to cultivate effective leaders in an ever-evolving world.

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## ABSTRACT

Traditional leadership development programs focused predominantly on reflective practices and cognitive skills are no longer sufficient for meeting contemporary leadership demands. Somatic coaching is a holistic approach in which the individual's way of being is used as the ground to coach and develop leaders. The purpose of this study was to explore the lived experiences of coaches certified in the Strozzi Institute of Somatics' Somatic Coaching (SISC) training program. A qualitative research study was conducted to provide an in-depth understanding of the experiences of the SISC-certified coaches. A phenomenological research design was used to gain insights from the study participants. Intentional change theory and a human performance improvement model were used to frame the study. The research population consisted of coaches practicing as executive, business, corporate, or leadership coaches who graduated from the SISC training program since 2001. Semistructured interviews were conducted with eight SISC-certified coaches selected through purposeful sampling. The two research questions answered for the study were: What are the somatic change experiences of coaches certified in the somatic coaching methodology by the Strozzi Institute? What is the perceived impact of the somatic coaching methodological intervention on the coaching effectiveness of experienced coaches who become certified graduates of the Strozzi Institute Somatic Coaching training program? A purposeful six-phased approach to thematic analysis was used to analyze the interview responses. Four themes emerged. First, embodiment is a catalyst for somatics in coaching transformation. Second was, coaches experience enhanced embodied presence in their way of being through somatic coaching practices. The third theme was using the body in coaching improves effectiveness in the coaching relationship. The last theme was somatic coaching enhances coaches' effectiveness in facilitating client change. The findings indicate by addressing

the being of leaders through somatic coaching, leaders can be prepared to lead effectively in the face of modern-day leadership complexities. The significance of the study is expanded knowledge about the role of the body in coaching as an intervention to develop and prepare leaders and to facilitate change. The research informs coaching practitioners, organizational stakeholders, and scholars about the importance of embodied approaches in leadership development.

## CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

Moore (2016), who discussed coaching for the 21st century, maintained that leaders must adaptively change to navigate the intensity of uncertainty and complexity in the leadership landscape. Coaching is a vital support to leaders in the challenging times of modern-day leadership. Subsequently, coaches need to enhance their ability to operate effectively in complex and uncertain environments, positioning their leader-clients to do the same. Moore asserted that it is essential for coaches to expand their toolkits to meet the evolving needs of their clients effectively.

Somatic coaching is a coaching methodology that practitioners can add to their toolkits to coach executives and other types of leaders. According to Aquilina and Strözzi-Heckler (2019), in somatic coaching methodology, the somatic coach works with the client by working through the body. The somatic coach facilitates change through the client's deepened awareness and transformation and by supporting the client in shifting toward their vision of whom they wish to become. Sustainable change is achieved when the coach works with the client's way of being rather than the client's actions. A phenomenological study was conducted to explore the lived experiences of certified graduates from the Strozzi Institute of Somatics' Somatic Coaching (SISC) training program to gain an understanding of their perspectives on the impact of the somatic coaching methodology on their coaching effectiveness.

This chapter consists of an overview to establish the foundation for exploring the lived experiences of certified SISC coaches. The first section entails an explanation of the study basis. Next is a discussion of the current state of the field for developing leaders and coaching, followed by a brief description of the historical background, somatic coaching, the study area of the Strozzi Institute of Somatics (Strozzi Institute), and the SISC program. Deficiencies in the

body of knowledge for developing leaders and coaching, as well as the role of the body in coaching, are shared. Following is an introduction to the theoretical foundation. In the next section, a statement of the problem is presented, along with a description of the relevant stakeholders and the specific leadership problem. Subsequently provided are the purpose of the study, the research questions, and the significance of the study. A summary of the methodology, population and sample, as well as data collection, is provided, along with a discussion of the limitations and delimitations of the study. Definitions of key terms are then included. The chapter is concluded with a summary.

### **Study Background/Foundation**

Shavshukov and Shuravleva (2020) considered leadership problems through a global economic lens. Leaders routinely face drivers of modern global economic problems, including failures in financial systems, technological transitions, resource-based and supply matters such as ecology, water, and food supply, corporate and state debt levels growth, and the loss of former sources of economic growth engines. Maker (2022) asserted that a shift is needed in leadership to address the needs of 21st-century leadership. Leaders also face unprecedented circumstances and challenges in an increasingly connected environment. Consistent with research on effective leadership, leaders will need to solve never-before-seen contemporary problems with contextual awareness.

According to Jiménez et al. (2023), who considered leadership in micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs), the operating environment for MSME leaders is highly volatile and competitive, resulting in unpredictability and uncertainty. Leaders are in a change of era rather than an era of continual change. Jiménez et al. contended that, in light of the social and economic realities faced by MSME leaders in the post-pandemic landscape, novel approaches to

leadership are needed to equip leaders to navigate contemporary organizational challenges. Coetzee et al. (2023), who problematized coaching strategy through a worldview lens, maintained that different thinking is required to support leaders functioning in a world filled with volatility, interdependency, complexity, change, ambiguity, and seamlessness (VICCAS). Coaching should equip leaders with the capacity to effectively navigate and address the nuanced complexities of the leadership landscape. Coetzee et al. asserted that there is a pressing need for a coaching strategy that enables coaches to support leaders amid increasing challenges better.

### **Current State of the Field in which the Problem Exists**

Hall and Rowland (2016) discussed the development of leaders in turbulent times. The authors explored the current demands placed on leaders in an operational context rife with volatility, uncertainty, complexity, and ambiguity (VUCA). Hall and Rowland identified a gap between academic teachings and the real-world needs of industry leaders. According to Kovacs and Corrie (2021), leaders and coaches who work with leaders have faced an increase in the complexity of demands within the leadership context. Leaders need to be equipped with new skills and abilities to navigate the demands of a dynamic leadership environment. Coaches need to have the capability and understanding to help leaders traverse the complexity of the leadership context. The ability of coaches to help their clients negotiate the complexities of the global landscape is essential. Somatics can be used as a strategy to help leaders develop intentional practices and make desired sustainable changes in the modern-day VUCA–VICCAS leadership environment.

### **Historical Background**

Reddy and Srinivasan (2015) noted that extensive research and discussion exist about leadership. Over time, scholars have presented various major leadership theories, including trait

and behavioral theories, theories based on situational, contextual, or contingency factors, leader-member exchange theories, and theories of transformational leadership, servant leadership, and charismatic leadership. Researchers exploring leadership theories have primarily focused on identifying the characteristics, traits, and behaviors necessary for an individual to lead effectively in a particular context.

As Day et al. (2014) asserted, research and theory-building about leadership development have evolved since 2000. The authors identified coaching as an organizational practice used to develop leaders. Maltbia et al. (2014) demonstrated a wide array of diversity in the theories and models on which coaching is founded. Psychotherapy, counseling psychology, organizational behavior, behavioral sciences, neurosciences, management education, sports psychology, and adult learning and development are at the roots of coaching. These coaching models vary widely in the topics they cover, including personal coaching, coaching for performance, development, change, and coaching to support interests aligned with business and corporations.

According to Maltbia et al. (2014), by the 1980s, scholars recognized coaching as a component of leadership development. Diverse training programs were integrated with executive coaching designed to prevent executive derailment or improve the skills of leaders in the 1990s. Maxwell (2017), who researched executive coaching competencies, explained coaching has continued to be used as a contemporary intervention to develop leaders and to help mitigate the potential for leader derailment. Decision-makers from an estimated 93% of U.S. Fortune 1,000 companies have relied on executive coaching for improved executive performance.

### ***Somatic Coaching***

Strözzi-Heckler (2014), named a top 50 executive coach in Morgan et al.'s (2005) *The Art and Practice of Leadership Coaching: 50 Top Executive Coaches Reveal Their Secrets*,

veered from the standard emphasis on cognitive knowing in practice. Strözzi-Heckler focused the client's attention on what mattered to them and considered how to bring what mattered to the client to the forefront. Subsequently, Strözzi-Heckler made cultivation of core somatic wisdom the first principle in the new way of working with clients. Strözzi-Heckler's work in cultivating core somatic wisdom marked the beginning of somatic coaching 10 years prior to the emergence of the coaching profession as a generally accepted discourse.

### ***The Strozzi Institute***

Strözzi-Heckler (2007) created a groundbreaking leadership program for the U.S. Marine Corps, The Trojan Warrior Project, which was a classified Army experiment launched in 1985 that was designed to improve the psychological, physical, mission-specific, and team cohesion capabilities of members of the Army's elite Special Forces. The soldiers who participated in the program increased their abilities across all program goal areas by a mean of 75% over their benchmark scores. The soldiers' average increase over benchmark scores for the psychological metrics was 80%. For the physical metrics, soldiers increased their scores by an average of 96.25% over the benchmark scores. The increase over benchmark scores for soldiers for the mission-specific metrics was 76%. Strözzi-Heckler used the two metrics to measure team cohesion. The two metrics to measure team cohesion included strengthening the team and strengthening leadership skills. As a result of the experiment, the soldiers' benchmark scores for strengthening teams increased by 50%, and strengthening leadership capabilities increased by 40%.

According to the Strozzi Institute (2023a), Strözzi-Heckler founded the Strozzi Institute in 1985 to serve coaches, leaders, and organizational members through the provision of somatics. The current field of somatics emerged from the integration of bodywork principles and Aikido

with Strözzi-Heckler's prior work in holistic change and leadership. Somatics is rooted in the unity of feeling, action, language, and meaning. Somatics is based on the premise that rationality, self, body, and mind are interconnected, such that cultivating one requires the development of the others. Somatics can be applied to broader purposes, such as facilitating embodied change from the individual to the community level and supporting equity, justice, and sustainability.

### ***Strozzi Institute Somatic Coaching Program***

According to communications published by the Strozzi Institute (2023a), the first coach certification program in somatic coaching was launched in 1999. Also published by the Strozzi Institute (2023b) was that students certified in somatic coaching by the Strozzi Institute are educated in mindfulness, martial arts, body-based practices, generative conflict training, and action-oriented communication to support client transformation. Students learn how to deepen their authentic leadership presence through their lived experience of somatic transformation. Coaching students' transformations are rooted in their learning of core somatic practices and in taking action toward their vision of their roles as coaches. Students learn how individuals are shaped by social conditions and how to work with the diverse shapes of clients, which results from the conditioning of the social context. Students of the SISC training program learn to develop skills in active listening, powerful questioning, direct communication, and somatic bodywork. Coaches can use the somatic coaching approach to help leaders develop and embody their full potential.

### **Deficiencies in the Evidence**

Day et al. (2021) presented scientific research on multiple areas of leadership development in the 21st century, discussing methods and practices used to prepare leaders. In all areas considered for leadership development, Day et al. found the research evidence to be

contradictory or scarce. Specific to preparing leaders, an overabundance of interventions was available for leadership development. Day et al. asserted that, although research on leadership development has increased over the past 20 years, an unending demand exists for causally identified and rigorous research to assess the value and efficacy of the wide array of leadership development techniques, methods, and practices.

### ***Coaching***

In their review of coaching research, Fillery-Travis and Cox (2018) found that the primary focus of such research included the exploration of how coaching works and distinguished between coaching and other learning and helping approaches. They identified research into the coaching intervention as deficient, specifically in the areas of the coaching relationship and the coaching interaction. Research on coaching has increased since the late 1990s. Fillery-Travis and Cox identified a lag between coaching research, coaching practice, and the efficacy and effectiveness of coaching.

### ***Coaching Effectiveness***

Gan et al. (2021) explained that research on coaching effectiveness is robust and that topics in the literature about coaching effectiveness range from the micro to the macro levels. For example, they found literature ranging from coaching satisfaction on the micro level to return on investment at the organizational level, reflecting the macro level. Despite the varying methods and dimensions that practitioners and researchers have proposed to evaluate coaching effectiveness, both groups have continued to show a lack of professional and empirical consensus regarding what constitutes effective coaching.

### ***Coaching for Change***

To understand the effectiveness of coaching in relation to the client's change process, Erdös et al. (2021) examined the contextual dynamics and client factors that influence the change process in coaching. The authors recognized general limitations in mixed-methods and quantitative approaches to research on coaching effectiveness, particularly in terms of contextual and client factors. Using 110 peer-reviewed qualitative studies, they conducted a systematic meta-synthesis of research and found clients reported both proximal and distal contextual factors were influential to the change process. Erdös et al. also studied the client factor of behavior to the greatest extent and emotion to the least extent. Though Erdös et al.'s coding results revealed emotions, described as the client's inner world, were important to the coaching conversation, subsequent researchers have rarely investigated the role of emotions in the coaching process for the topic of coaching effectiveness in coaching research.

### ***The Role of the Body in Coaching***

Jackson (2017) contended that scholarly discussions about physicality and the body in the literature for psychotherapy are more robust than those in the coaching practice literature. Scholars have largely remained silent on the concepts of embodiment, body, and physicality in coaching. Two notable reviews of the coaching field neglected the subject of physicality for both the coach and the client. According to Matthews (2013), who explored engaging with the body in coaching, a research void exists regarding the body's intelligence in coaching. The absence of attention to the intelligence of the body regarding coaching is a vulnerability to the evidence-based approach of coaching as a profession. Insufficient recognition of embodied intelligence in coaching research may lead to a myopic definition of coaching and risk continued neglect of the body in coaching research.

### *The Role of the Body in Change*

Green and Hopwood (2015a) pondered what could be understood and researched about the role and significance of the body in professional practice. They reconsidered the meaning of being, learning, and practicing professionally. According to Green and Hopwood (2015b), insights into what professionals practice are crucial for gaining an understanding of learning and change among professionals. Professionals bring their bodies into their practice, even when they are unaware of the body being part of their practice. When professionals engage with others, act, or talk, their bodies are always present in the background. Professionals do much of what they carry out as embodied beings. Green and Hopwood indicated that increased scholarly attention to the cognitive aspects of practice for professionals has come at the expense of the body.

### **Theoretical Foundation**

A change theory and a human performance improvement framework were used as the theoretical foundation for the study. According to Boyatzis (2006), intentional change theory (ICT), the result of 30 years of longitudinal studies, is a complex system. Boyatzis explained that researchers can use ICT to describe the requisite process and components of desired and sustainable change at the individual level. Dyck and Lovelace (2018) described ICT as a change model based on theory. They stated that ICT is a self-directed journey to learning and personal change. The ICT was used to frame the change journey for practicing coaches who received certification in somatic coaching from the Strozzi Institute.

Marker et al. (2009) designed their six-P planning and evaluation framework (i.e., six-P framework) human performance improvement model with both a short-term and a long-term element to help decision-makers understand the impact of interventions such as coaching. The model can be used to understand the impacts of interventions, ranging from the individual level

to the global level of sustainability. The short-term elements of the six-P framework and the long-term profit element of the six-P framework, as they relate to results, were used to frame the current study, which explores the perceived impact of the somatic coaching methodology intervention on the effectiveness of coaching as perceived by the SISC-certified coach.

### **Problem Statement**

The general problem explored in this study is that when leaders are not prepared to lead, they can be poor leaders who are ineffective or incompetent and may derail themselves. Kellerman (2004) asserted that ineffective leaders fail to produce the desired change. Leaders who demonstrate incompetent leadership cannot sustain effective action. The consequences of poor leadership include short- and long-term damage, as well as high damages. According to Furnham (2018), incompetent leaders lack the ability to perform effectively, whereas leaders who derail are able to perform effectively. Derailment is the demise of a once highly capable and successful political or business leader. King et al. (2013) examined the relationship between effective leadership and five derailment factors. The five derailment factors included issues with interpersonal relationships, self-centeredness, failure to attract and build talent effectively, a functional orientation that is too myopic, and a failure to deliver on business results. The authors found that the derailment factors were correlated negatively with leadership effectiveness. Ineffective leaders who fail or derail can have a negative impact on organizations, resulting in millions of dollars in direct and indirect organizational costs. King et al. also indicated that additional consequences of leader failure or derailment include non-financial negative impacts on individuals, teams, and the organization.

The specific problem is that when coaches are not effective and innovative in their coaching practices, adverse coaching impacts, coaching failures, and leader derailment can

result. Graßmann et al. (2018) explored the antecedents and impacts of negative effects for coaches, finding that when the relationship quality between the coach and client was low, the number of negative effects experienced was higher. Graßmann et al. asserted when coaching failures occur, expected coaching outcomes may not be achieved, and adverse impacts may result. One coaching failure that can happen is leader derailment. Inyang (2013) posits that leadership derailment can pose a substantial challenge to employee development. The consequences of leadership derailment are dire and impact the leader who is derailed, the followers of the leader, the organization, and organizational stakeholders. Inyang suggested a connection between leadership failures and the 2008 economic crisis, pointing to more recent corporate scandals and failures across the globe as evidence of failed leadership.

### **Audience**

The intended audience for this study consists of coaching practitioners, coaching clients, organizational stakeholders, and scholars. Coaching practitioners may include professional business coaches, human resources development decision-makers, professionals specializing in organizational development and leadership development, as well as proponents of coaching training and development programs. Coaching clients consist of executives and business and organizational leaders. Scholars who may find this study relevant include those interested in research on developing leaders and coaching. According to Schermuly and Graßmann (2019), barriers to effective coaching can have negative effects on all coaching stakeholder groups. Coaches, coaching clients, and stakeholders of organizations are negatively affected due to coaching ineffectiveness.

### **Specific Leadership Problem**

The specific leadership problem is that, in today's unpredictable business environment, traditional leadership development programs, which are predominantly focused on reflective practices and cognitive skills, are now inadequate, according to Brendel and Bennett (2016). The authors suggest that relying solely on cognitive-behavioral processes is insufficient for developing effective leadership, given contemporary scientific research, leadership theory, and practice. Mansour (2023) reported that the majority of learning and development (L&D) investments by companies are in cognitive-based theorizing and learning interventions. Common titles for leadership development programs include "*becoming* a leader" or "*being* a leader," yet they rarely put the learner in a state of feeling or being. Instead of developing individuals who can transition into leadership roles and *be* leaders, individuals only cognitively understand what is needed to *become* leaders.

Rowland (2016) contended that if leadership skill development begins in the mind, leaders will remain confined to their thoughts. The author maintained that leaders cannot think their way out of a habit. Brendel and Bennett (2016) explained that leaders who rely upon habit and who neglect to tune into both their mind and body may come across as inauthentic and detached from their intentions. The authors asserted somatics has a strong emphasis on cultivating awareness through being mindful of thoughts and bodily sensations. Genuine leadership transformation requires that a leader's way of being first takes root in the core of the body, grounding the outward *doing* of leadership practice in a deeper sense of *being*.

According to Brendel and Bennett (2016), by focusing on the present-moment experience of sensations in the body, working with the physical body directly provides a practical and enduring method for enhancing cognitive and emotional awareness in the present moment.

Developing the ability to tap into one's internal states and linking this awareness to transformative behaviors that generate alternate emotional states offers a pathway to fresh perspectives. Such an embodied, reflective self-awareness enables the leader to remain grounded and responsive, even in the face of conflict and pressure, thereby building resilience. With open awareness, this process cultivates the creativity and resourcefulness needed to navigate ambiguity and complexity.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to explore the lived experiences of change and somatic transformation of coaches certified by the Strozzi Institute in somatic coaching. This research was conducted to gain a deeper understanding of leadership development by exploring the phenomenon of somatic coaching. Moore (2016) opined that coaches need to be agile and able to adapt. The author noted that coaches also need to expand their coaching toolkits to include new coaching methods to help leaders navigate the rapidly shifting global landscape. As Palmer and Whybrow (2019) described, somatic coaching is a holistic approach to coaching. They indicated that in somatic coaching, the coach focuses on an individual's way of being to support transformation and sustainable change. Understanding of the perceived impact of applying the somatic coaching methodology on the coaching effectiveness of SISC-certified training program graduates was gained by exploring the coaches' lived experiences.

### **Research Questions**

RQ1. What are the somatic change experiences of coaches certified in the somatic coaching methodology by the Strozzi Institute?

RQ2. What is the perceived impact of the somatic coaching methodological intervention on the coaching effectiveness of experienced coaches who become certified graduates of the Strozzi Institute Somatic Coaching training program?

### **Significance of the Study**

The significance of the study was an exploration of the identified gap in the recognition of the body in coaching research and coaching practice. Offered in this study was an inquiry into the role of the human body in the coaching profession. An understanding of embodiment and using way of being as the ground in coaching was achieved. Gained was an in-depth understanding of the experience of change and somatic transformation in coaches, as well as the coaches' perspectives on the impact of the somatic coaching methodological intervention on coaching effectiveness. Learning about the phenomenon of somatic coaching enabled enhanced discovery of developing leaders.

Ramakrishnan (2021) stated that leaders are not prepared to lead in contemporary times. The author indicated the rapidly changing landscape for leaders and the coaches who support them has resulted in an unmet demand for effective coaching tools and strategies designed to meet current leadership coaching and development needs. As Brendel and Bennett (2016) observed, traditional leadership programs emphasizing reflection and cognitive skills remain inadequate. The authors noted that relying solely on cognitive-behavioral processes is insufficient for developing effective leadership in light of the contemporary demands on leaders. The increased understanding of somatic coaching gained through this research could be advantageous to all coaching stakeholders. Scholars, practitioners, and other stakeholders involved in coaching and leadership development will benefit from gaining expanded knowledge

about leadership development and the role of the body in professional coaching within the business context.

### **Methodology and Research Design Overview**

Creswell and Creswell (2023) outlined preliminary considerations for conducting research. Among the considerations are research methodology and design. Researchers can choose from three research methodologies. The research design employed for this research was contingent upon the selected research methodology.

#### **Methodology**

The methodological approach used in this study was qualitative research. Research educators Merriam and Tisdell (2016) described qualitative research as an approach used to explore constructed meaning and individual experiences. The objective of qualitative research is to understand the interpretation and meaning that people associate with their individual experiences and the manner in which they construct their world. According to Creswell and Creswell (2023), quantitative research methodology is an element of mixed-methods research. Researchers use quantitative methods to examine relationships between variables, make comparisons between groups, or test objective theories. The qualitative approach was preferred over the quantitative and mixed-methods approaches because the quantitative and mixed-methods approaches were not aligned with the purpose of the current study, which was to explore the lived experiences of the study participants.

#### **Research Design**

The design used for this qualitative research study was phenomenology. According to Peoples (2020), phenomenology is a research approach rooted in philosophy. Phenomenological researchers analyze vivid depictions of experiences, as articulated by participants, to construct a

meaningful reality. The purpose of phenomenological research is to understand experiences as lived. The availability of insights into the shared lived experience is permitted when researchers use phenomenological research design. Creswell and Creswell (2023) explained that four additional research designs are available for qualitative research, including narrative, ethnographic, case study, and grounded theory. Each research design has a different primary focus. The phenomenological research design was chosen over the other four qualitative research designs and used to explore the lived experiences of coaches certified in somatic coaching by the Strozzi Institute. The exploration of the lived experiences of the SISC-certified coaches could not be achieved using any of the other four qualitative research designs.

### **Population and Sample**

The SISC Program was started in 2001 with the initial cohort of the SISC training program graduating the same year (S. Meux, personal communication, August 16, 2023). Since 2001, 622 individuals practicing various coaching specialties or somatic bodywork have completed the program. The population consisted of all 622 graduates from 2001 onward across all specialty areas.

### **Research Population**

The research population for this study consisted of 452 coaches practicing in the coaching specialty area(s) of executive, business, corporate, or leadership coaching who graduated from the SISC training program since 2001. These individuals passed the final certification review on their first attempt and are currently practicing professional coaches in their respective coaching specialties. Individuals were required to have at least two years of professional practice in their coaching professions before enrolling in the SISC training program and one year of professional coaching practice after being SISC-certified. Members of the

research population coached at least four client-leaders including two before enrolling in the SISC training program and two after being SISC-certified.

### **Research Sample**

In Creswell and Poth's (2018) discussion of phenomenological research, the authors indicate that the sample for phenomenological research is comprised of a heterogeneous group of individuals who have all directly experienced the phenomenon under study. A sample group for a studied phenomenon can range in size from 3 to 15 individuals. Guetterman (2015) examined qualitative sample sizes and sampling, analyzing 51 articles. The author found that 21 participants were the mean sample size for phenomenological studies at a single site. Articles in which saturation was assessed included smaller sample sizes. The minimum sample for studies across qualitative research design types that included a discussion of saturation was 10. Purposeful sampling was applied for participant selection for the current study. The first two individuals interested in study participation who met the study criteria were selected for the pilot study to review the interview questions. The next eight participants who responded with interest and met the study criteria were selected for the study. Saturation was met through the data collected from the eight study participants selected.

### **Instrumentation**

According to Creswell and Creswell (2023), the researcher is the primary instrument in qualitative research. The researcher personally collects data through one of three means. The three approaches for collecting data in qualitative research include document examination, behavior observations, and participant interviews. Semistructured interviews were conducted with SISC-certified graduates selected for the current study. The video technologies of Microsoft

Teams and Zoom were used to conduct the interviews. Open-ended questions were used in the interviews to explore the study participants' lived experiences.

### **Data Collection**

Semistructured interviews were used to collect data from certified SISC training program graduates who were eligible for the study and consented to participate. All interviews were conducted remotely using either Microsoft Teams or Zoom online platforms for virtual interviews. Participants provided verbal consent after the recording began and before the interview commenced. As part of this consent, study participants agreed to participate in recorded interviews, and the researcher subsequently recorded the interviews using the online virtual platform and a backup voice recorder. The interviews were transcribed from the interview recordings. Verbal consent was reconfirmed verbally after the start of the recording and before the interview began. Pseudonyms were used as an ethical safeguard to protect the identity of study participants. A search and replace feature was used to substitute pseudonyms for the participant names in the transcripts used for coding.

The data collection was conducted after institutional review board (IRB) approval. A study eligibility survey was developed using Microsoft Forms. A study invitation email from a City University of Seattle (CityU) email address, including a link to the study eligibility survey, was sent to members of the Strozzi Institute (see Appendix A Strozzi Study Invitation for Potential Coaching Research Participants). A member of the Strozzi Institute disseminated the email with the link to the study eligibility survey en masse to the graduates of the SISC Program using a customer relations management (CRM) software program. Potential participants responded to the study eligibility survey (see Appendix B). Contact information was collected from the eligibility survey results for participants who completed the study eligibility survey and

were found qualified for the study. A CityU email address was used to contact qualified participants and send them the interview invitation, which included a link to a demographic survey and introductory information about the informed consent (see Appendix C Interview Invitation Email).

The interview invitation email included a consent form for study participation to ensure that informed consent was obtained to protect the interests of participants in accordance with IRB guidelines (see Appendix D, Informed Consent for Participants in Research Activities). Consent forms were collected from the qualified participants, who first signed and dated the consent form electronically. When a participant signed the informed consent form with a wet signature, they converted it back to a digital format before submitting the form. Interviews were scheduled in coordination with qualified participants via email to accommodate their availability (see Appendix E, Interview Appointment Confirmation). Interviews were conducted after the participants submitted the signed consent forms to the researcher. After the interview, participants received an interview follow-up email to notify them that they would receive a copy of the transcript (see Appendix F).

### **Data Analysis**

Consistent with the recommendations by Merriam and Tisdell (2016), interview transcripts were read, and notes were made about the interesting and relevant interview data to facilitate coding during the early stages of analysis for the current study. Merriam and Tisdell explained that researchers use codes to construct categories and subcategories and sort them into themes. Nowell et al. (2017) recommended using a systematic approach to data analysis. The objective of using a systematic data analysis approach is to increase traceability and verification. Patterns in the content of the transcribed interview data collected for this study were identified

and recorded during the data analysis process using coding, sorting, categorizing, and theme-building. The Intellectus Qualitative data analysis and Excel software programs were used to conduct the data analysis of the collected interview data. Patton (2015) explained that member checking can be used to allow research participants to verify the interpretations of collected data, thereby confirming the completeness and accuracy of their interview data. Congruent with descriptions by Patton, the study participants in the current study were given the opportunity to validate the accuracy and completeness, as well as the tentative interpretations of the collected interview data, through member checking to help establish credibility.

### **Study Limitations**

Theofanidis and Fountouki (2018) emphasized that rigor is requisite to identifying study limitations and delimitations. Limitations are inherent in various aspects of the research process. A limitation of this study was that the training and experiences of the coaches selected varied. Mwita (2022c) considered the strengths and vulnerabilities of qualitative research in the social sciences. Small sample sizes are common in qualitative research. According to Peoples (2020), small sample sizes are a common limitation of phenomenological studies. Other limitations commonly found in phenomenological research include time constraints and bias in the participant sample.

As noted by Mwita (2022c), researcher bias is a risk in qualitative research. In a literature review of research articles, the author found that researchers were directly involved with respondents. When researchers engage directly with participants to collect data, the collected data may be affected. The chance of researcher bias is increased due to the use of interviews and open-ended questions. Participants of the current study were provided with transcripts to verify

accuracy, thereby mitigating the potential for researcher bias (see Appendix G, Transcript Accuracy Check Email).

### **Study Delimitations**

Terrell (2016) explained that delimitations are under the purview of the researcher. The researcher can use delimitations to limit the research parameters and enhance focus on a specific problem. Coachees were not included to inform perceived impacts on coaching effectiveness in the current study. To address the specific problem of adverse impacts that result from ineffective coaching, the research included only coaches certified in somatic coaching by the Strozzi Institute. The participants in the study consisted of eight currently practicing coaches who provided leadership, executive, business, or corporate coaching. The study participants had attained Strozzi Institute certification in somatic coaching, passing the certification on their first attempt. The coaches selected for the study had at least two years of experience practicing as leadership, executive, business, or corporate coaches before enrolling in the SISC training program.

Study participants also had at least one year of coaching experience practicing in their respective disciplines, such as leadership, executive, business, or corporate coaching, following certification in somatic coaching by the Strozzi Institute. Selected participants coached at least four client-leaders: two before being certified in somatic coaching by the Strozzi Institute and two after being SISC-certified. Certified SISC graduates who did not practice as leadership, executive, corporate, or business coaches were not considered for this study. Graduates of other coaching programs were not included in this study.

## Definitions of Key Terms

*Business coaching.* Business coaching is a form of executive, management, and leadership coaching conducted within a business context (Blackman et al., 2016).

*Coaching.* Coaching is a type of leadership development intervention comprised of a series of one-to-one, individually tailored, and reflective conversations with a certified coach (de Haan et al., 2013).

*Corporate coaching.* Corporate coaching is an intervention used to address individual developmental needs by increasing the effectiveness of executives and leaders who are already highly effective, including executive, leadership, business, and other forms of coaching designed to facilitate high performance for organizations (Mukherjee, 2016).

*Embodiment.* Distinct from cognitive knowledge, embodiment is the authentic state that is the *being* rather than the *doing* of change, transformation, and the new action or skill (Strözzi-Heckler, 2014).

*Executive coaching.* Executive coaching is an approach to executive development that is carried out through a process of gathering insights from various sources to inform individualized sessions, founded in mutual trust, that coaches use to equip leaders with the skills needed to achieve both immediate and long-term goals for their organizations (Mukherjee, 2016).

*Leader derailment.* Leader derailment is the involuntary termination or career plateau of a leader who was previously successful and highly regarded (Desrosiers & Blankenship, 2015).

*Leadership coaching.* Leadership coaching is a one-on-one relationship between an internal or external coach and a client who holds a leadership position within an organization, with the goal of the coaching being to help the client-leader achieve the desired change (Taylor et al., 2019).

*Practice.* Practice is the means used to evolve and transform, where what is practiced is reflected in the body and linked to ethics, values, commitments, and what one cares about (Strözzi-Heckler, 2014).

*Professional coaching.* Professional coaching is a transformative process facilitated by an experienced coach who helps individuals identify and achieve their professional goals while also promoting personal growth and development (University of Wisconsin-Madison, 2024).

*Shape.* Shape is how the summation of one's lived experiences and history manifests through the individual's habits, the actions they take and do not take, their emotional range and emotions, their thought processes, and their belief systems (Strozzi Institute, 2021).

*Social context.* The social context reflects the contemporary and historical forces in which the individual was raised and is currently living, and is always present, continually shaping the individual through personal experiences (Strözzi-Heckler, 2014).

*Soma.* Soma is the wholeness of the living body that includes the mind and the body (Aquilina & Strözzi-Heckler, 2019).

*Somatic awareness.* Somatic awareness is the noticing of sensations felt in the body used to gather information throughout the nervous system and the rest of the body organism to enhance awareness of information coming into and through the whole of the psychobiology in the body (Strozzi Institute, 2021).

*Somatic coaching.* Somatic coaching is an approach to coaching that involves increasing an individual's awareness of habitual narratives and patterns to facilitate the change process through the transformation of an individual's embodied shape toward a new shape aligned with the individual's desired identity (Aquilina & Strözzi-Heckler, 2019).

*Somatic opening.* Somatic opening is a process of noticing, honoring, and then disrupting the individual's physical organism, musculature, and breath patterns to shift from the old, embodied shape to a new embodied shape where the new way of being is present even when challenged under pressure (Strozzi Institute, 2021).

*Somatic practices.* Somatic practices are a suite of practices rooted in psychobiology that are used to facilitate individual transformation and sustainable change by aligning the practices with what matters most to the individual, thereby supporting the individual's vision for desired change (Strozzi Institute, 2021).

*Somatics.* Somatics is a change approach that is carried out by transforming the entire embodied shape of an individual (Strozzi Institute, 2021).

*SISC-certified coaches.* SISC-certified coaches are those who have completed the Strozzi Institute Somatic Coaching training program and passed a final review (L. Melvin & S. Meux, personal communication, August 16, 2023).

*Sustainable change.* Sustainable change is change achieved through addressing the being of an individual rather than addressing an individual's actions or doing (Aquilina & Strözzi-Heckler, 2019).

*Thick description.* Thick description refers to contextual and detailed descriptions that are captured to communicate another's experience of the world in their own words, serving as the foundation for the analysis and reporting of qualitative data (Patton, 2015).

*VICCAS environment.* A VICCAS environment is a work environment filled with volatility, interdependency, complexity, change, ambiguity, and seamlessness (Veldsman, 2021).

*VUCA world.* A VUCA world is one in which leaders are subject to high levels of volatility, uncertainty, complexity, and ambiguity (Bushe & Marshak, 2016).

*Way of being.* Way of being describes a space where an individual's ingrained perceptions, patterns, and attitudes are deeply held (Sieler, 2018).

### **Summary**

Coaching is an approach available to prepare executives and organizational, corporate, and business leaders for 21st-century challenges. When coaches are not effective and innovative with their coaching strategies, ineffective coaching can result in negative coaching effects, coaching failures, and leader derailment. The VUCA environment in which leaders and coaches operate requires coaches to evolve more quickly and adapt faster than their clients. Coaches consequently need to add tools to their coaching toolkits to support their clients effectively. Coaches can use somatic coaching to support executive and leader-clients and help them transform and achieve sustained change by working with and through the body, considering the context.

The purpose of this qualitative phenomenological study was to explore the lived experiences of certified graduates of the SISC training program and to understand the perceived impact of the somatic coaching methodological intervention on the coaching effectiveness of the SISC-certified training program graduates. The lived experiences of eight coaches who were prepared with and certified in somatic coaching by the Strozzi Institute were explored. The findings from this research can be used to enhance understanding of the lived experiences of SISC-certified coaches regarding the application of the somatic coaching methodology and the potential impact of the methodology on coaching effectiveness from the coach's perspective.

Chapter 2 includes a discussion of theoretical connections to change and an introduction to the model used to explore perspectives on the impact of somatic coaching on coach effectiveness. The chapter also includes a literary review of coaching, its benefits, and barriers to

effective coaching, as well as the topics of body-based coaching and embodiment. Results of a literature review on somatic coaching are also presented before the chapter concludes with a summary.

## CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

Coetzee (2019) considered the needs of contemporary leaders and recognized that leaders play a vital role in driving results that support organizational success. The landscape for leaders is saturated with volatility, uncertainty, complexity, and ambiguity. Leaders need to be agile, able to adapt, and work to ensure the sustainable performance and success of organizations. Coetzee maintained that conventional approaches to coaching are not aligned with the VUCA world in which leaders operate. According to Coetzee, alternative coaching strategies are necessary to prepare leaders for effectiveness in modern times.

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to explore the lived experiences of coaches certified by the Strozzi Institute in somatic coaching. This research was used to discover more about leadership development by gaining insights into the phenomenon of somatic coaching. This chapter examines existing literature on coaching, the benefits of coaching, barriers to effective coaching, body-based coaching, embodiment, and somatic coaching. Theoretical considerations related to change are presented first, followed by the framework used in the study.

### **Intentional Change Theory**

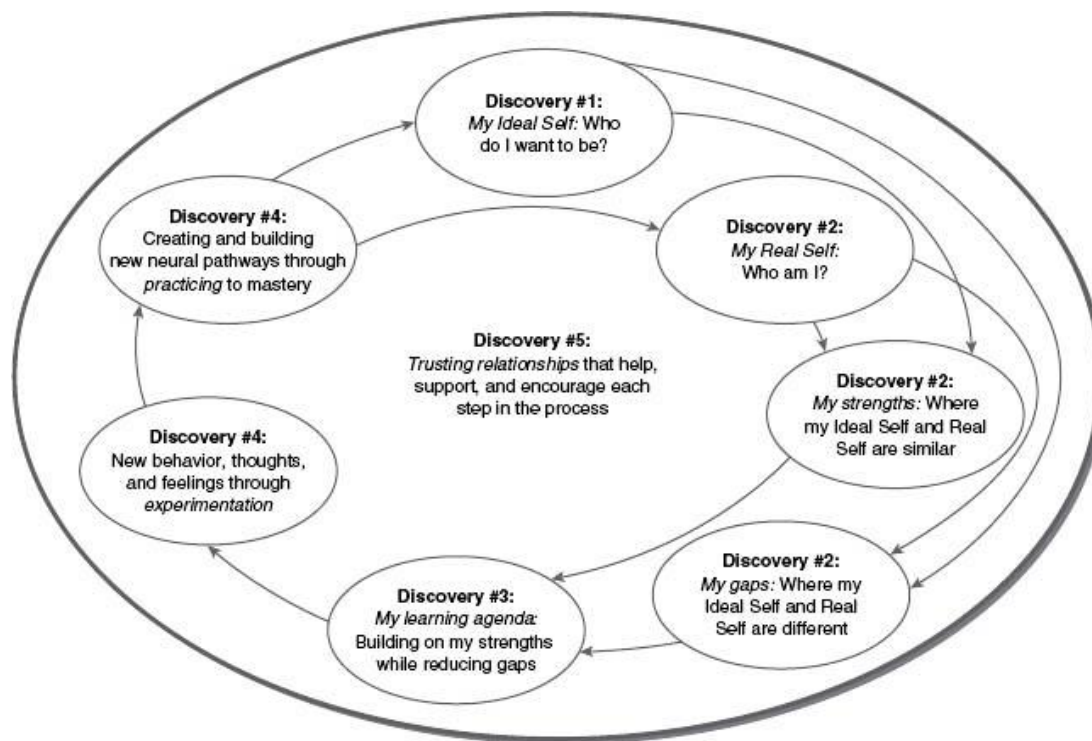
In an overview of ICT through a lens of complexity, Boyatzis (2006) applied concepts from complexity theory to ICT, gaining new insights into how and why desired sustainable change can occur. The author explored over 30 years of longitudinal studies of organizational and individual change. Boyatzis found that change is intentional and sustainable, is discontinuous overall, and occurs through a series of emergent conditions. Intentional change, inherent to business coaching, can be used to frame research for coach effectiveness.

Taylor et al. (2019), who proposed that an effective coach enables sustained change in clients, discussed coach effectiveness in the context of ICT. ICT has five levels of discovery. The first level of discovery in ICT is to articulate the ideal self and then commit to the ideal self. The second level of discovery is self-evaluation, which involves comparing the real self to the vision of the ideal self. The third level of discovery involves developing a plan to transition from the real self to the ideal self. The components of the fourth level include experimentation and practice with elements of the transition plan for change created in the third level of discovery. The fifth level of discovery is relationship building for support and encouragement through the first four levels of discovery and for the duration of the change process.

In examining opportunities for ICT, Dyck and Lovelace (2018) described ICT as a self-directed journey to learning and personal change. Dyck and Lovelace explained that the five levels of discovery in ICT are iterative. The five levels of discovery of the ICT were used to facilitate inquiry into the participant coaches' journeys of change and somatic transformation. The first level of discovery was used to inquire about the coaches' vision for coaching. For the second level of discovery, an understanding of the participant coaches' expectations for somatic coaching compared to their vision as coaches was sought. The third level of discovery was used to explore how the study participants adapted their coaching approaches in response to incorporating the somatic coaching methodology into their coaching toolkits. The fourth level involved an inquiry into how study participants applied the somatic coaching methodology and practices in their work as coaches. The fifth level of discovery for participants involved inquiring through each coach's own lens how the somatic transformation and coaching outcomes of their clients had been influenced by the coaches' use of the somatic coaching methodology throughout the coaching relationship. The five levels of discovery are shown in Figure 2.1.

Figure 2.1

*Boyatzis's Intentional Change Theory*



*Note.* Reprinted from “Interpersonal aesthetics—emotional and social intelligence competencies are wisdom in practice,” by R. Boyatzis (2007). In *Handbook of Organizational and Managerial Wisdom* (p. 234). SAGE Publications (<https://doi.org/10.4135/9781412982726>)

### Human Performance Improvement Model

Lazăr and Robu (2015) explained that coaching is an intervention commonly used in the technological field of human performance improvement (HPI) to address performance gaps in knowledge, skills, and attitudes. The general intent in the field of HPI is to use interventions to close performance gaps and deliver business results. HPI as a discipline is rooted in evidence-based practice. A systems lens and systematic approaches are employed in HPI to identify performance gaps, determine their root causes, and design and implement interventions that support business solutions. Practitioners use HPI models to help produce desired business results.

Kirkpatrick (2005) introduced the four levels of training evaluation in 1959. The four levels of training evaluation later came to be known as the Kirkpatrick model. The Kirkpatrick model of evaluation is a tool used by practitioners to develop and evaluate the impact of training interventions. Kirkpatrick designed the four levels of evaluation to assess learner reactions to the intervention, learner learning levels resulting from the intervention, changes in on-the-job behavior resulting from skills or knowledge gained from the intervention, and changes in organizational results linked to the intervention(s).

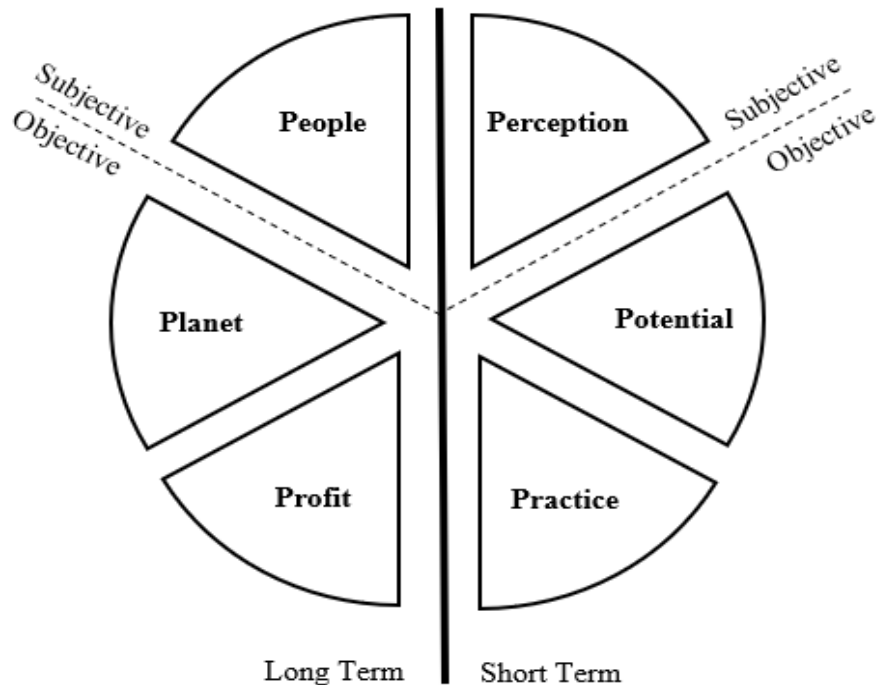
To advance the HPI toolkit, Marker et al. (2009) built upon the work of Kirkpatrick and others, proposing the six-P framework rooted in sustainability. The six-P framework has six elements. The six elements of the six-P framework are depicted as slices of a pie (see Figure 2.2). The six elements include perception, potential, practice, profit, planet, and people. The first four elements of the six-P framework are somewhat parallel to Kirkpatrick's model. The six P's elements of perception, potential, practice, and profit can be likened, respectively, to reaction, learning, behavior, and results. The remaining two elements of planet and people in the six-P framework are categories used to measure impacts on the environment and society, respectively.

Marker et al. (2009) explained that perception, potential, and practice are shown as short-term on the right side of the pie graphic. Short-term elements are indicators related to an intervention that are available immediately following the intervention or shortly thereafter. On the left side of the pie, profit, planet, and people are shown as long-term. The long-term elements are indicators related to an intervention that may not be measurable for weeks, months, or years. The framework sections of people and perception are illustrated as subjective. The context for the element of perception can be understood from individual reactions. Societal judgments can

be used to inform the people element of the framework. The remaining four sections of potential, practice, profit, and planet are depicted as objective.

**Figure 2.2**

*The Six-P Planning and Evaluation Framework*



*Note.* Reprinted from “A planning and evaluation six-pack for sustainable organizations: The Six-P framework,” by A. Marker, E. Johnson, & C. Caswell (2009). *Performance Improvement* 48(8), p. 29.

According to Marker et al. (2009), subjective perspectives can be garnered for all six elements in the six-P framework, depending on the questions asked, the methods used for data collection, and the approach used for data analysis. Given the research methodology and design of this study, subjective information was collected through the perceptions of the lived experiences of the study participants. Data was collected for the short-term subjective element of

perception, the short-term objective elements of potential and practice, and the long-term objective elements of profit, which is likened to results from an intervention.

All the short-term elements of Marker et al.'s (2009) six-P framework, as well as the long-term element of profit, were considered in the current study. These four elements were used to garner a phenomenological understanding of the perceptions of the impact of the somatic coaching methodology intervention on the effectiveness of coaching as experienced by SISC-certified coaches. Given the exploratory purpose of this research, the six-P framework was used to explore study participants' perceptions of the somatic coaching intervention rather than conducting an evaluation. Since the six-P framework is an extension of the field of HPI, implications for HPI were also considered.

### **Coaching**

According to Lazăr and Robu (2015), coaching is a tool in the practitioner toolkit that can be used to influence positive impacts on performance, learning, and business results. Based on the purpose of the coaching, clients may improve in various areas, such as focus and self-awareness, communication, working relationships, reduction of workplace problems, enhancement of promotability, acceleration of career advancement, and better results in organizational performance. Coaching as an intervention can be used to address performance gaps identified for attitudes, knowledge, and skills.

Cox et al. (2018) explained that coaching is a process of developing humans using structured interactions. The structured interactions in the coaching process are coupled with the use of fitting strategies, tools, and approaches to promote sustainable and desirable change. The coachee and, potentially, other stakeholders are the beneficiaries of coaching. Coetzee (2019) discussed how coaching is leveraged in the VUCA world to identify the realities leaders face in

order to meet the requisite need for effective change in the VUCA context. The coaching process is holistic and interactive between a coach and a leader, helping the leader enhance individual excellence in leadership. Coaching is used as a leadership development tool to prepare leaders and to coach executives and business leaders.

### **Business Coaching**

Wiginton and Cartwright (2020) indicated that business coaching is rooted in social science and business research and the disciplines of consulting psychology, management consulting, and training and development. Managers use business coaching for diverse needs across organizations and among individuals. Business coaching is used to contribute to success in business. Experienced leaders and novice leaders can benefit from business coaching.

According to Schutte and Steyn (2015), business coaching is a newer approach to coaching. The authors investigated available literature to understand the progress level in developing the body of knowledge for business coaching. They analyzed 36 articles and generated a synthesis and summary to contribute to the building blocks for developing business coaching as a discipline in academia. Schutte and Steyn described business coaching as a one-on-one relationship with an emphasis on learning to change individual behavior to improve organizational effectiveness through goal setting. Dominant concepts associated with business coaching included executive coaching and leadership development.

### **Executive Coaching**

Pavur (2013) identified three drivers for executive coaching. The first driver was to meet training and development needs. The second driver was individual well-being, including navigating emotions. The third driver for coaching leaders and executives was the need for leaders to develop resilience and adaptability. Pavur identified beneficiaries for each of the

executive coaching drivers. Although coaching for leader training and development benefits the leaders being coached, the intended beneficiaries of coaching for the training and development of leaders are the organization and stakeholders of the organization. For the category of coaching for well-being and self-actualization, the primary beneficiary is the leader. The secondary beneficiaries of coaching for well-being and self-actualization are the organization and the organizational stakeholders. Coaching for adaptation and resilience would have direct and indirect benefits to the leader. Coaching for adaptation would be especially helpful to the leader in anticipating future trends. The leader's ability to anticipate future trends could then be impactful to the organization, enabling efforts to prepare for multiple future scenarios, orient to new environments, and adapt to rapid change needs.

### **Coaching for Leadership Development**

As Korotov (2017) described, coaching for leadership development is a human development activity designed to develop managers who are expected to lead effectively in the context of increased complexity. Practitioners commonly employ assessments in coaching for leadership development to bring awareness to a gap in leadership competence between current and desired states of leadership competence. These assessment results are then used to inform the foundation for the coaching intervention to address the leadership gap.

According to Rowland (2016), stakeholders responsible for leadership development need to use an experiential approach to develop leaders. Habits are not changed by thought alone. Based on neuroscience, changing behavior is best supported through lived experience, which can occur when the brain is activated by emotions. Through the visceral experience triggered by emotions, leaders can get out of their heads and be more intentional in their behavior through conscious decision-making. The being of leaders needs to be influenced to enable leaders to

regulate mental and emotional states. According to Rowland, focusing on the *being* of the leader rather than their behavior or *doing* is essential to developing leaders.

### **Coaching for Change**

O'Connor and Cavanagh (2013) asserted that coaching is designed to create change in the individual leader. When change is created in the leader, the way in which the coached leader interacts with the organizational system changes. Consequently, integral to the success of the coached executive and the associated organizational stakeholders is the effectiveness of the executive coach in fostering such change. According to Strözzi-Heckler (2014), somatic coaching is a tool that can be used to facilitate change and the embodiment of leadership skills. In somatic coaching, the individual's way of being is the foundation of the coaching. Coaches use somatic coaching to support clients and help them transform and achieve sustained change by working with and through the body.

### **Coaching Engagement**

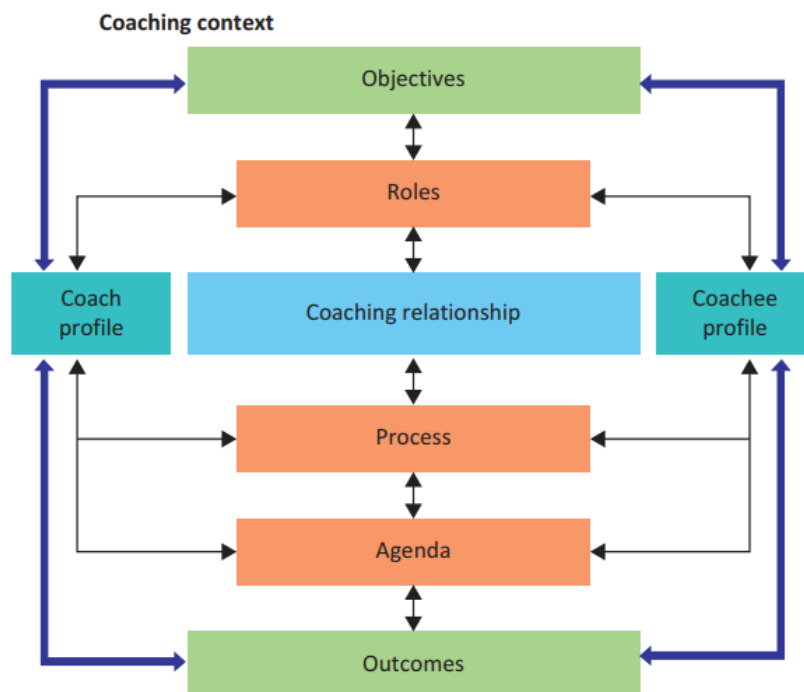
Cox et al. (2014b) addressed four facets of coaching engagement. The four facets of the coaching engagement include the coach, the coachee, the coaching relationship and processes, and the coaching context. They posited that the coach's background, experience, and attributes are important to the coaching engagement for the coach. They indicated that, for the coachee as an individual, their values, attitude, and commitment to the coaching process are relevant considerations for the coaching engagement. Communication, collaboration in learning, and equality of power are essential factors in the coach-coachee relationship, as well as the coaching processes developed between the coach and the coachee. Both the coach and the coachee must understand the organizational agenda and the allocated space and time for engagement in the coaching context.

## The Coaching Landscape

Coetzee et al. (2023) considered coaching through a lens of goodness-of-fit. Given the VICCAS environment for leaders, there is a need for fit between the coachee leader and the context in which they operate. The author proposed nine coaching building blocks for the coaching engagement to enable considerations for coachee leader–context fit. The coaching building blocks used by Coetzee to illustrate the coaching landscape include the coaching context, coaching objectives, roles of the coachee and the coach, the coaching relationship, the coaching process, the coaching agenda, the profile of the coach, profile of the coachees, and coaching outcomes (see Figure 2.3).

**Figure 2.3**

*The Coaching Landscape*



*Note.* Reprinted from “The application of a systemic world view within coaching as a strategy for leadership development,” by M. E. Coetzee, 2019. Unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Johannesburg, p. 22.

### **The Coaching Context**

Coetzee (2019) contemplated the breadth in coaching for the coaching context. The author described the coaching context as the context outside of the leader in which the leader operates and is embedded. All aspects of the entirety of the person, the person's life, and how the aspects of the person's life are nested dynamically are considered in the coaching context. According to Odendaal (2016), one must consider the immediate business context and how micro-internal organizational and external conditions are influenced by macro-external conditions. Examples of macro complexities in the business context are unstable political environments and the global monetary crisis. Examples of micro-influences are politics at the national and regional level, legislation, socio-economic challenges, and the local business environment. Leaders and coaches face challenges due to changing demands and increased complexity in the organizational context in which leaders operate. Coaching outcomes are influenced by the leadership challenges in the coaching context. The coach can employ a wide variety of lenses, techniques, and tools to inform understanding of the context in which the leader is embedded.

### **Coaching Objectives**

As Coetzee (2019) explained, the coaching objectives are comprised of the foci of the coaching. Coaching objectives are connected and interrelated, and coaches can use these objectives to help their clients increase awareness of self across all of the client's life dimensions. It is essential for the coach and client to understand the basis for the coaching

engagement, specifically whether it is structured and fixed versus flexible and emergent. The coach asks challenging questions to help the client reflect, explore, discover, and learn. Coaches also pose questions that challenge the client to stimulate rigorous thinking, broaden their ability to understand and increase their individual capacity to do things differently to thrive in a world of complexity.

### **Coach Profile**

Coetzee (2019) noted that the coach profile is specific to the coach. There are multiple factors concerning the coach profile. Coaches must understand what they apply from their identity in the building block of the coaching process. They must know whether they will use only parts of themselves or apply themselves holistically. Because coaches are uniquely equipped with particular approaches, theories, or models, they need to understand whether they require specific qualities to use a certain approach effectively. Odendaal (2016) indicates that coaches have diverse coaching backgrounds, with coaches presenting in the coaching industry from a wide array of industries, such as management, consulting, and human resources. Coaches need to understand which coaching approaches are well-suited or ill-suited to a given coaching situation. Skills in developing leader competencies for individuals are more prevalent than skills used to advance levels of a leader's mindset through transformation. As individuals, coaches need to recognize their strengths and weaknesses.

### **Role of the Coach**

According to Theeboom et al. (2017), the coach's role is to strive for a specific goal in each of the four main stages of change. The primary stages of change include the preparatory contemplation stage, the contemplation stage, the planning stage, and the maintenance and termination stages. The coach's role in the preparatory contemplation stage is to facilitate the

coachee's awareness and mindfulness. The coach helps the client explore their capacity for adaptability to enhance self-efficacy during the contemplation stage. For the planning stage, the coach's central support role is to help the client establish goals and map out related implementation requirements. In each of the last stages of maintenance and termination, the coach's role is to help clients reflect on learning and experiences to increase the chance of sustained change.

### **The Coaching Relationship**

Payne et al. (2023) maintained that the coaching relationship is foundational to coaching outcomes and fostering sustained change. To understand what constitutes effectiveness in a professional coaching relationship, they conducted semistructured interviews with nine coach–client dyads who reflected on recent coaching experiences through a lens of critical incidents. Payne et al. identified four themes in support of an effective coaching relationship. First, they found that the foundation of the coaching relationship is a supportive relationship. Second, the coaches' use of questions to help the client explore, inspire shifts in thinking, and facilitate change was helpful to the coaching relationship. The third theme was the coach's initiative-taking approach to initiating the coaching process from a place of knowledge and expertise. The last theme in support of an effective coaching relationship was the positive social influence of the coach, where the coach helped enhance client perceptions through social actions, such as questioning.

### **The Coaching Process**

As indicated by Cox et al. (2014a), coaching is comprised of structured and focused interactions. Fitting strategies, tools, and approaches are leveraged by the coach in coaching to promote change that is both sustainable and desirable. The coaching process is found in the *how*

of coaching. According to Grief (2017), the coaching process is a service created in collaboration with the coach and the coachee through a suite of interactions. Components of the coaching process include the coaching relationship, coach behavior to support the coachee, and the coaching client. The process of coaching interactions between the coach and the coachee is a considerable component of coaching outcomes.

### **Coachee Profile**

Coetzee (2019) discussed questions concerning the coachee profile. One question for the coach to consider is whether certain qualities of the coachee will be emphasized based on the chosen coaching approach. Another question to be pondered is whether processes that do not require mindful consciousness will be considered or if ways in which the client consciously thinks will be explored. Coaches need to understand the comprehensiveness of the coachee's focus. In doing so, the onus is on coaches to contemplate whether to consider the whole of the client within their respective context. For the client context, key relationships across all dimensions of the client's life may be included, or the areas to be addressed in coaching may be limited to specific aspects of the client.

### **Benefits of Coaching**

Wiginton and Cartwright (2020) sought to understand the extent to which business coaching is beneficial to the success of both the coachee and the organization. To explore the impact of business coaching on leaders and the companies for which they work, Wiginton and Cartwright surveyed participants from 87 companies that invested in business coaching. They investigated whether there was a return on investment from business coaching. The authors also considered six dimensions to assess the effectiveness of business coaching. These six dimensions included strategic clarity, leadership effectiveness, short-term decision-making, employee

engagement, customer satisfaction, and financial impact. Wiginton and Cartwright found positive impacts from business coaching across all dimensions, except for financial results, which were statistically significant. Respondents did not believe there was a correlation between business coaching and the coaching outcome of financial results. With a 99% confidence level, respondents perceived a positive return on investment, with results indicating benefits to the coachees and their respective organizations.

To understand the benefits of coaching from the perspective of senior business executives, Longenecker and McCartney (2020) collected qualitative data from 70 senior-level business executives. Each participant had a private executive coach and experience with being coached. Of the 70 participants, Longenecker and McCartney interviewed 30 and divided the remaining 40 into 10 focus groups, each with four people. They asked participants in the interview group and the focus groups to describe the benefits of their own experience of being coached by an executive coach. The authors asked all participants to describe the benefits they garnered from their personal coaching experience. Longenecker and McCartney considered benefits at the individual and organizational levels. Findings revealed multiple benefits of executive coaching from the interview group and the focus groups. These benefits included those associated with leader behavior, emotional intelligence, feedback, encouragement, personal support, and more. Improvement could be made in the leader's effectiveness with the proper use of an effective executive coach. Longenecker and McCartney suggested that senior leaders who have undergone executive coaching can have a powerful impact on the culture and performance of an organization.

## **Impact of Coaching on Coaching Outcomes**

To assess the executive coaching outcomes in a field setting, de Haan et al. (2019) conducted what they contended to be the largest randomized control trial on executive coaching in international healthcare as of their study date. Participants in the randomized control study included 66 coaches, 180 coachees, and 140 line managers among the 180 coachees. To predict the impact of coaching on the outcomes of coaching effectiveness and personality derailment, de Haan et al. considered the impact of the main ingredients of executive coaching. They used six coaching elements common to all coaching approaches as independent variables in a hypothesized predictive model of coaching. The six independent variables included coach behaviors, social support, coachee resilience, coachee well-being, personality factors, and self-efficacy.

De Haan et al. (2019) used the coaching relationship as a mediating variable to understand the impact on coaching outcomes of coaching effectiveness and personality derailment. They employed a randomized controlled trial to test the predictive coaching model. They found evidence supporting the importance of the coaching relationship, as indicated by variables associated with both the coach and the coaching client. The coaching relationship served as a mediator between perceived social support and coaching well-being. Shown in the findings was that the impact on positive aspects of personality, resilience, and coachee self-efficacy was significant. The main active components of executive coaching were predictive of the coaching outcomes, including executive coaching effectiveness and the ability to mitigate leader career derailment.

Mosteo et al. (2021) conducted a qualitative study to explore how various elements of the coaching setting impact coachee perceptions of outcomes from coaching sessions. They

considered setting elements for the coach and the coachee. The authors conducted a thematic analysis derived from 197 semistructured interviews with executives in the banking industry. It was suggested in the findings that coachees perceived coaching sessions as useful, based on the coach's guidance and reliability, as well as the coachees' willingness and self-awareness. Subthemes associated with the coachee's self-awareness included acknowledging personal limitations and improved self-understanding. In all, 72% of the executive coachees identified self-awareness as a key element for perceiving and receiving the value available from the coaching process.

### **Effectiveness of Coaching**

According to Blackman et al. (2016), business coaching includes executive, leadership, and other forms of coaching implemented in a business context. The authors considered whether business coaching was an effective tool for development. Using a systematic review, they conducted a comprehensive analysis of empirical evidence related to the effectiveness of business coaching. It was shown in the findings that 33 factors were considered contributory to perceived effectiveness in business coaching. Blackman et al. summarized the 33 factors they identified as supporting the perceived effectiveness of business coaching (see Table 2.1).

**Table 2.1**

*Summary of Factors Contributing to Effective Coaching Practice*

Coach	Coachee	Relationship	Organizational Context	Coaching Process
Experience with coaching	Self-efficacy	Matching between coach and coachee	Support	Encourage appropriate action
Experience with relevant sector	Motivated		Goal Alignment	Uses priorities and timelines
Likable	Locus of control	One-on-one interaction		Relates personal to organizational goals
Self-confident	Confident	Trust		
Empathetic	Committed	Authenticity		
Warm	Involved			

Coach	Coachee	Relationship	Organizational Context	Coaching Process
Organized	Effort	Challenge		Identifies blind spots
Creative	Ability/	Commitment		Constructively views difficult issues
Calm	Competence	by both		
Communicates clearly				
Honest				
Maintains confidentiality				

*Note.* Reprinted from “Challenges for the theory and practice of business coaching: A systematic review of empirical evidence,” by A. Blackman, G. Moscardo, & D. E. Gray, 2016, *Human Resource Development Review*, 15(4), p. 476. (<https://doi.org/10.1177/1534484316673177>)

Blackman et al. (2016) used five coaching categories to summarize the 33 factors. The five coaching categories used to summarize business coaching effectiveness included the coach, the coaching client, the coaching relationship, the organizational context, and the process used for coaching. For the coach category, 12 factors were perceived to support effective business coaching. Blackman et al. grouped the 12 factors believed to support business coaching effectiveness under experience, attributes of the coach, and coaching behaviors. Experience factors in support of effective business coaching include the coach’s coaching experience and the coach’s relevant experiences in the client’s industry. The authors summarized the factors that contribute to coaching attributes, which included the coach’s ability to be warm, empathetic, calm, likable, creative, honest, self-confident, and organized. Behavioral factors that were indicated to support the effectiveness of business coaching included communicating clearly and maintaining confidentiality.

For the category of the coachee, Blackman et al. (2016) identified eight coachee attributes as contributing factors to effective coaching. In the category of the coaching relationship, factors related to effective coaching practice included matching the coach and

coachee, the one-on-one nature of the coaching interaction, and the elements of trust, authenticity, challenge, and commitment from the coach and the coachee. Under the category of organizational context, Blackman et al. identified the support and alignment of goals related to effective coaching practice. Concerning effective coaching practice within the category of the coaching process, they identified five actions, including encouraging appropriate action, using timelines and priorities, relating personal and organizational goals, identifying blind spots, and viewing difficult issues constructively. Based on preliminary research findings, Blackman et al. posited that business coaching can be an effective approach. The authors acknowledged that the evidence on business coaching effectiveness was limited due to the self-reported evaluations.

### **Effectiveness of the Coach**

Although the objective of achieving sustained change, following the limited time available in a coaching intervention, is a challenge to coaching effectiveness, Behrendt et al. (2021) assert that coach behavior can be used to facilitate effective coaching. Despite the working relationship between the coach and the client being the primary indicator of successful coaching, there remains a lack of understanding about particular coach behaviors that can be used to create effective coaching interactions. Behrendt et al. proposed a framework for coaching behavior to advance the development of coaching theory. They outlined three coaching behavior metacategories comprised of a base of 33 behaviors used to frame coach behaviors that could be used to identify specific behavioral measures. The three overarching coaching behavioral categories included a purpose orientation, a relationship orientation, and an orientation toward warranting change.

Coach behavior that is purpose-oriented directly aids goal attainment, according to Behrendt et al. (2021). Effective working relationships are created through coaching behavior

that is relationship-oriented. Memorable experiences are generated from coach behavior that is change-warranting. Sustained change for the client is facilitated by two aspects related to the change-warranting behavior of the coach. The first aspect is the client's comprehensive memorization and stabilization of the memorable experience generated by the coach's behavior. The second aspect is the client's transference of the stabilized memory generated by the coach's behavior into the client's daily life through the client's personal, professional, or organizational routines.

De Meuse et al. (2009) explained that the effectiveness of executive coaching may be related to the coaching methodology the coach selects. Due to their varied academic backgrounds, coaches employ different methodologies to help their coachees. Various coaching methodologies may be more effective in certain content areas than others. The effectiveness of executive coaching may be influenced by the nexus of the nature of the coaching topic and the selected coaching method employed. According to de Haan et al. (2011), the literature suggests that a wide array of coaching techniques have been considered equally helpful. De Haan et al. suggested that coaches avoid heavy reliance on using a particular technique. The ability to employ a variety of techniques used well and at the right time is vital to the effectiveness of the executive coaching intervention.

### **Barriers to Effective Coaching**

According to Graßmann et al. (2018), barriers to effective coaching can have negative consequences for executive coaching stakeholders. To gain a deeper understanding of potential antecedents and the impacts of negative effects on coaches, they conducted a quantitative international study with 275 coach participants. The authors found that coaches perceived a portion of the adverse effects as having negative effects on the clients. Participant coaches

perceived the negative effects related to coaching that could impact both the coach and the coachee. Graßmann et al. (2018) reported that the negative effects perceived by participant coaches, which could impact both the coach and the coachee, included low attainment of goals, low quality of the relationship, and low perception of coach competence.

Negative effects of coaching can occur because of the coaching intervention, according to Schermuly et al. (2014). The authors purported to be the first to explore the negative effects of coaching systematically. They defined negative effects as undesirable or harmful consequences for the client that are a direct result of the coaching. The negative effects for the client occur parallel to or after the coaching engagement. Schermuly et al. collected qualitative data from the coaches' perspective for 123 evaluated coaching sessions. They determined potential negative effects resulting from coaching using a preliminary qualitative study.

Schermuly et al. (2014) subsequently used an exploratory investigation to understand the frequency, intensity, and duration of the negative effects of coaching. It was shown in the findings that the average number of negative effect occurrences was two per coaching session. Schermuly et al. also found that the level of intensity of the negative coaching effects was low. They detected a positive relationship between the frequency of negative effects from coaching and the breadth of the subjects considered. The authors invited coaches to rate potential causes of negative effects in coaching. The coaches attributed the majority of the causes of the negative effects of coaching to factors related to the coaching client. The coaches associated the negative effects of coaching with additional causes. One of the additional causes the coaches associated with the negative effects of coaching was the coaching approach used, related to each client's needs. Another cause the coaches associated with the negative effects of coaching was time limitations.

## The Coach

Schermuly (2014) considered the negative effects of coaching for business coaches. Negative effects for coaches were defined as effects that occur during or after coaching, caused as a direct consequence of the coaching. The negative effects are unwanted by the business coach or harmful to the business coach. The author distributed a quantitative survey to 104 German coaches to determine the intensity and frequency of negative effects that occurred in their latest coaching session and throughout their careers. Schermuly discovered that business coaches experienced 30 negative effects. The author explored the negative effects of coaching on business coaches quantitatively and validated 14 effects. The 14 validated negative effects were rooted in fear, feelings, and/or emotion. At least one negative effect was present in over 90% of all recent coaching. Schermuly found that, on average, 5.9 negative effects occurred per coaching engagement. Throughout the business coaches' careers, 99% experienced at least one negative effect. Although the frequency of negative effects was high, the effects were low in intensity.

Barner and Higgins (2007) discussed barriers to effective coaching. Although coaches employed a wide and varied range of coaching methods, coaches tended to center their coaching craft on one coaching model. Without an awareness of the models and theories that inform their practice, coaches can encounter barriers to coaching effectiveness. The coaches' lack of ability to adapt their practice to address the constraints and limitations of their model of choice can lead to coaching barriers. Impacts that could emerge from a myopic approach to coaching include unnecessary failures in communication, a loss of trust, and lost opportunities to impact the client positively.

## Coaching Relationship

In an investigation of coaching ingredients, Williams (2023) examined the alignment of the coaching relationship during coaching. The author studied 56 coaching dyads over a four- to six-week period, during which participants engaged in four 1-hour face-to-face sessions.

Williams used goal-focused coaching and the working alliance of the coach and the client as measures rated by the coach and the client. A decrease in alignment in the coaching relationship was shown over time. De Haan et al. (2020) critically reviewed two large-scale randomized control studies to consider the coaching relationship and enhance understanding of effectiveness in executive coaching. At the earlier stages of the coaching relationship, they found a higher correlation between coaching effectiveness and the strength of the working alliance. They did not find a significant correlation between the strength of the working alliance and increased outcomes resulting from additional coaching conversations.

Schermuly (2018) found that the caliber of the relationship between the coach and the client was one of the four variables relevant to client dropout. The author conceptualized and defined client dropout as the termination of the coaching protocol before the goal is attained and all coaching sessions are completed. To explore the cause and prevalence of coaching client dropouts in business coaching from the viewpoint of the coach, Schermuly conducted two studies. Found was that 57.4% of business coaches experienced the phenomenon of a client dropout throughout their career. The implication of client dropout to the client is that the positive effects of coaching cannot be fully achieved. Schermuly suggested additional research on the antecedent of poor quality or failed relationships.

## **Resistance to Change**

According to leadership consultant and author Hamill (2013), formerly of Roffey Park Institute in the United Kingdom, self-awareness is only part of what is required for change. Relying on findings from neuroscience, Hamill questioned the sustainability of changes brought forth with the use of current leadership development theories and models. The author explored approaches that incorporate the body into learning and leadership development to evolve from self-awareness to self-cultivation. The application of the typical tools used for coaching and developing leaders did not impact the regions of the brain needed to bring about behavioral change.

Cotone (2014) indicated that constrictions in the body and suppressed emotions can be barriers to change. The author reported on the concept of armoring that Wilhelm Reich proposed early in the 20th century. Armoring emerged from observations of the phenomenon of postural distortions from repressed emotions. The repressed emotions are a result of the physical contraction in clients that restrains the impulse to express emotions. The excess energy from the repressed emotion is housed in a muscular restriction. Given that practiced historical muscular patterns and repressed emotions have accumulated over time, the capacity to respond to what is happening in the present is reduced. Individuals consequently respond to present situations based on past-practiced reactions. Feelings, emotions, personality, and character are shaped by what has been practiced in the body. The muscular patterns that are fixed in the body are central to an individual's way of being.

## ***Way of Being***

Sieler (2018) explained how an individual's way of being could serve as a barrier to change. Sieler described way of being as a space where ingrained perception patterns and

attitudes are deeply held. Way of being is where human existence is rooted, and learning, meaning, and change occur in response to continuous interplay between the domains of emotions, language, and the body. Way of being is what underpins communication and behavior and possible consequent results. Ingrained patterns of perception and attitudes may serve to limit the effectiveness of what the individual is capable of achieving.

According to Brendel (2016), who considered way of being in the context of facilitating change through mindfulness, individuals who embody a habituating way of being may be limited, where one's focus could be narrowed to everyday tasks and practical aspects that are objective, finite, and measurable. Attention may be shifted to tangible problems rather than having the ability to step back and understand the context in which problems are situated. Without awareness, leaders who embody a habituating way of being may be limited to engaging with automated approaches to fixing what is broken and maintaining the status quo for what is not broken rather than being open to change and transformation.

### **Body-Based Coaching**

Matthews (2012) found that working with the body in coaching enables coaches to facilitate change for clients, particularly when clients face complex and emergent issues. The author conducted an interpretive phenomenological analysis with coaches who used body-based approaches to coaching to elicit an initial understanding of the relevance of these specific approaches to coaching. Matthews learned that habitual patterns could be changed by applying body-based approaches in coaching. The author found that body-based coaching approaches were conducive to the occurrence of change at a tacit level, enabling implicit learning. Results from using body-based approaches to coaching included a faster achievement of change and

greater sustainability of change. Using the body in coaching can benefit the organizational clients, individuals, and teams in the organization.

Matthews (2012) found that coaches can benefit from incorporating the body into their coaching practice. A coach's use of the body in coaching deepened the coach's ability to expand beyond coaching behaviors. The coach's use of body allowed the coach to apply their whole self to the coaching experience. Given the benefits of body-based coaching for coaching stakeholders and coaches, Matthews discovered that incorporating the body into coaching expanded the range of available tools for coaches working with clients. The coach needs to be versed in body-based coaching to employ body-based coaching strategies.

According to Jackson (2017), various components of physicality are incorporated into a variety of coaching practices. Considerations surrounding physicality and embodiment in coaching may be used to inform the coaching process. Historical precedents about physicality and the role of the body are available in psychotherapy and other evolved disciplines. Evidence and guiding theory in support of physicality in coaching practice do exist. The presence of the body in coaching and the value of considering the body in coaching can both be understood through a lens of embodiment.

### **Embodiment**

According to Briers (2015), embodiment is a field of study sometimes referred to as somatics. The focus of embodiment is on exploring and understanding the lived experience of the body. The dominant stance in contemporary times is to treat the body as a mechanically functioning object. In the context of embodiment, the body is an integrated part of the whole self. Aquilina and Strözzi-Heckler (2019) explained the concept of armoring as a connection between the body and consciousness and discussed the subsequent evolution of Strözzi-Heckler's

approach to supporting change. Strözzi-Heckler recognized that innate cellular intelligence can be brought to the foreground with minimal encouragement.

According to Aquilina and Strözzi-Heckler (2019), Strözzi-Heckler embraced the concept of armoring and maintained that it would not be possible for clients to unpack issues without engaging in direct work through the body. Strözzi-Heckler cultivated the practice of working with the core of somatic senses and explored new and unconventional ways of working with clients. Strözzi-Heckler also pioneered an innovative approach to working with clients based on gestalt therapy, combining body-oriented psychotherapy with movement practices from Aikido martial arts, bodywork, and meditation. Later, Strözzi-Heckler incorporated the use and embodiment of language into the method of working with clients. The evolution of Strözzi-Heckler's integrated methodology resulted in somatic coaching, an approach to transformative change.

### **Somatic Coaching**

Stelter (2014) questioned the primary objective of coaching in contemporary society and viewed the evolution of coaching through a lens of three generations. The primary purpose of the first generation of coaching is goal setting. Solutioning is the focus of the second generation of coaching. Values and identity work are the focus of the third generation of coaching. Strözzi-Heckler (2014) explained that somatic coaching, which is done through the body, is the next evolution in coaching. In somatic coaching, the way of being of the individual is the ground of the coaching. Transformation in somatic coaching occurs by addressing the individual's way of being. Space for transformative change in somatics is facilitated by shifting one's states of consciousness to increase individual choice and capacity. Choice is subsequent to awareness. With greater awareness, one has an increased range of choices. Through increased awareness,

additional choices become available for individual thoughts, moods, feelings, actions, and ways of being.

As described by Aquilina and Strözzi-Heckler (2019), somatic coaching is a change process in which the embodied shape is transformed, awareness of narratives and habitual patterns is deepened, and movement toward life and work goals can occur. Sustainable change is enabled when the *being* of the person is addressed rather than what the person is *doing*. Blake (2009) noted that somatic coaching is used to facilitate changes in physical patterns, such as breathing, posture, and walking. The goal of enabling the changes is to raise somatic awareness, release tacit memories and train the body toward desired response patterns. Through fostering somatic intelligence, the individual can transition away from a historical way of being that serves as a barrier to what is desired and then shift to an envisioned future. Such a shift is accomplished through the development of a capacity to take new action.

### **Methodological Domains of Somatic Coaching**

Aquilina and Strözzi-Heckler (2019) explained that there are five methodological domains of somatic coaching, including somatic awareness, somatic opening, somatic practices, social context, and landscape and spirit. The first three domains of the somatic coaching methodology include somatic awareness, somatic opening, and somatic practices. These first three domains are interdependent, nonsequential, and mutually supportive. Somatic awareness, somatic opening, and somatic practices occur in concert within the boundaries of the social context domain, and with consideration of the domain of landscape and spirit. There are specific practices for each of the five domains of somatic coaching. The specific practices associated with each domain of the somatic coaching methodology are provided in Appendix H.

### ***Somatic Awareness***

According to Aquilina and Strözzi-Heckler (2019), somatic awareness, the first domain of the somatic coaching methodology, is where individual attention is directed toward the body's life to first notice what is present in the body. Typical responses to life's challenges may include numbing and detachment from bodily sensations. Somatic awareness begins with the recognition of sensations such as pressure and temperature and leaning toward understanding the inner landscape. The client's act of attending to sensations focuses the client's attention on the inner workings of the body, allowing the client to cultivate somatic awareness and move through past traumas. Given that choice follows awareness and from greater awareness one has more choices, it is necessary that awareness of the soma first takes place.

### ***Somatic Opening***

Strözzi-Heckler (2014) asserted the soma can be changed, transformed, and evolved through the shifting of the soma within the domain of somatic opening. In the domain of somatic opening, the historically embodied shape is undone, disassembled, disorganized, and deconstructed, allowing space for a new shape to emerge. Aquilina and Strözzi-Heckler (2019) maintained that the disruption to the past embodied self can be unnerving because the individual can go down a trail of questioning their identity and familiar ways of knowing. The undoing of oneself in the somatic opening is pivotal to the change transformation process. In the unfolding of the somatic opening, the coachee appreciates the old shape, acknowledges that it is no longer useful to them, and then releases it. Letting go of the old shape is needed in order to allow for the emergence of the new shape.

### *Somatic Practices*

For the third domain of somatic practices, Strözzi-Heckler (2014) pointed to Aristotle's contention that the individual is what the individual does repeatedly. What one practices will result in embodied stories, beliefs, emotional behavior, and moods. It is requisite to come to terms with the idea that the individual is always practicing something. The body is not capable of not practicing. The practices used in somatic coaching are to be integrated into the emotional, cognitive, and feeling aspects of the individual's life. A person feels the integration of somatic coaching practices rather than executing the practices as a rote mechanical exercise. The biology of the human body is organized as a receiver of stimuli from the environment. Through responding to stimuli, the individual evolves their shape to effectively integrate the incoming stimuli, meeting the fundamental needs of safety, dignity, and belonging.

Strözzi-Heckler (2014) outlined five aspects of somatic coaching practices. The first is a declaration of a purpose and vision used to align the coachee's somatic practices and enable the coachee to move toward. The second and third, respectively, are body- or soma-based somatic practices practiced over time. The fourth requires that the emphasis on somatic practices be rooted in the embodiment of new behaviors and actions rather than new insights alone. The fifth is that the somatic practices serve to disassemble an old soma in support of building a new soma.

### **Coaching Context in Somatic Coaching**

The ability to embody an aligned way of being would allow for the integration of a whole self where the individual self would not be separate from the persona of a leader, according to Brendel and Bennett (2016). Changing their way of being would enable leaders to shift from automatic to conscious behaviors. Preparing leaders using an integrated pedagogy rooted in way of being would allow leaders to align individual purpose and presence in a manner that would

span all contexts. Strözzi-Heckler (2014) indicated that in the effort to help transform the client's way of being, the interdependency between the individual and the outer world is considered through contexts ranging from the individual level to the level of nature and landscape. In the coaching context of the somatic coaching approach, the author recognized how the client was shaped by various levels of contexts, the client's impact on various contexts, and the contexts related to what the client cares about.

### **Coaching Objectives in Somatic Coaching**

According to Strözzi-Heckler (2014), the objectives of somatic coaching are transformation and sustained change. The somatic coach helps transform others by training individuals, communities, and organizational clients to reorganize themselves spiritually, emotionally, muscularly, and socially. The underlying intentions of somatics are to embody conflict through a generative interpretation, an ethic of social equity, and an ethic of environmental sustainability.

### ***Transformation***

According to Strözzi-Heckler (2014), a reorganization deeply felt in the body's tissues is integral to moving through the somatic coaching arc of transformation. The practices used in the Strozzi Somatic coaching process to facilitate movement through the arc of transformation are designed to enable individuals to make shifts in their nervous, organ, and muscular systems in the body. These bodily shifts are how individuals perceive, feel, and act. Within the Strozzi Somatic coaching process, the coachee is taught to mobilize the self energetically and muscularly, aligning with a new way of being. The energetic and muscular alignment with the new way of being is done from a place of feeling. Working through the body enables transformation that is purpose-driven, grounded, and sustainable.

### ***Facilitate Sustained Change***

Levine (2010) contended that neuroscientists can point to where emotions reside in the brain, but they are unable to explain how people change. Somatics can be used to facilitate a change process, helping clients move through the steps required to achieve sustained change. As Levine explained, some memories are associated with feelings and sensations described as emotional–experiential memories. Examples of emotional–experiential memories include the sensation of butterflies in the stomach when feeling anxious or the sudden relaxation of muscles after a stressful task has been completed. Emotional–experiential memories are messages to the self about a situation through a lens of past feelings or experiences. Because historical bodily sensations are aligned to thoughts and actions, corresponding behaviors are involuntary. Emotional–experiential memory tied to desired behaviors needs to be brought forth intentionally to achieve sustained change. In somatics, the practitioner facilitates the process of sustained change for the client by helping them evoke awareness of the nature of their feelings and bodily sensations, thereby bringing forth emotional–experiential memory.

### **Coach Profile in Somatic Coaching**

The somatic coach is trained to notice and attend to the client’s bodily conditioning, according to Aquilina and Strözzi-Heckler (2019). They maintained that there exists a demand for the somatic coach to be a ground for their client. The somatic coach’s attention needs to be rigorous, and their embodied presence needs to be centered. Strözzi-Heckler (2014) noted that because the somatic coach was previously guided by a somatic coach on their own journey of somatic transformation to become a somatic coach, the somatic coach has had repeated experiences moving through the stages of the arc of somatic transformation. The somatic coach recognizes that they and the client are both shaped by conditions in the social context, so the

somatic coach needs to develop skills based on their own understanding of how their unconscious assumptions, beliefs, and ways of relating were influenced by personal social conditioning. The somatic coach needs to be able to listen, see, and deepen their presence to guide clients through their transformation of shape.

### **Role of the Coach in Somatic Coaching**

Aquilina and Strözzi-Heckler (2019) explained that the somatic coach works with, on, and through the body, supporting the client's journey through somatic transformation in order to facilitate sustained change. The fundamental role of the somatic coach is to guide the client in being with and feeling the animating life force that supports their aliveness, helping them tune into the innate wisdom of the body as a source of depth and intelligence. The somatic coach supports the client's evolution of shape through the arc of transformation by working in each of the somatic coaching domains, including somatic awareness, somatic opening, and somatic practices, with consideration of the social context, landscape, and mystery domains.

### ***Working With the Body***

Aquilina and Strözzi-Heckler (2019) indicated that in the somatic coach's work with the body, the coach educates the client on how to bring a conscious intention and personal accountability to how the individual is shaping themselves. The coach first collaborates with the client around their social and emotional lives to help them understand how emotional reactions toward other people and circumstances are manifested physically in the client and how the client can elicit alternative ways of being through one of the two primary means. One of the means the client can use to elicit a different way of being is conscious intention. A second way the client can elicit alternative ways of being is through personal accountability for how they are shaping

themselves relationally, energetically, emotionally, and physically under various circumstances with specific individuals.

### ***Working On the Body***

As Aquilina and Strözzi-Heckler (2019) explained, it is essential for the coach to address the client's physical symptoms before proceeding with their work when pronounced physical symptoms are present in the client. Somatic coaches are taught how to help clients release stored tension in their bodies, such as collaborating with the client to alleviate associated headaches. When a client presents with organic physical issues more severe than stored body tension, the somatic coach, unless otherwise medically trained, has a fundamental responsibility to refer the client to seek support from a qualified health professional.

### ***Working Through the Body***

In somatic coaching, the coach works with the individual's life energy, which shapes the individual's self, according to Aquilina and Strözzi-Heckler (2019). The primary purpose of the somatic coach is to help the client connect with and resonate with their source energy. This source energy supports the client's aliveness. The client's aliveness is reflected in their unique rhythm of energy, as manifested in how they express themselves emotionally and physically, how they fulfill their commitments, and how they carry out their roles in life.

### **Coaching Relationship in Somatic Coaching**

Strözzi-Heckler (2014) emphasized that the coach's consciousness around access and power is essential to the somatic coaching relationship. The somatic coach understands how social norms and institutions are embodied in both the coach and the client, recognizing that the shaping and social conditions influencing both are continually present in the coach-client relationship. The somatic coach is transparent with the client about how phenomena within the

social context have influenced both parties. The somatic coach raises awareness of the differences in access and power between the coach and the client and collaborates skillfully with the client to foster a shared understanding of access and power within the coaching relationship.

According to Strözzi-Heckler (2014), the coach uses a discovery process in the somatic coaching relationship to help the client understand what no longer serves them and to inform a new future the client desires. The client identifies their vision and intent and declares their commitment to their new desired future. Throughout the somatic coaching relationship, the original commitment between the coach and the client may evolve as a result of discoveries that emerge during the somatic coaching process.

### **Somatic Coaching Process**

According to Strözzi-Heckler (2014), in the somatic coaching process, the coach nonsequentially applies elements of the somatic coaching methodological domains of somatic awareness, somatic opening, and somatic practices. The coach considers the methodological domains of social context, landscape, and mystery. The somatic coach then collaborates with the client to evolve the client's shape from the historical shape to the unbounded shape, to the new shape, and to embodiment, which are the four distinct stages of the arc of somatic transformation.

### ***Stages of Somatic Transformation***

Strözzi-Heckler (2014) asserted that one does not experience linearly the evolution of the individual shape through the historical shape, the unbounded shape, the new shape, and the embodiment stages of transformation as they occur over time. In each stage of somatic transformation, it is requisite for the client to acknowledge the sensations, behaviors, perceptions, emotions, and narratives associated with that stage. Throughout the process of

somatic transformation, the client learns how to separate from a historical shape that no longer benefits them and how to reorganize themselves into a new, current shape aligned with what is important to the client. To move through the somatic arc of transformation, the client sheds embodiments that are no longer needed and engages in generating new embodiments. Working through the body, the client invokes a desired future by engaging with full presence in the present. The processes and practices relevant to each of the four stages of the arc of somatic transformation are provided in Appendix I.

### **Coachee Profile in Somatic Coaching**

According to Strözzi-Heckler (2014), the client's willingness to explore and examine their inner landscape is a starting point for them to consider what is important and what purpose they desire to fulfill. The client in somatic coaching will be open to feeling their aliveness and connecting to the wisdom of their body. The somatic coaching client will be receptive to moving through the somatic transformation arc to change their way of being, supporting sustained change that aligns with what is of greatest importance to them.

### **Summary**

This chapter contained a review of the literature regarding multiple facets of coaching. ICT and the six-P planning and evaluation framework used to frame the study were introduced. Coaching was identified as a change intervention commonly used to support the growth and development of executives and other leaders in a business context. The coaching context, coaching objectives, the profile of the coach, the role of the coach, the coaching relationship, the coaching process, and the profile of the coachee were considered for both coaching and somatic coaching. The benefits of coaching and barriers to effective coaching were presented.

The chapter also included a discussion of the role of the body in coaching and the field of embodiment and somatics. Matthews (2012) posits that the range of tools available to coaches for collaborating with clients is expanded when the body is used in coaching. Matthews found body-based approaches to coaching to support the occurrence of change at a tacit level and enable implicit learning. Working with the body in coaching was shown by the author to facilitate change for clients, navigating complex and emergent issues.

In Chapter 3, a discussion of research methods and research design will be presented. Outlined in the chapter are details about the instruments used for the interview protocols and data collection. Chapter 3 also includes information about the participants and the data collection plan for the research. An overview of the pilot study and the role of the researcher are then introduced, followed by a description of the quality of the evidence and the data analysis methods used for the study. The plan for protecting human participants in the study will be explained before detailing an overview of the limitations and delimitations of the research. A chapter summary is provided last.

### CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

Peterson (2018) contended that individuals are grappling with increased change, uncertainty, and complexity in contemporary times. As individuals contend with the disruptive changes in their environments, they are motivated to find support from others who are equipped to assist them in navigating the unknown. Accordingly, Peterson indicated that coaches are required to adapt quickly and take considerable steps to enhance their coaching abilities to assist clients in overcoming ever-changing and modern challenges. The research outcomes regarding the influence of the somatic coaching approach, as perceived by certified coaches from the SISC training program, were used to offer insights into another coaching methodology accessible to coaches. A qualitative phenomenological study was conducted to explore the lived experiences of coaches who have been prepared with the somatic coaching methodology offered by the Strozzi Institute. Gained was an understanding of the coaches' experiences with change and transformation, and their perspectives on the impact of the somatic coaching methodological intervention on the coaching effectiveness of SISC-certified graduates.

Two research questions were the focus of the study. Research Question 1 was: What are the somatic change experiences of coaches certified in the somatic coaching methodology by the Strozzi Institute? The second question for the study was: What is the perceived impact of the somatic coaching methodological intervention on the coaching effectiveness of experienced coaches who become certified graduates of the Strozzi Institute Somatic Coaching training program? This chapter includes the study details, starting first with the research methodology and the research design. This chapter then covers instrumentation, participant information, data collection, and the pilot study. The role of the researcher and how trustworthiness was demonstrated are discussed. Data analysis methods and the plan used to protect study

participants are then explained, followed by a description of the study limitations and delimitations that were used to clarify the scope of the study. The chapter closes with a summary.

### **Research Method**

Creswell and Creswell (2023) indicated there are three approaches available for conducting scholarly research. Academic research encompasses three methodological approaches, including qualitative, quantitative, and mixed-methods research. In qualitative research, researchers use naturalistic inquiry for real-world observations to understand what emerges, according to Patton (2015). Researchers can use the naturalistic paradigm in qualitative research to gain a deeper understanding of phenomena through contextual sensitivity and holistic insights. Scholars use observations, analysis of documents, and in-depth interviews to collect data in qualitative research to learn about what people think, know, and feel.

The qualitative research method is rooted in the constructivist worldview, according to Creswell and Creswell (2023). Within the constructivist worldview, researchers can consider complexities. Researchers collect data typically in the setting of the participant. Then, they analyze data inductively and identify themes from specific information. Researchers generate the meaning of research data by interpreting the themes that emerge from the data. The meaning humans attribute to a problem can be discerned through open-ended questioning in qualitative research. The qualitative approach was selected for this study because it enabled the use of naturalistic inquiry to discover the meaning surrounding the lived experiences of coaches certified in somatic coaching by the Strozzi Institute. The use of the qualitative approach in the current study enabled an understanding of participants' perceptions of the impact of the somatic coaching methodology on coaching effectiveness.

In mixed-methodological research, as described by Creswell and Creswell (2023), both quantitative and qualitative data are collected. Researchers collect data in the qualitative research portion of the mixed-methods approach from open-ended questions, where responses are not predetermined. In the quantitative piece of the mixed-methods approach to research, researchers use psychological instruments or questionnaires to collect data comprised of closed-ended responses. According to Goertzen (2017), researchers use the quantitative approach to explain the what and the how of phenomena. Data sets in quantitative research can be large. Researchers use research findings to represent a population. A primary objective for using a quantitative approach is to ensure that measurements used for statistical analysis and the evaluation of findings are reliable and accurate. A limitation of quantitative research is that it cannot be used to provide an understanding of why individuals in research populations feel, act, or think in particular ways. Due to the focus of the current study on understanding the lived experiences of the research participants, neither the mixed-methods approach nor the quantitative approach was selected for this study.

### **Research Design**

According to Merriam and Tisdell (2016), five research designs are available for conducting qualitative studies. These five research strategies include narrative inquiry, ethnography, qualitative case study, grounded theory, and phenomenology. Creswell and Creswell (2023) explained that the purpose of narrative research is to tell stories and develop themes that are often chronological, constructing a narrative about an individual's life. A single individual is the unit of analysis for narrative research. Creswell and Creswell defined ethnographic research as examining an individual's culture and the behaviors of their cultural group in the broader cultural context. A single individual is the unit of analysis for ethnographic

research. Merriam and Tisdell (2016) addressed case study design, specifying that case studies are conducted for bounded systems. Researchers who employ this approach describe and analyze bounded systems in depth through qualitative case study research. Creswell and Creswell (2023), who wrote about the grounded theory approach to research design, clearly stated that participant views are used to derive a theory. Researchers conduct 20–60 interviews to gather participant perspectives and insights in grounded theory research. Due to the absence of fit for the narrative, ethnographic, case study, or grounded theory research designs, none of these four research designs were chosen for the study.

Butina et al. (2015) described phenomenology as an approach to qualitative research where researchers using this approach explore how participants feel about, describe, remember, and make sense of a shared experience. The availability of insights into the shared human experience is permitted when a phenomenological research design is used. According to Vagle (2018), the philosophical underpinnings of philosophy are in direct opposition to the Cartesian dichotomy, which posits the mind as separate from the body and all else. Included in phenomenology is the conception that individuals experience phenomena as embodied in the physical world. The body intuitively lives or engages with the world, often doing so before the conscious mind can fully comprehend or rationalize the experience. In certain phenomenological schools of thought, phenomena and the lived experience are synonymous.

Peoples (2020), who discussed practical aspects of phenomenology for developing a phenomenological dissertation, asserted that phenomenology focuses on how essence manifests within lived experiences. Peoples indicated that phenomenology is distinguished from other qualitative research designs partly due to its philosophical grounding. The author explained that generating the lifeworld experiences of a particular population is the primary focus of

phenomenological research. Given the shared focus on the lived experience of the body in both phenomenology and somatic coaching, the phenomenological inquiry was deemed appropriate for this study. Qualitative phenomenological research was conducted to explore the lived experiences of the study participants, who were certified coaches in somatic coaching by the Strozzi Institute. Exploring the study participants' feelings, descriptions, recollections, and sense-making enabled insights for this research. An understanding was garnered of the somatic change experiences of SISC-certified coaches and their perceived impact of the somatic coaching methodological intervention on their coaching effectiveness as experienced coaches and certified graduates of the SISC training program.

### **Data Collection**

According to Creswell and Creswell (2023), three levels of research approval are required before a researcher can conduct a research study and collect data. They asserted approval for conducting research is required from the IRB, the local research site, and the study participants to ensure ethical alignment for research. The research proposal was submitted to CityU decision-makers. Upon approval of the research proposal by CityU decision-makers, a request was submitted to the IRB for approval. Following approval by CityU decision-makers and the IRB, the IRB approval information was provided to members of the Strozzi Institute leadership team via an email with a CityU email address.

Upon receipt of IRB approval, the Strozzi Institute leadership team granted site approval for the study, provided access to potential participants, and permitted data collection. The researcher provided an organizational consent form to a Strozzi Institute leadership team member that was considered and approved. The researcher collected the signed organizational consent form from a Strozzi Institute leadership team member and provided the completed form to the

researcher's chair. The researcher's chair sent the completed organizational consent form to the IRB (see Appendix J for Organizational Consent).

Mwita (2022a) asserted adequate qualitative data cannot be collected without fitting data collection methods. The interview is the commonly used form of qualitative data collection. Mwita (2022b) explained that interview data could be collected through multiple means. Formats for interview data collection offered by the author included in-person, telephone, and video conferencing. Data for the phenomenological inquiry were collected through participant interviews in the current study. The duration of the interviews for qualitative data collection was 45–60 minutes. Video technologies, including Microsoft Teams and Zoom, were used to collect all of the data.

### ***Data Collection Process***

Prior to collecting data, a consent form for study participation was provided to ensure that the interests of potential participants were protected in accordance with IRB guidelines. Using participant contact information collected from the study eligibility survey, the researcher used a CityU email address to send an interview invitation email to potential participants who responded to the study eligibility survey and were found qualified for the study (see Appendix C, Interview Invitation Email). The email included the link to a demographic survey in Microsoft Forms and an attached informed consent form. The Demographic Survey is provided in Appendix K. Appendix D contains the Informed Consent for Participants in Research Activities.

The researcher collected the consent forms from the qualified participants, who first signed and dated the form electronically before submitting the form to the researcher. When a participant signed the informed consent form with a wet signature, they converted the form back to digital format before submitting the form. To facilitate the ease of electronic signature for

research participants, the informed consent form was converted into a digital PDF. Interviews were scheduled and conducted after the qualified participants consented to study participation and confirmed completion of the demographic survey (see Appendix E Interview Appointment Confirmation). Interviews were scheduled and conducted with the first 10 qualified participants who provided their signed consent forms to the researcher and completed the demographic survey. Based on participant communication preferences, email and electronic calendar invites generated from Zoom or Microsoft Teams were used to coordinate the scheduling of the interview times. Interview times were set at times convenient for the study participants. A pilot study was conducted with the first two participants interested and eligible for the study.

Attempts were made to follow up with the qualified participants at intervals of five business days between each attempt when a qualified participant did not return a signed consent form or coordinate to confirm the interview appointment. Emails and phone were used as the means of communication to offer gentle reminders to the qualified participants. All 10 interviews that could be scheduled with qualified participants, including the two interviews for the pilot study, were coordinated in advance of 28 calendar days. Additional qualified participants beyond the eight study participants were unable to be selected for the research study, even after snowball sampling efforts were exhausted. An outline of the tasks, audience, and condition(s) for the data collection process is provided in Appendix L.

### ***Recording Procedures***

Creswell and Creswell (2023) indicated that researchers record interview information through videotaping or audiotaping interviews or by taking handwritten notes. To mitigate the risk of potential equipment failure(s), they suggested taking handwritten notes even when interviews are recorded via audio or video. They also recommended planning for the

transcription of recorded interviews. All interviews in the current study were audio-recorded with the participant's consent. Participants who were comfortable with video recording and verbally consented to video recording were video recorded. All recorded participant interviews were transcribed using the transcription feature of the web-based video and audio recording technologies. Written transcripts were provided to all study participants to ensure the accuracy of the interview discussion. Recorded interviews were made available to interested study participants. Handwritten notes were not needed.

### **Instruments**

The primary research instrument in qualitative research, according to Creswell and Poth (2018), is the researcher. Qualitative researchers collect data personally through observation, document examination, and interviews with participants. Qualitative researchers may use a data collection instrument. Researchers conducting qualitative research use data collection instruments such as open-ended questions designed by the qualitative researcher. According to King et al. (2019), in phenomenology, there is an emphasis on the bodily relationship to the world. The body is the subject of experiences and is central to any effort to seek to understand the lived experience. In qualitative interviewing for phenomenological research, the conversational engagement between people enables the sharing of understanding and experiences of phenomena. Researchers use semistructured interviews for phenomenological research, emphasizing the collection of in-depth descriptions of the researched phenomena as they are experienced by participants.

### **Interviews**

As Mwita (2022a) explained, conducting semistructured rather than structured interviews allows for more in-depth data collection. The author maintained that using semistructured

interviews provides increased flexibility when compared to structured interviews. Semistructured interviews were conducted in the current study using a virtual meeting platform accessible to the study participants. The interview time for the semistructured interviews was 45–60 minutes. After providing the information about the semistructured interview, participants were asked the same questions. Given the open-ended design of the semistructured interview, participants answered probing and clarifying questions based on their responses to the initial questions. Individual participants did not need to be contacted after interviews for clarification purposes. The semistructured interviews were conducted with each participant using synchronous technology, including Microsoft Teams and Zoom. Telephone and email were not needed as alternative technologies for collecting responses to interview questions. Using remote interviewing was optimal for this study, given the geographic distribution of the research population's locations.

### **Interview Questions**

Merriam and Tisdell (2016) explained that the focus of phenomenological research is to depict the essence of individual's lived experiences. The phenomenological interview is the primary format researchers use to uncover the foundational structure of the meaning and essence of a lived experience. The authors asserted that it is essential for the interview to comprise well-written questions in language familiar to the study participants, enabling the collection of meaningful data. Bevan (2014) proposed a method of phenomenological interviewing to collect data for descriptive phenomenological research. The question types used for phenomenological interviewing include descriptive and structural, descriptive or narrative, and imaginative variation.

According to Bevan (2014), descriptive and structural questions are designed to generate themes around contextualizing the experiences of the phenomenon. Descriptive or narrative questions are used to understand the phenomenon. Imaginative variation questions are used to clarify the phenomenon. The distinctly different question types are designed to ensure the adequacy of the description of the phenomenon. The phenomenological interview question format, as developed by Bevan, was used in the current study to design the interview questions, which are designed for both broad and narrow inquiry to enable a sufficient description of the phenomenon. The interview question design was underpinned by elements of ICT. Participants answered questions regarding their vision, expectations, and goals related to incorporating somatic coaching into their toolkit. Questions were focused on coaching and somatic practices related to desired changes and the perceived impact of somatic coaching on coaching relationships. Participants were asked a total of 11 interview questions. Each participant answered the same interview questions. Participants did not need to be recontacted for follow-up on interview clarifications. The interview questions used in the study are located in Appendix M.

### **Pilot Study**

According to Creswell and Poth (2018), the interview protocol should be pilot-tested. Pilot study participants can provide relevant feedback that can be used to refine the interview protocol. After receiving IRB approval, local research site approval, and consent from eligible individuals to participate in the study, a pilot study was conducted to ensure a viable interview protocol and to develop meaningful and relevant interview questions. The pilot study included the first two SISC coaching graduates who responded to the study invitation email and met the study criteria. The selected individuals were contacted and invited to participate in the pilot study.

The two individuals selected for the pilot study provided written informed consent after agreeing to participate. After the written consent was signed, dated, and collected, the interviews were conducted. The interview protocol for the pilot study included 10 interview questions. Upon concluding the pilot study interviews, participants provided feedback on the interview questions. Confirmed in the pilot study was that the 45–60-minute anticipated interview length was accurate. Feedback learned from the participants in the pilot study was used to inform refinements to the study interview questions.

### **Participants**

The SISC Program began in 2001, with the initial cohort of the SISC training program graduating also in 2001 (S. Meux, personal communication, August 16, 2023). Since then, 622 individuals practicing various coaching specialties or somatic bodywork have completed the program. The population consisted of all 622 graduates from 2001 onward across all coaching and somatic specialty areas. Participants for the study were selected from the research population.

### **Research Population**

The research population was comprised of 452 SISC graduates in the coaching specialty areas of business, executive, corporate, or leadership coaching. SISC graduates who did not fall into one of the coaching specialty areas of business, executive, corporate, or leadership coaching were excluded. To be eligible for this study, coaches had to meet multiple criteria. First, they had to be certified in somatic coaching by the Strozzi Institute. They had to have passed the certification exam on their first attempt. Next, they had to be current coaching practitioners with at least two years of coaching experience before enrolling in the SISC program and one year of

coaching experience after becoming SISC-certified. Finally, the coaches had to have worked with a minimum of two client-leaders both before and after earning their SISC certification.

### **Gaining Access to Study Population**

The vice president of the Strozzi Institute was contacted and asked about potential interest in having graduates of the SISC training program participate in a research study. The vice president communicated the request for a potential study to the Strozzi Institute leadership team. The leadership of the Strozzi Institute granted permission to conduct the current study. The Strozzi Institute program director, with support from delegees at the institute, was the primary contact for the approved study.

### ***Process for Access to the Population***

A contact list for the research population was not provided for the study. The researcher sent a study invitation email from a CityU email address to leadership at the Strozzi Institute. The study invitation email included a link to a study eligibility survey developed using Microsoft Forms and the researcher's CityU email address and contact number. A designated member of the Strozzi Institute team embedded the entire content of the study invitation email into a new email that was sent en masse to the graduates of the SISC training program. The email sent en masse to the SISC-certified graduates was transmitted by a member of the Strozzi Institute via a CRM software program used by a member of the Strozzi Institute's leadership team. The study invitation email was disseminated to the research population using a Strozzi Institute email address.

To ensure that SISC-certified graduates recognized the study invitation email as legitimate and not spam, a message from the Strozzi Institute leadership team was included in the email sent through the CRM. This message contained a brief introduction indicating that the

Strozzi Institute had approved the study and dissemination of the study invitation to participate in the voluntary study. The language used in the introduction message did not suggest undue influence on participants' decision to participate. Members of the Strozzi Institute were not involved in the selection of study participants. Interested SISC graduates accessed the survey link provided in the invitation email and completed the eligibility survey, which included criteria for participation in the study.

The email addresses of potential participants who completed the study eligibility survey were collected from the study eligibility survey data and used to contact those who qualified for the study. The researcher used a CityU email address to contact qualified participants and sent them an interview invitation email that included the link to a demographic survey and an attached informed consent form. Interviews were not conducted, and demographic data were not collected when informed consent was absent. The process steps for gaining access to the population are provided in Appendix N.

## **Sample**

Hennink and Kaiser (2022), who conducted a systematic review of empirically based studies on the sample sizes required to achieve saturation in qualitative research, indicated that saturation can be reached in 9–17 interviews for certain types of studies. Specifically, saturation can be achieved through conducting 9–17 interviews for studies with narrowly defined objectives and a generally homogeneous study population. Creswell and Creswell (2023) considered sample sizes for phenomenological research. They indicated that the suggested sample size for phenomenological research is between 3 to 10 individuals. The goal of the current study was to recruit a sample of 10–15 SISC graduates who met the study criteria to participate, and then

select additional qualified participants until saturation was achieved. There were 10 qualified participants, two for the pilot study and eight for the current study.

### **Sampling Procedure**

Creswell and Poth (2018) indicated that purposeful sampling is a nonprobability sampling approach. They explained that with purposeful sampling, the researcher can sample a specific group of individuals who are highly knowledgeable about the research problem being investigated. Purposeful sampling was used to select 10 study participants. The first two individuals who expressed interest in participating in the study and met the study criteria were selected for the pilot study. The next eight participants who qualified for the study and expressed interest in participating were selected. The snowball sampling contingency was exhaustively conducted.

According to Parker et al. (2019), in snowball sampling, researchers ask study participants who meet the research criteria to refer individuals who also meet the study criteria and may be willing to participate in the research. The process for requesting referrals is repeated with research participants who qualify through snowball sampling until the target sample size has been reached, or saturation has been achieved. Four attempts were made to contact potential participants to select qualified participants for the current study. There were 10 business days between each attempt to contact potential participants. Fewer than 10 qualified participants were selected for the study. Snowball sampling, as described by Parker et al., was conducted. Qualified participants, including those recruited through snowball sampling, were asked to refer potential participants. The process for referral and selection was exhausted with all qualified participants. The study included eight study participants.

### **Role of the Researcher**

Patton (2015) explained that human beings are the research instruments for qualitative research. Essence is at the heart of phenomenology. The methodological means required to uncover essence are two systematic and rigorous paths for phenomenological reduction. One of the methods researchers use to uncover the essence systematically is researcher bracketing. The second rigorous course for uncovering essence is for the researcher to refrain from positing the reality or existence to which they are beholden. Sundler et al. (2019) discussed reflexivity in the context of descriptive phenomenology. Reflexivity is the embodying of a reflexive attitude and the questioning of pre-understanding. According to Bevan (2014), the interviewer in phenomenological research must remain self-aware of their perspective regarding the phenomenon being explored. Maintaining critical self-questioning and self-awareness is essential throughout the interview. The researcher for the current study did not have a background in somatic coaching, so they exercised self-awareness regularly throughout the research process.

### **Quality of Evidence**

Cypress (2017) asserted that concerns about rigor in qualitative research remain prevalent in the 21st century. Attention to rigor in qualitative research is a crucial aspect of the investigative research process. Critique of research and the consequent evolution in science research result from rigor in qualitative research. Cypress recommended replacing the term *trustworthiness* with the term *rigor* to describe quality in qualitative research. Instead of evaluating research after the qualitative inquiry, researchers should build strategies into the process to enhance the rigor of qualitative research. Morse (2015) observed a lack of criteria for determining trustworthiness in achieving quality in qualitative research. The author critically examined the strategies recommended for achieving trustworthiness in qualitative research.

Morse argued that rigor can be used to replace trustworthiness in qualitative inquiry. Rigor in qualitative research is accomplished in the data collection and data analysis processes. Morse recommended that qualitative researchers use validity and reliability to support the achievement of rigor in qualitative research.

### **Internal Validity**

Creswell and Poth (2018) discussed strategies for validity in qualitative research. One of the strategies for validity they outlined was for the researcher to engage in reflexivity to clarify researcher bias through their lens. The potential for researcher bias was acknowledged upfront to support internal validity and transparency, which are essential for credibility. Reflexivity was engaged throughout the current study process. A debated avenue for transparency is member checking. According to Creswell and Poth (2018), member checking is a useful validation strategy through the participant's lens. Member checking includes verifying data, interpretations, and findings with study participants. Morse (2015) discussed the use of member checking for transcribed interviews and completed analyses. The author argued that judging the analysis is not the study participant's responsibility. Morse indicated that member checking supports validity and facilitates transparency. According to the author, the scope of the member checking does not include judging the analysis. The transcriptions of the interviews for the current study were shared with the participants to verify the accuracy and completeness of the interview responses.

### **External Validity**

According to Sundler et al. (2019), transferability is a measure of the soundness of study findings. Components important to study transferability include relevance, meaningfulness, and usefulness. Merriam and Grenier (2019) indicated that because the focus of qualitative research is on understanding the depth of an issue, and small and nonrandom samples used for research

cannot be generalized, the fundamental question for external validity in qualitative research is the degree to which study findings from one study are applicable to other situations. The reader determines if findings from a study can be transferred to their situation. Merriam and Grenier explained that researchers provide thick and rich descriptions of the study findings in qualitative research as a primary strategy to facilitate the transferability of qualitative study findings. Such thick description enables the reader to determine the potential for transferability, according to the authors. Thick and rich descriptions were used in the current study to support the soundness of the research.

### **Reliability**

Merriam and Tisdell (2016) contended that researchers understand reliability traditionally as the degree to which replication of research findings can occur. The results of a qualitative study will vary when replicated because the same data can be interpreted in diverse ways. Consideration should be given to whether there is consistency between the research data collected and the study results. Transparency, achieved through documenting study processes and procedures, as well as providing detailed, rich descriptions of the study findings, enables readers to assess reliability by examining the consistency between the research data collected and the study results. A pilot study was conducted with two qualified participants to validate the efficacy of the interview protocol and the interview questions, thereby supporting the reliability of the current study. According to Morse (2015), researchers can use semistructured interviews to enhance the richness and depth of description in research. With sufficient data, data overlap occurs, allowing for the replication of results. The thick, rich descriptions consequently contribute to internal reliability. Thick, rich descriptions were used for the current study to contribute to internal reliability.

## Data Analysis Methods

King et al. (2019) presented the foundational stages and steps of thematic analysis for qualitative research. The three stages included descriptive coding, interpretive coding, and the development of overarching themes. Researchers can institute quality checks in any of the three stages of thematic analysis. A more robust approach, the six-phased method offered by Nowell et al. (2017), was used for the data analysis for the current study. According to the authors, the objective of having the six phases is to systematize the process of thematic analysis and increase the traceability and verification thereof. The first phase of the six-phase thematic analysis is increasing familiarity with the data. The second phase of thematic analysis is generating initial codes. The third through fifth phases of thematic analysis involves searching for, reviewing, defining, and naming themes. The sixth phase of thematic analysis is producing the report. The data analysis for this study was conducted in six phases.

According to Creswell and Creswell (2023), researchers employ both inductive and deductive data analysis processes. The inductive process of data analysis is rooted in the researcher moving back and forth between emergent themes and the underlying data until a comprehensive set of themes can be established. The themes are based on the building of patterns and categories the researcher derives from the raw data. The researcher implements the deductive process of data analysis by examining the data through the lens of the identified themes to refine and validate the thematic framework.

Creswell and Poth (2018) indicated that there are data analysis considerations specific to phenomenological research. In phenomenological studies, researchers can use statements and quotes that are consequential to generate themes. Researchers develop textural descriptions to describe what participants experienced relative to the phenomenon being studied. Then, they

develop imaginative variation or structural descriptions to capture influences in the context of the phenomenon being studied. The researcher also uses textural and structural descriptions to develop thick composite descriptions rich in detail. Those composite descriptions are then present in their reporting of the essential structure or common underlying essence of the studied phenomenon. Composite descriptions, derived from both structural and textural descriptions, were integrated into the data analysis process for the current study.

Barker et al. (2015) asserted that researcher immersion in the collected data is foundational to ensuring a systematic understanding of the data. Researchers conduct immersion by continuing to read and reread participant interview transcripts and listening to recordings to gain a sense of the captured interview data. In the current study, data immersion activities were implemented to ensure a systematic understanding of the collected data. Interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed verbatim to maximize the accuracy of the descriptions of participants' essences. Handwritten notes were not required. In alignment with Patton's (2015) recommendations, member checking was employed in this study to verify the accuracy of the interview recordings. Data management, coding, and analysis were facilitated using computer-assisted software, specifically Intellectus Qualitative and Excel.

### **Protection of Human Participants**

A foundational way to protect human participants is to seek approval from the university IRB. According to Creswell and Poth (2018), IRBs have policy sideboards that require planning to address three principal areas. The three principal areas include respect for individuals, concern for the welfare of others, and justice. Respect for individuals extends to the treatment of the individual and the data collected from the individual as a participant. The researcher must explain how participants' privacy will be respected and ensure clear communication of the

consent process and participants' rights to withdraw from the study. Caring for participant welfare requires protecting participants and ensuring they are not placed in risky situations. Justice is important, and there is a need for fair and equitable treatment of participants.

Ethical issues can occur throughout the research study, according to Creswell and Poth (2018). The occurrence of ethical issues can arise at any stage of the study, including prior to its initiation, during study rollout, data collection, data analysis, data reporting, and the publication of the study. Researchers need to consider potential ethical issues that could arise during the study period and be prepared to mitigate them proactively. Researchers can meet IRB requirements to mitigate these challenges and ensure consent and privacy in the context of research interviews. Consistent with IRB requirements, participants were provided full and transparent disclosure prior to obtaining informed consent for the current study.

As suggested by Creswell and Poth (2018), participants were assigned pseudonyms in support of process integrity to help protect privacy. The researcher temporarily stored study information and research data using their personal computer. The personal computers and applications used to store the data remained password-protected and inaccessible to others. Study information and research data were transferred to the researcher's secure CityU Microsoft One Drive account, which is also inaccessible to others. The data from the completed research study will be retained for a period of five years on the researcher's secure CityU Microsoft One Drive account before being destroyed.

### **Limitations and Biases**

Researcher bias and vulnerability to bracketing are limitations of qualitative research. Creswell and Poth (2018) explained that in particular types of phenomenology, researchers bracket themselves to set aside their personal experiences with the studied phenomenon. By

reading the descriptions of the phenomenon provided by the researcher, study participants can determine whether experiences other than their own are included in the description. In Sorsa et al.'s (2015) examination of the concept of bracketing in phenomenological research, they acknowledged that personal researcher bias can influence the rigor of research. In the absence of researcher bracketing, the researcher's worldview could be reflected in the research rather than the participant's worldview. To bracket in the descriptive phenomenological approach, researchers act without judgment and set aside preunderstanding. Bracketing can be used to strengthen validity and scientific rigor in qualitative research.

Although the researcher for the current study was not a member of the population being studied, they had previously completed an embodied leadership (EL) training course on-site at the Strozzi Institute. The researcher learned during their participation in the EL training that leaders are generally exposed to the concepts of somatic coaching. The researcher became familiar with introductory concepts of somatic coaching during the EL training. The researcher had no experience working with a somatic coach and was not personally familiar with the SISC training program. The researcher set aside their limited preunderstanding of somatic coaching and provided transcripts to study participants to check for accuracy and minimize the impact of bias.

According to Wilson (2015), phenomenological research is intrusive into the private world of people. The author noted that study participants may be reluctant to portray their experiences accurately. Understanding of the lived experience of somatic coaching by SISC-certified coaches in the current study was limited by the description of the lived experience being provided by only the coach. The coaches' lived experiences of their training and somatic change experiences were varied. The possible influences of other coach training or certification types

were not isolated. Other factors may have impacted the coach's effectiveness. Study participants were also not collocated at a single site in a single time zone, so scheduling conflicts and time zone differences were deconflicted.

Conducting interviews via virtual platforms enables a sense of social cues, which Bowden and Galindo-Gonzalez (2015) explained are available in a face-to-face format. According to the authors, the accuracy of responses is expected to be higher when using audio recordings and written transcripts. Participants may respond differently to the interview questions based on the format of communication used to conduct the interview. As virtual interviews were conducted with the study participants for this research, the benefits of face-to-face interviews and the full sense of social cues could not be achieved. The interviews were recorded and transcribed. Data relevant to the study were collected, while data not pertinent to the study were not collected.

The sample size was another limitation of the study. The initial goal was to include two individuals in the pilot study and 10 participants in the study. Despite implementing a cycle of planned reminders about the study invitation with the research population and conducting snowball sampling for the current study, two qualified individuals were included in the pilot study, and a total of only eight qualified individuals participated in the study. Given the months of consistent effort to try and recruit two additional participants, the committee approved the revised sample size.

### **Delimitations**

Coker (2022) asserted that a principal element of delimitations is to align the research with the research question. Delimitations are used to scope the research and make the study manageable while aligning it with the research question(s). To manage the current study and

align with the research questions, the scope of the research included eight business coaches currently practicing business, corporate, leadership, or executive coaching. The study participants had attained Strozzi Institute certification in somatic coaching, passing the certification on their first attempt.

The existing business coaches considered for the study had at least two years of experience as business coaches prior to enrolling in the SISC training program. Study participants had at least one year of practice as a business coach following certification in somatic coaching by the Strozzi Institute. Individuals participating in the study coached two leader clients before enrolling in the SISC training program and after SISC certification. Acolin (2016), who discussed the mind-body connection, described delimitation as a means to identify a clear research focus within a broad topic. Personal life coaches and somatic bodyworkers were a subset of the total population of 622 graduates of the SISC training program. Personal life coaches and somatic bodyworkers were not considered for this research.

### **Summary**

A qualitative, phenomenological approach was used to conduct this research, exploring the lived experiences of coaches who have been prepared with the somatic coaching methodology through the SISC training program. Garnered from this study was understanding of the SISC-certified coaches' perceptions regarding the impact of the somatic coaching approach on coaching effectiveness. With IRB and Strozzi Institute site approval, a pilot study was conducted with two participants selected using purposeful sampling. A purposeful sample of eight study participants was then interviewed using semistructured interview questions designed to inform the study research questions.

The researcher was the primary instrument for conducting the participant interviews. The primary tools for conducting, recording, and transcribing the collected participant interview data were web-based technologies, including Microsoft Teams and Zoom. Member checking was conducted with study participants, which was limited in scope to confirm the accuracy and completeness of interviews. The Intellectus Qualitative and Excel software programs were used for data analysis, data management, and coding. This chapter contained the methodology, research design, data collection and analysis procedures, and instruments used for the study. Discussed were the quality of evidence, participants, limitations, and delimitations.

## CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS

This chapter contains a description of the data collection and analysis of the research study. The purpose of the study was to explore the lived experiences of change and somatic transformation of coaches certified by the Strozzi Institute in somatic coaching. The goal was to discover more about leadership development by gaining insights into the phenomenon of somatic coaching through an understanding of the essence of the lived experiences of the coaches certified in somatic coaching by the Strozzi Institute. Two research questions were used to guide the study. The first research question was: What are the somatic change experiences of coaches certified in the somatic coaching methodology by the Strozzi Institute? The second question for the study was: What is the perceived impact of the somatic coaching methodological intervention on the coaching effectiveness of experienced coaches who become certified graduates of the Strozzi Institute Somatic Coaching training program?

The lived experiences of the certified graduates of the SISC training program were explored using phenomenology. Sought was an understanding of the perceived impact of the somatic coaching methodological intervention on the coaching effectiveness of the SISC-certified program graduates. The research was based on the lived experiences of eight coaches trained and certified in somatic coaching by the Strozzi Institute. According to Merriam and Tisdell (2016), the qualitative research approach can be used to explore constructed meaning and individual experiences. Qualitative research is used to understand the interpretation and meaning people associate with their individual experiences and how they construct their world. Peoples (2020) articulated that researchers employ the phenomenological research design to understand experiences as they are lived. As Peoples indicated, insights into a shared lived experience are permitted within the phenomenological research design.

This chapter includes the findings of the qualitative phenomenological study. The study's findings are organized by theme. Four study themes emerged. The first theme was embodiment is a catalyst for somatics in coaching transformation. The second theme was coaches experience enhanced embodied presence in their way of being through somatic coaching practices. The third theme was using the body in coaching improves effectiveness in the coaching relationship. The last theme shown in the findings was somatic coaching enhances coaches' effectiveness in facilitating client change. Preceding the presentation of findings is a description of the pilot study, followed by a presentation of participant demographics.

### **Pilot Study**

A pilot study was conducted to ensure the viability of the interview protocol and the appropriateness of the interview questions. The first two SISC-certified coaching graduates who responded to the study invitation email and met the study criteria were selected for the pilot study. The selected participants were contacted and invited to participate in the pilot study. The two individuals provided written informed consent after agreeing to participate in the pilot study. After participants signed and dated the written consent form, the interviews were scheduled and conducted. The interview protocol originally proposed for the study was used with the pilot study participants.

The pilot study was used to test the interview questions for accuracy and clarity and to verify if the anticipated 45–60-minute interview length was correct. Upon the conclusion of the pilot study interviews, participants were asked to provide feedback on the interview questions. The interviews with the pilot study participants were recorded and transcribed. The data from the pilot study interviews were not included in the study data. Feedback learned from the participants in the pilot study was used to revise the interview protocol and adjust the language in

the original 10 questions. Based on the pilot feedback, an 11th question was added to the interview protocol used for the study (see Appendix O).

### **Participant Demographics**

According to Creswell and Creswell (2023), collecting data for qualitative research is intended to garner information from a purposefully chosen small sample. Creswell and Creswell reported from their review of qualitative research studies the ideal sample size range for phenomenological research is 3–10. A sample of eight qualified and consenting study participants was selected for the current study. The demographics of age and gender were collected from all eight study participants using an online demographic survey (see Appendix K). The participant demographic data are provided in Table 4.1.

**Table 4.1**

#### *Demographic Data From Participants*

Participant	Gender	Age Range
Coach Alpha	Female	65+
Coach Beta	Female	65+
Coach Chi	Female	45–54
Coach Delta	Female	65+
Coach Epsilon	Female	55–64
Coach Gamma	Female	65+
Coach Kappa	Female	65+
Coach Omega	Female	45-54

### **Presentation of Findings**

The qualitative phenomenological study encompassed data collected from eight SISC-certified graduates who were currently practicing professional coaches in the coaching specialty areas of executive, business, corporate, or leadership. Each SISC-certified graduate had a minimum of two years of professional practice in their coaching profession before enrolling in

the SISC training program and one year of professional coaching practice after being SISC-certified. Each of the eight SISC-certified graduates interviewed coached at least four client-leaders. The coaches had coached at least two clients before enrolling in the SISC training program and had coached a minimum of two clients after being SISC-certified.

The data collected for the qualitative study were transcribed, reviewed, coded, categorized, and grouped into themes based on supporting code categories. Table 4.2 includes the themes derived from the data collected. The data were analyzed through the lens of ICT, with a focus on the perception, potential, practice, and profit elements of the six-P planning and evaluation framework model. Semistructured interviews were conducted with eight coaches certified in the somatic coaching methodology by the Strozzi Institute to collect data for the study. The data was collected from each participant through recorded interviews. The study participants provided a guide for reflection upon the identification of themes in the eight semistructured interviews through their lived experiences. To protect participant confidentiality, each of the eight participants was assigned a pseudonym.

**Table 4.2**

*Research Questions and Themes*

Research Questions	Themes
RQ1: What are the somatic change experiences of coaches certified in the somatic coaching methodology by the Strozzi Institute?	Embodiment is a Catalyst for Somatics in Coaching Transformation Coaches Experience Enhanced Embodied Presence in Their Way of Being Through Somatic Coaching Practices
RQ2: What is the perceived impact of the somatic coaching methodological intervention on the coaching effectiveness of experienced coaches who become certified graduates of the Strozzi Institute Somatic Coaching training program?	Using the Body in Coaching Improves Effectiveness in the Coaching Relationship Somatic Coaching Enhances Coaches' Effectiveness in Facilitating Client Change

### **Theme 1: Embodiment Is a Catalyst for Somatics in Coaching Transformation**

The participants talked about the body when discussing their influences for enrolling in the SISC training program. All participants showed a pattern of wanting to increase physical awareness and understanding of the body. They expressed interest in focusing on being present and facilitating transformational change. All eight participants (100%) shared a foundational desire for enhanced coaching effectiveness through embodiment. A theme emerged that embodiment acts as a catalyst for somatics in coaching transformation.

For instance, Coach Delta and Coach Chi expressed interest in adding somatic coaching as a tool in the coaching toolkit to enhance embodiment in coaching. The coaches revealed that growth as a coach was pivotal to each coach's change journey. Coach Delta stated her "expectations were to have a different skill set." She conveyed that she was interested in "raising the bar around how" she observed, sensed intuitively, and connected "in ways that are unusual." She indicated in somatic coaching, "We're [the coaches are] using the whole body and the whole languaging of our sensations, our sensory experience." Coach Chi explained that she desired enhanced embodied awareness and intuition to help her navigate difficult behavioral patterns in clients more effectively.

For example, Coach Chi's coaching background was in the cognitive framework. She saw behavioral patterns she did not know how to address. She explained, "Talking is not enough . . . bringing it up into the cognition . . . they clearly understood [something different was needed], but they would just repeat it." She indicated, "I realized working in the cognitive space was not sufficient as it did not move my clients to 'show up differently.'" Coach Chi emphasized that she needed "to have a way through the barriers and the blockages in client work where [she] . . . really fe[el]t . . . there's something in the way that is unnamable." Coach Chi had an early

focus on expanding her coaching toolkit through somatics and evolved her vision for adding somatics as a tool to her toolkit after she experienced an awakening to the significance of the body in coaching before enrolling in the SISC program. She noticed something was “going on beneath the narratives beneath the mind . . . while coaching.”

Coach Chi emphasized that she lived “in a very sensitive body” and acknowledged, “If I really want to be of help, I have to bring . . . the body [into coaching].” She wanted “to . . . bring what [she] was unaware of, what [she] can feel, sense, into actions, into relationships, and that has to move through a felt sense. Because that’s what communicates with another body.” She recognized that the felt sense in the body and embodied experiences in the coaching context fueled her desire for enhanced embodied awareness, understanding, and intuition. Coach Chi expressed a clear commitment to integrating the somatic coaching methodology into her coaching as well as goals of deepened embodiment for getting SISC-certified. Coach Delta and Coach Chi voiced aspirations to expand their coaching toolkits to address their clients’ needs more effectively through embodiment.

Three of the coaches indicated being motivated by prior personal embodied change experiences, including Coaches Beta and Gamma. Each coach highlighted striving to develop a deeper understanding of somatic coaching and the potential of somatic coaching for facilitating embodied change and transformation in clients. Each coach’s change intention for enrolling in the SISC program was unique. Coach Beta conveyed that her prior embodied transformation resulted from her earlier work with a SISC-certified coach. Coach Gamma facilitated her embodied transformation experience without prior awareness of somatics or somatic coaching.

Before pursuing somatic coaching, Coach Beta recognized a “lack of connection between [her] and [her] body and how [she] took information in” and decided to get curious. She

articulated that she hired “a long-time Strozzi-trained coach to do some somatic work with [her]” and further conveyed, “I had a quite transformative experience with her.” Given her prior somatic experience of embodied transformation with an SISC-certified coach, Coach Beta enrolled in the SISC program with personal and professional goals. She hoped to improve her mind–body connection, expressing a desire to get “better connected to [her] soma” and have “better use of the information from and through [her] body.” Absent a specific vision for enrolling in the SISC training program, Coach Beta consistently conveyed a desire for a more embodied connection through her reflections.

After initially facilitating an embodied change for herself intuitively, Coach Gamma expressed her excitement about becoming SISC certified when she discovered somatic coaching through her boss’s recommendation. She exclaimed, “It was just like, oh, my God! There’s this whole thing that I’ve taught myself, of how I observe what’s happening in my own body to make [a] change in myself.” Coach Gamma subsequently shared, “There was a whole world of it [somatics] that I didn’t know anything about. So, I was . . . sold immediately.” She articulated her motivation for enrolling in the SISC training program. She said:

Basically [it] comes down to I had my own . . . experience, pre-Strozzi, and then found out there was a whole language and world that went along with my own inner learning and . . . [I] already knew it worked.

Coach Gamma’s intentions for enrolling in the SISC training program included deepening her embodiment and mastering somatic coaching.

Coaches Epsilon and Alpha each had a deep sense of embodied awareness before enrolling in the SISC training program. They both sought to enhance their embodiment in their coaching practices through the use of the somatic coaching methodology. Coach Epsilon described her early considerations about using the body as a ground in coaching, indicating she

was curious whether she wanted to work with the body in coaching. She explained that she had since practiced somatics before receiving specialized training in somatic coaching. She wanted to deepen her use of somatics and integrate somatic coaching into her practice with due diligence and integrity. She did not know what to expect from the SISC training program but articulated her desire to explore and integrate her pre-existing embodied awareness. She stated, “I would be on the phone with a client in California, and I would say, ‘What’s going on with your shoulders?’ . . . and they would say, ‘How do you know my shoulders are tense?’”

Speaking to her pre-existing aptitude with embodied awareness, Coach Alpha talked about her ability of clairsentience when she offered, “I have always known what other people are feeling. Not here [indicating not in the mind], but here [indicating in the body].” Coach Alpha did not have a language for articulating embodied awareness in coaching. She had a friend who had taken training with the Strözzi Institute and observed that the training had a powerful impact on her friend. Coach Alpha expressed that her vision for enrolling in the SISC training program was to deepen her embodied awareness. She said, “[I wanted to] have additional language to speak with my clients about what I experienced in their presence and what I observed in their bodies. . . . And I got that.”

All eight coaches identified through their change intentions that embodiment is a catalyst for somatics in somatic transformation. Influences for this change catalyst included adding somatic coaching as a tool in the coaching toolkit, prior personal experience with embodied transformation, a pre-existing embodied awareness, and a desire for embodied presence. Though not all participants had an explicit vision for enrolling in the SISC training program, they all had a common desire for embodiment. They wanted to integrate an awareness of the body and bodily experiences into coaching.

## **Theme 2: Coaches Experience Enhanced Embodied Presence in Their Way of Being Through Somatic Coaching Practices**

The study participants garnered greater awareness of the body through somatic coaching practices. All eight SISC-certified coaches interviewed (100%) described an enhanced sense of embodied presence due to the somatic coaching methodology and practices used in the SISC training program. The participants acknowledged the role of somatic coaching practices in their journeys toward somatic change in their way of being. Each coach described their lived experience of the journey toward deeper awareness, highlighting how somatic practices helped them better understand the body and their bodily sensations and reactions on a new level. The study participants discussed various somatic coaching practices, including practices in the somatic coaching domains of somatic awareness, somatic opening, and somatic practice. Specific practices emphasized were centering, meditation, and dojo practices.

All the coaches interviewed described aspects of an enhanced embodiment in their way of being. They conveyed that through their experiences of direct engagement with the somatic coaching practices, they increased awareness of the body and deepened their embodied presence. Their increased somatic awareness, opening, and practice through somatic coaching practices foreshadowed a deepened awareness of the body, their bodily sensations, and bodily reactions. For example, Coach Beta described how centering practices in the somatic domains of awareness and opening facilitated enhanced bodily presence for her. When speaking to centering practices, Coach Beta described her experience with the “dino tail.”

Coach Beta explained that the dinosaur tail practice, which considers the sum of one’s historical heritage used to ensure depth of one’s being, allowed her to “find the history of [her] confidence. Bringing the whole of [her] history with [her] and owning it.” She expressed that

within the centering practices, “Probably the most important practice was really paying attention to what’s going on inside [her] body . . . noticing in ways that [she] . . . didn’t have access to before.” Coach Beta shifted her way of being as a coach through centering practices. When working with a leader, she used somatic centering practices to deepen her presence through her awareness of her body and the client’s body. Coach Beta indicated her shift in her way of being as a coach was her “most important somatic shift.” According to Coach Beta, by noticing her body and that of her client and paying attention to the bodily information, she was able to use her enhanced embodied awareness and presence to share this sensory information that she or the client may not have otherwise been able to access.

Coach Epsilon said she found all the somatic coaching practices helpful. Her use of somatic coaching practices led to an enhanced understanding of the body and a deepened embodied presence. Coach Epsilon felt better prepared to use the body as the ground in coaching. She stated:

It grounded me . . . in a way that I could use this body . . . this . . . body of knowledge to come through me... and gave me a way to understand it... lean on it and expand it. So yeah, it made me more comfortable and certain in what I was noticing, and it gave me a structure to do it.

A profound somatic opening signaled an enhanced embodiment for Coach Kappa, characterized by greater awareness and explicit shifts in her way of being. Although she found value in all the somatic coaching practices, Coach Kappa said the two-step centering practice was immediately useful in how it shifted where she was. Coach Kappa discovered habitual patterns in the domain of somatic opening that she described as conditioned tendencies. She said:

Learning about condition tendencies . . . to really see myself in how I showed up. My conditioned tendency is a move against. How that really hit me . . . the damage that I might have done throughout my life . . . I wasn’t aware of the possibility of being able to change and change from the inside out.

Coach Delta, who heralded the importance of somatic coaching practices to her journey of enhanced embodiment, emphasized the value of centering in action. She discussed a dojo practice of aikido, sharing, “I was my own best client in the beginning . . . testing everything out on myself.” She explained that by using the practices, she could identify what she was “feeling” and the sensations in her body. She said she would tap into her bodily awareness to sense “when [she was] off balance . . . when [she was] centered” and ask herself, “[Was she] connected to [her] training partner?” Coach Delta explained that “all of those things . . . were physically being acted out, in the moment, in the dojo.” Coach Delta articulated how she used her experiences with somatic coaching practices to enhance her bodily observations and intuition, which enabled her to connect with clients somatically. Coach Delta’s somatic experiences and her ability to connect with clients on an embodied level revealed a pattern of embodied presence.

Underscored in reflections from Coach Alpha, Gamma, and Omega was the idea that the journey to enhanced embodiment involved the use of somatic coaching practices and represented a proclaimed transcendence of cognitive approaches in coaching. Through her use of a somatic opening practice, Coach Alpha enhanced her embodied presence by yielding a blank cognitive slate. She said:

I’d taken other kinds of coach training that was very cerebral. That doesn’t put me in a beginner mind. The Strozzi stuff put me in beginner mind, like I have no idea what the “f\*\*\*” I’m doing. That was very powerful.

Revealed in the data from Coach Alpha was how the beginner's mind and other somatic coaching practices increased her somatic openness and deepened her embodied awareness. This finding was foreshown by Coach Omega. Coach Omega’s increased somatic awareness was a poignant shift from the cognitive realm to the body. She stated her previous approach to coaching was “very heady” and demonstrated a lack of depth in being centered. She enhanced

her emotional regulation through somatic coaching practices and transformed her presence. Coach Omega's transformation journey involved multiple practices to improve her embodied awareness, allowing her to effectively notice when she became disembodied and then reground in her body. She indicated that the experiences that led to her enhanced embodied presence "really changed who [she was] as a coach."

Coach Gamma spoke about transformational shifts in presence, grounding, and her ability to blend. Coach Gamma somatically experienced what it was like to have ground, specifically, witnessing herself as a moving body. She explained how she garnered an understanding of her beingness, stillness, and mood when she said:

I think staying present and being grounded, you know, witnessing. I think I was already pretty good at witnessing myself, but I really became sharp and clear about what's going on in me. "Where do I want to be?" That was a shift I became more adept at.

Being able to blend with people is enormous. A blend means moving together. . . . if I physically show that person A is here [motioning low energy], person B [comes in, motioning high energy], this can come in really fast. How do I do that without hitting? Learning how to blend with people, to see it that way . . . understand it, and practice it, that was a big shift.

Coach Gamma articulated her increased awareness of how she moved, her automatic reactions, conditioned tendencies, and how she wanted to create new actions, as well as what she needed to do differently to support the new actions. She discussed ways her transformational shifts surpassed the cognitive frame in coaching. She described her enhanced embodied presence obtained through heightened somatic awareness of self via somatic coaching practices. Coach Chi shared her insights about the role of somatic coaching practices in her heightened somatic awareness and opening, which led to her experience of transformed presence. Coach Chi revealed her vulnerable experiences of somatic awareness and somatic opening around the dojo practices. She said:

I was . . . always really scared. . . . walking into the dojo . . . for me [it was] . . . a trigger. I had to walk through a lot of fears . . . stiffness in the movements, judgment, and... noticing that people in the dojo . . . I could feel them, but they could not feel me . . . truly see me, who I was?

Coach Chi conveyed that the somatic transformation of enhanced embodied presence was integrated into her way of being, sharing, “Somatics is not just a tool that we can choose and leave.” She explained that somatics was so transformative for her that “No matter who [she] coach[es], it will always be there . . . It’s not a tool for [her]. It’s really who [she has] become.” Coach Chi and all the other study participants showed how their use of somatic practices influenced their journey toward a deepened embodied presence. Although each coach’s somatic change journey included experiences specific to the coach, all coaches showed increased somatic awareness, opening, and practice through somatic coaching practices, which led to an enhanced embodied presence in their way of being. Through their enhanced embodied presence, the participants gained more awareness and connection to themselves and others.

### **Theme 3: Using the Body in Coaching Improves Effectiveness in the Coaching Relationship**

The study participants carried their enhanced embodied presence and application of the somatic coaching methodology into their respective coaching practices. All participants reported working with the body in their coaching. Each participant integrated the somatic coaching methodology into practice with a client-centered approach. Revealed in the conversations with the coaches was that the somatic coaching intervention effectively bolstered the coaching relationships. Each coach improved their coaching relationships in five ways. The five ways included a deepened coaching presence, a safe and supportive coaching environment, enhanced trust and intimacy, vulnerable exploration into deeper places, and enhanced client awareness. A theme that emerged for all eight study participants (100%) was using the body as the ground in coaching improves effectiveness in the coaching relationship.

The coaching presence is foundational to the coaching relationship, as it enables genuine engagement with the client and sets the stage for all that follows. All the coaches revealed that using the body as the ground in coaching enabled a deepened coaching presence. For example, Coach Gamma emphasized the importance of embodied presence in her work with clients. She strove to bridge the cognitive and somatic realms to facilitate deeper engagement. She underscored the critical importance of somatic awareness to being an excellent coach. Coach Gamma indicated in her description how she ensured an embodied presence in her engagement with clients. She said:

I have to come back [to] my own awareness, my ability to perceive what's going on with my client . . . to really feel them physically and emotionally, the whole kit and caboodle of somatics. My ability to do that informs everything I do with my clients. I can't come from my head with my clients. I have lots of knowledge. I have lots of bandwidth. I have lots of certifications, but at the end of the day, I have to feel me, and feel them, and use that. That's our currency, a big currency. I would say it's fundamental. I don't use it programmatically. It's such an embodied sense now.

The coaches discussed how a strong coaching presence aided their ability to cultivate a safe and supportive coaching environment for clients. They described how offering deepened support in the coaching relationship provided emotional safety for the client. The interviews revealed how each study participant employs somatic coaching practices to nurture supportive relationships with their clients. Coach Omega explained, "It feels like there's a language and . . . an anchoring that I got from the Strozzi . . . coaching that... supports us to . . . stay clear and . . . committed to what is most important for my client."

To better support her clients, Coach Omega adjusts her embodied presence during coaching engagements by using centering practices to foster safety and support in the coaching relationship. She reflected on her earlier style, admitting she was "very heady" before becoming

SISC-certified. She realized that her strong ownership of the coaching setting often overshadowed her clients' ownership of their journeys.

Coach Omega now emphasizes the importance of partnership in the coaching relationship and expressed her desire for clients to “trust themselves through the process of coaching.” To maintain this supportive environment, Coach Omega engages in centering practices to re-ground herself, which signals safety and facilitates trust, a fundamental aspect of the coaching dynamic. Interview discussion results indicated that all the coaches in the study leveraged their coaching presence and somatic interventions to cultivate trust and intimacy in their relationships.

When discussing coaching presence through somatics, Coach Chi explained that “the trajectory in somatics is getting you deeper and deeper into the subtle energy body.” She indicated that in the context of somatics, the ability to “feel yourself and still stay grounded and not be carried away by your thoughts” is “a practice, practice, practice, practice.” Because of her ongoing practice of staying grounded in the present moment, Coach Chi can no longer distinguish her coaching from her ongoing practice.

While deeply reflecting, Coach Chi expressed that somatic coaching is increasingly about her deepened presence as a coach. When contemplating how somatic coaching impacts the effectiveness of her coaching relationships, Coach Chi responded, “How fast trust is established is amazing.” Clients are able to feel “safe, to open up to areas that are so vulnerable, so painful, filled with judgment.” She indicated that through somatics, an “intimacy” and “a *holiness* that is now possible that was not there before” is created in the relationship.

Coach Delta provided another example of the influence of somatics on the coach-client connection in the coaching relationship. She spoke to a deepened connection and increased intimacy in the coaching relationship, stating, “Somatics is . . . a tender place of . . . unifying

with someone . . . from an energetic standpoint, they live in my heart, in my spirit, in some way.”

All the coaches garnered increased trust and intimacy in the coaching relationship through somatic coaching. The study participants intimated how the increased trust, intimacy, and use of the body in coaching enable vulnerable exploration with the client. Each coach provided examples of deep client exploration.

Coach Kappa shared that “with somatic coaching,” she could see how clients “are shaped.” She could ask questions or use somatic practices with clients to “help them reveal themselves.” She stated:

If they [clients] feel it from the inside out, then that experience is what gives them both the ‘Aha moment,’ and . . . the opportunity to say “This works for me,” or “This doesn’t work for me,” and “I need support in how to develop some different ways of being.”

Coach Delta offered examples of questioning and somatic practices she used for deeper exploration with clients. She indicated that questioning can be used for “tuning in to the physical sensations in the body.” For instance, if someone speaks of a twinge in their neck without awareness of the cause, Coach Delta can ask, “What were you thinking? What was connected to that?” She affirmed how using the body in the questioning process in coaching can help with “alignment of the mind, body, and spirit or emotions.” Coach Delta provided an example of how the deepened trust and intimacy in the coaching relationship, paired with physical somatic practice, can enable quick access to deeper places where “rich and informative territory” can be explored with the client. She said:

I’ll take [some clients] outside and give them a [jo] stick. I’ll take my jo, and I teach them a simple routine that we learned in Strozzi . . . then I have them do that routine with me, and in sync . . . at the end, we strike. We do a low strike and a high strike . . . You can really feel the energy of the strikes . . . or tentativeness of it . . . . When they feel that, then I can ask . . . “Where do you feel that tentativeness in your life right now? As a leader . . . where does that tentativeness show up?”

Coach Delta showed in her example how client awareness can be enhanced through deeper exploration. Revealed in the conversations with all the study participants were examples of how somatic exploration of the body through questioning and practices enhanced client awareness. For instance, Coach Beta spoke specifically about her use of the body in coaching. She discussed her deepened coaching presence and how she leverages embodied presence with her coaching clients. In describing how she uses the client's body in coaching, she explained, “In the Strozzi language . . . I do a lot of work with body awareness [and] work with the body.” Coach Beta shared how her embodied presence enabled a greater attentiveness to both her and her client’s bodies. She said:

What happens between the coach and the client is cocreated. So, if there’s something going on [with]in me, I played a part in creating it, but my client also played a part in creating it . . . It gives the client access to information... they don’t . . . have.

Coach Beta indicated that she shares her own bodily observations with clients, such as when she senses tension in her own body. She invites them to explore similar feelings in their bodies. This process gives clients access to insights into their bodily reactions and emotional states that they were previously unaware of. Coach Beta engages in various somatic coaching practices to help increase clients’ awareness. Coach Beta revealed how leaning into her coaching presence and reflecting bodily observations to her client enabled her to facilitate greater client awareness in the coaching relationship.

Coach Omega discussed how she facilitates enhanced client awareness. She spoke about the somatic arc of transformation and how she guides clients through the initial phase of somatic awareness. She includes the body and engages clients with somatic coaching practices during coaching sessions and on their own. Coach Omega offered an example of how she may introduce a client to somatic awareness when she said, “We’re gonna be in this early phase of building

body awareness.” Explaining how the client’s personal history shapes their current behaviors and somatic shape, she would state, “We’re also [going to be] understanding your shaping, what has happened across your life to have you showing up in the way that you are.” Through her use of somatic coaching practices in alignment with the somatic arc of transformation, Coach Omega facilitates enhanced somatic awareness in the coaching relationship to help clients see things “in a new way.”

The participants highlighted how they each shifted their coaching behavior and adjusted their coaching approach to ensure client-centeredness in the coaching relationship. The participants use the clients' bodies as the ground in somatic coaching and use their own bodies by tapping into their embodied coaching presence. These interview findings indicated that coaching effectiveness in the coaching relationship can increase through the coaches’ application of the somatic coaching intervention.

#### **Theme 4: Somatic Coaching Enhances Coaches’ Effectiveness in Facilitating Client Change**

All the coaches interviewed (100%) demonstrated enhanced coaching effectiveness in change facilitation for leaders through the somatic coaching intervention. Each study participant spoke about how certain changes and somatic shifts can be facilitated quickly. The participants conveyed that they garnered perceived impacts of their ability to facilitate change using somatics in two ways. Participants directly observed or received feedback from clients on their effectiveness in facilitating client change. Coaches Delta, Gamma, and Kappa provided firsthand examples of client change.

In Coach Delta’s observation of leaders who experienced transformation due to her change-facilitation efforts with somatic coaching, she articulated examples of immediate somatic shifts and sustained change for the client. In the first example, Coach Delta communicated how

she helped a client instantly release an inauthentic physical facade through somatic movement. She explained, “I had a young executive, a very nice-looking Black man that was very almost robotic in his mannerisms,” who embodied a “‘how executives look-alike’ kind of behavior.” She shared how she “put some music on” in a private coaching setting and “had him skipping around the room . . . and then . . . skipped with him.”

After Coach Delta and her client stopped skipping, Coach Delta observed that her client’s face “had changed. He literally looked like a totally different person.” She indicated that he “dropped the facade of this kind of fake mask of what he thinks an executive ought to behave and look like,” and she “saw the real person.” Coach Delta explained to her client what she observed with him. She said, “There is no ‘quote executive look.’ Your being is what matters, that you show up 100% as you.”

Coach Delta shared her example of sustained change achieved through somatic coaching. She described the sustained change as “unbelievably awesome.” In the three years she worked with the client, the client made changes in the first year. The client sustained the changes for the next two years that Coach Delta worked with her. Coach Delta relayed how the leader in her example came to Coach Delta as a business leader with poor self-care habits and an employee mindset. According to Coach Delta, her client now “looks like a totally different person. . . . Her business is dramatically different than it was three years ago.” The client’s business is “growing financially and prospering, and her capacity as a leader has ratcheted up. She is excellent at delegating. . . . she’s confident in the way she carries herself and has stepped into her role as a business owner.” Coach Delta emphasized that “somatics was a key underpinning” of the “core fundamental shift” her client made.

Coach Delta expounded and discussed an example of a somatic practice she found helpful to her effectiveness in facilitating change in her client:

We did some somatic jo stick work out at the beach . . . that's where I think things started to really move quicker for her in terms of taking powerful actions because she got this experience with doing something brand new in the sand. It's challenging to move in the . . . loose sand, keep her balance, drop her breath, and learn choreography. So that . . . anchored . . . her motivation to keep on, keeping on.

Coach Gamma discussed her perspective on what she observed regarding her effectiveness in facilitating changes for leaders through somatic coaching. She conveyed that her clients change and change for the better. She underscored how she provides her clients with a "cradle-to-grave agency." Through somatics, she empowers leaders with awareness at a level where they know what to do, when to do it, and what their choices are, as well as what needs to be put into place to enable what they want to do. She emphasized that leaders coached by her understand for themselves how change works.

Coach Kappa provided another example of the effectiveness of change facilitation for leaders through somatic coaching. Her access to clients enables her to witness changes in the leaders she coaches. Because she works with multiple leaders in the organizations she supports, she gets to see firsthand "how they relate with each other." She is able to garner an understanding of how the leaders operate with others vertically and horizontally across the organization.

In describing the value of somatic coaching in facilitating change with her clients, Coach Kappa stressed how somatic questioning and practices are "far more impactful than if [she] were a coach . . . asking questions and pointing something out." Coach Kappa shared examples of how her clients experienced changes from her use of somatic coaching, including the softening of "bulldozer executives," increased empathy, more compassion, and more warmth from leaders

who were historically standoffish before their somatic coaching. Coach Kappa emphasized, “I can’t imagine coaching without somatics,” and declared there is a “major transformation” from using somatic coaching.

Coach Alpha described changes she observed in clients, including enhanced awareness and authenticity. Before working with Coach Alpha, her clients “were so detached” from their bodies that they were “completely unaware that their bodies were data gathering, filtering, and sorting.” They did not know that their bodies were “trying to get them to pay attention to what their bodies knew were the big issues.” She explained:

Most of the people I’ve coached for the last several decades are people . . . who walk around like this, [Coach Alpha extended her head and neck very far forward, distancing her head from her body] . . . their heads are so detached from their bodies that their heads are actually trying to get away from their bodies . . . The notion that a feeling lived in the body was frequently . . . counterintuitive to them.

By leaning into her embodied coaching presence and using somatic practices, Coach Alpha raises client awareness and brings attention to their internal discrepancies to facilitate transformational shifts. Coach Alpha discussed her deepened coaching presence that she described as “clairsentience . . . just like clairvoyance, the ability to see that which is not seeable,” but in her case, ‘feel’ in others that which is unseen. Because of her deepened coaching presence, Coach Alpha could tell clients, “Your body is conveying a different message than your voice tone, and they’re both separate from your words. . . . You got a real disconnect here. . . . Where does that live in your body?”

Coach Alpha’s deep observation of her clients enhances their awareness of bodily sensations and internal incongruence. Coach Alpha facilitates shifts toward authenticity for her clients by highlighting their lack of congruence. Coach Alpha helps her clients align their feelings, emotions, and verbal expressions. On the topic of perceived sustained change for her

clients, Coach Alpha indicated, “If you interviewed a bunch of my clients, you’d get some form of ‘She taught me how to trust my gut.’” Coach Alpha emphasized, “That’s not trivial,” given her client base of largely disembodied leaders in a highly technical industry. Revealed in the discussion with Coach Alpha was how she effectively facilitates change in leaders around embodied awareness, authenticity, and self-trust.

Coach Chi was able to offer indirect affirmation of the effectiveness of the somatic coaching intervention in facilitating change in leaders through coaching outcomes of transformation conveyed from past clients. She stressed that with somatics, once a transformation has happened, “you cannot go back . . . who you used to be is no longer. You’ve taken on a new shape.”

Based on the clients’ experiences shared with Coach Chi, she identified the somatic coaching intervention as effective in facilitating transformational changes in leaders. Coach Epsilon offered indirect and direct witness accounts of change facilitation with clients. Regarding her direct witness accounts of sustained change in leaders, she explained that she had a 15-year contract with a large agency. Because of the contract length, she coached all the key leaders in the organization and was able to observe them. In describing changes she had observed in her client-leaders, she indicated that leaders had somatically shifted in various ways due to somatic coaching. Shifts she observed included increased relaxation in the clients’ bodies, where the leaders allowed themselves to connect with “what’s going on inside” their bodies. She said, “Their use of self is more grounded and less urgent . . . [with] more confidence.”

Coach Epsilon revealed she has other clients she worked with longer term. The longer-term clients experience transformations, practice in their transformed state, and return to her for follow-up coaching for new transitions. Coach Epsilon reflected heartfelt sentiments about one

client she worked with who was “able to operate because of the somatic resiliency . . . grounding, and . . . extension work” they did. The client made an embodied shift to her “wise woman brain” as a leader rather than the former “abused wife brain” she previously embodied. Coach Epsilon indicated she periodically receives emails stating, “Coach Epsilon! I can see the shift.” The study participants revealed in their examples how somatic coaching enhanced coaching effectiveness in facilitating change for leaders. Changes facilitated for leaders through somatic coaching included heightened awareness, enhanced authenticity, and increased agency in decision-making.

### **Summary**

All participants described their somatic change experiences and their perceived impact of the coaching methodological intervention on their coaching effectiveness from becoming certified in the SISC methodology. Common threads emerged from the coaches’ unique somatic experiences and perceptions of their coaching effectiveness related to their SISC certification. The first theme was embodiment is a catalyst for somatics in coaching transformation. The next emergent theme was coaches experience enhanced embodied presence in their way of being through somatic coaching practices.

The third theme revealed by all study participants was that using the body in coaching improves effectiveness in the coaching relationship. The last theme discovered from the data analysis was somatic coaching enhances coaches’ effectiveness in facilitating client change. Chapter 5 discusses the findings and conclusions, which explain how they apply to the stated problem and leadership. The chapter closes with recommendations for future action, further research, and a concluding statement.

## CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSIONS AND DISCUSSION

The purpose of this research was to explore the lived experiences of change and somatic transformation of coaches certified by the Strozzi Institute in somatic coaching. The research was designed to discover more about leadership development by gaining insights into the phenomenon of somatic coaching. The first two themes that emerged were related to the study participants' experiences of change and somatic transformation. The third and fourth themes were generated from the study participants' perspectives on the impact of the somatic coaching intervention on coaching effectiveness.

The first theme identified was embodiment is a catalyst for somatics in coaching transformation. The second theme that emerged was coaches experience enhanced embodied presence in their way of being through somatic coaching practices. The third theme was using the body in coaching improves effectiveness in the coaching relationship. The final theme identified was that somatic coaching enhances coaches' effectiveness in facilitating client change. This chapter discusses how the research questions and the problem statement are addressed through the study findings. The chapter covers recommendations about the applicability of this research to leadership. The final sections of the chapter include suggestions for future actions, recommendations for further research, and a concluding statement.

### **Discussion of Findings and Conclusions**

The study participants discussed their experiences of somatic coaching. Explored were their experiences of change and somatic transformation, as well as their perspectives on the impact of the somatic coaching intervention on coaching effectiveness. Illustrated in the study findings was that using the body as the ground in coaching enabled coaches to somatically transform, deepen their embodied coaching presence, and enhance coaching effectiveness.

Coaches improved their coaching effectiveness in their coaching relationships, and the coaches enhanced their ability to facilitate change with client-leaders. The general study findings represent an advancement in the literature on the development of leaders and the role of the body in professional coaching in the business context.

According to Behrendt et al. (2021), coaches can use coach behaviors to create effective coaching interactions to facilitate effective coaching. Coaches can generate memorable experiences for clients through change-warranting coach behavior. The clients can then transfer the stabilized memory generated by the coach into their daily lives through personal, professional, or organizational routines. Revealed in the findings of the current study was how coaches can use the somatic coaching intervention to surpass the creation of experiences carried forward through memory and instead facilitate deepened embodiment in support of change. With somatic coaching, coaches bring an embodied presence to the coaching engagement, connecting with clients on an embodied level. Through somatic coaching practices, SISC-certified coaches help clients embody their somatic coaching experiences and practices. Clients can then carry their embodied experiences and deepened practices, garnered from somatic coaching, into practice through their daily personal, professional, or organizational routines.

Two research questions were used to guide data collection for the study. Four themes were identified from the participants' responses to the study interview questions. The first two themes were identified in response to the first research question. The first theme was embodiment is a catalyst for somatics in coaching transformation. The second theme was coaches experience enhanced embodied presence in their way of being through somatic coaching practices. The second two study themes that emerged from the collected data addressed the second research question. The third theme was using the body in coaching improves

effectiveness in the coaching relationship. The fourth theme was somatic coaching enhances coaches' effectiveness in facilitating client change.

### **Research Question 1**

The first research question was: What are the somatic change experiences of coaches certified in the somatic coaching methodology by the Strozzi Institute? The study participants shared their motivations and influences for enrolling in the SISC training program. All eight participants expressed a foundational desire for enhanced coaching effectiveness through embodiment. The theme of embodiment is a catalyst for somatic transformation in coaching was the first theme identified in the study findings.

The change catalyst of embodiment to enhance coaching effectiveness aligns with a change barrier Hamill (2013) described, which is rooted in findings from neuroscience. In questioning the sustainability of changes brought forth using current leadership development theories and models, Hamill discovered that the typical tools for coaching and developing leaders do not impact the brain regions necessary for behavioral change. This recognition of the need to augment the coaching toolkit to be more effective in facilitating change was inherent in the participants' collective understanding that the ability to change must surpass the cognitive and include the body in coaching.

According to Cotone (2014), the capacity to respond to present situations is reduced due to long-practiced muscular patterns and repressed emotions. Individuals consequently react to current situations based on past practiced responses. Feelings, emotions, personality, and character are shaped by the practices that have been ingrained in the body. Such patterns are rooted in one's way of being, which Sieler (2018) indicated could serve as a barrier to change.

The author described how ingrained patterns of perception and attitudes may limit the effectiveness of what the individual is capable of achieving.

Levine (2010) contended that although neuroscientists can identify where emotions reside in the brain, they are unable to explain how people change. The author asserted that somatics can facilitate a process to achieve sustained change. As Levine explained, in somatics, the practitioner assists the client in evoking awareness around the nature of their feelings and bodily sensations. The somatic coach is trained to notice and attend to the client's bodily conditioning, as noted by Aquilina and Strözzi-Heckler (2019). The authors maintained that a somatic coach must serve as a grounding presence for their client, necessitating that the coach's embodied presence is centered.

Levine's (2010) assertion that change is facilitated through evoked awareness of bodily sensations was illuminated through the study participants' lived experiences of somatic change toward embodied presence. A pattern emerged from the participants' experiences with somatic changes and their use of somatic coaching practices. The second theme, coaches experience enhanced embodied presence in their way of being through somatic practices, was identified in the study findings. Revealed in the findings is the ability to use somatic change and transformation to break through the barriers of change inherent in historically practiced patterns and way of being. Participants indicated that they were able to transcend the change barriers of the body through a shift in their way of being, resulting in enhanced embodiment via somatic coaching. The potential effectiveness of somatic coaching in facilitating change for leaders is denoted in the study findings.

## Research Question 2

The second research question was: What is the perceived impact of the somatic coaching methodological intervention on the coaching effectiveness of experienced coaches who become certified graduates of the Strozzi Institute Somatic Coaching training program? Demonstrated through the participant interview responses was that all the study participants worked with the body in coaching. Using the body in coaching improves effectiveness in the coaching relationship was identified as the third theme.

Aligned with findings in the literature, effectiveness in the coaching relationship was enhanced through the use of the body in coaching. Payne et al. (2023) maintained that the coaching relationship is foundational to coaching outcomes and fostering sustained change, identifying four themes in support of an effective coaching relationship. The four themes identified by the author included a supportive relationship, the use of questioning by the coach, initiative-taking by the coach, and the positive social influence of the coach, such as enhancing client perceptions through questioning. All four themes identified by Payne et al. were underscored by the findings in the current study. Illustrated by the study participants' insights was that the coaches provided a safe and supportive coaching environment for clients. The participants used somatic questioning to facilitate vulnerable exploration through the body. The study participants initiated somatic questioning with clients from a place of embodied presence. The study participants enacted positive social influences through somatic practices and questioning to enhance client somatic awareness.

Blackman et al. (2016) considered whether business coaching, which includes executive, leadership, and other forms of coaching implemented within a business context, is an effective tool for development. The authors identified 33 factors contributing to perceived effectiveness in

business coaching. Seven of the 33 factors identified by Blackman et al. were present in the current study. The factors that emerged in the current study included the coach's calmness, a one-on-one format in the coaching relationship, trust, authenticity, encouragement of the client to take appropriate action, and identifying blind spots for the client. The factor of calm identified by Blackman et al. is reflected in the embodied presence that the study participants first garnered for themselves as a result of their somatic transformation journey and then carried into their coaching interactions with clients. Evident throughout the participants' narratives was Blackman et al.'s factor of the one-on-one coaching engagement. The embodied presence of the coaches in the coaching relationship underscores how the relational depth of one-on-one coaching can be enhanced through somatics.

Clients' internal congruence enabled through somatics enhanced their authenticity, which aligned with Blackman et al.'s (2016) factor of authenticity. Consistent with the authors' factor of encouraging appropriate action, by leaning into their heightened embodied awareness and using somatic coaching practices, the coaches facilitate appropriate actions that resonate with their clients from a place of embodied presence. Building on Blackman et al.'s concept of discovering blind spots, the enhanced client awareness gained through somatic exploration and questioning positions the coach to facilitate the client's own discovery of blind spots. The seven factors identified by Blackman et al. that were present in this study through the participants' use of somatic coaching underscore the critical role of somatic coaching methodology and practices in enhancing business coaching effectiveness.

All participants perceived that the use of the body in coaching, through the somatic coaching intervention, enhanced coach effectiveness in facilitating client change. This finding aligns with Matthews' (2012) assertions, who discovered that working with the body in coaching

enables coaches to facilitate change. Matthews learned that habitual patterns could be changed by applying body-based approaches in coaching. Results from using body-based approaches to coaching included faster achievement of change and greater sustainability of change. The potential effectiveness of somatic coaching as a tool to prepare leaders is indicated by the study findings.

### **Application of Findings and Conclusions to the Problem Statement**

The general problem explored in this study is that when leaders are not prepared to lead, they can be poor leaders who are ineffective and incompetent, according to Kellerman (2004). The author explained that leaders who are ineffective fail to produce desired change. Leaders who demonstrate incompetent leadership cannot sustain effective action. Kellerman indicated that the consequences of poor leadership include short- and long-term damage and high damage. As Inyang (2013) discussed, leaders can fail or derail. Leader derailment is likened to a train going off the train tracks. Inyang explained that coaching is one of the interventions that can be used to avoid leadership failures or derailment. Captured in the participants' responses in the current study was that somatic coaching enhances coaches' effectiveness in facilitating client change. With a catalyst of embodiment for somatics in transformation, the participant coaches were able to enhance their embodied presence through a shift in their way of being due to their engagement with somatic practices. Given these findings and Inyang's indication that coaching can be used to avoid leader derailment, the somatic coaching intervention could be used to prepare leaders to help them be effective, competent, and able to avoid failure and derailment.

According to Barner and Higgins (2007), though coaches employ a wide and varied range of coaching methods, coaches tend to center their coaching craft on one coaching model. The coach's lack of ability to adapt their practice can lead to coaching barriers. Barner and Higgins

articulated impacts that could emerge from a myopic approach to coaching, including unnecessary failures in communication, a loss of trust, and missed opportunities to impact the client positively. Given the client-centered approach to somatics used by the participants in the current study, which is rooted in embodied presence, the coaches were able to adapt their practice to meet the client's needs in the moment and provide effective support. As indicated by these study findings, business coaches who employ somatic coaching can avoid the coaching barriers described by Barner and Higgins and mitigate the subsequent negative impacts outlined by the authors.

In light of the finding that using the body in coaching improves effectiveness in the coaching relationship, coaches who use the somatic coaching intervention may be able to preempt the negative effects that Graßmann et al. (2018) described for coaches. From their exploration of the antecedents and impacts of negative effects for coaches, Graßmann et al. found that when the relationship quality between the coach and client was low, the number of negative effects experienced was higher. According to Graßmann et al., when coaching failures occur, expected coaching outcomes may not be achieved, and adverse impacts may result.

Schermuly (2018) found that poor-quality or failed coaching relationships were antecedents to client dropout. The implication of client dropout for the client is that the positive effects they receive from coaching cannot be fully reached. Improved effectiveness in coaching relationships achieved through somatics is relevant to mitigating client dropout and resultant coaching failures for leaders. The improved effectiveness in the coaching relationship, garnered from using one's body in somatic coaching, would help coaches avoid early termination of the coaching protocol and better enable client goal attainment.

Mosteo et al. (2021) investigated the impact of various elements of the coaching setting on client perceptions of outcomes from coaching sessions. Seventy-two percent of the executive coachees identified self-awareness as a key element necessary for perceiving and receiving the value available from the coaching process. Qualitative interview data from Mosteo et al.'s study showed that all participants reported enhanced facilitation of somatic awareness for coaching clients through the application of the somatic coaching intervention. Enhanced client awareness, garnered from somatic coaching, is connected to the perceived value of coaching from the client's perspective, as discussed by Mosteo et al. Given the emphasis on self-awareness in the authors' findings, it can be concluded that enhanced somatic awareness, facilitated through the somatic coaching intervention, contributes to the effectiveness of coaching outcomes.

### **Considerations for Theory and Practice**

Taylor et al. (2019) discussed the five discovery levels in ICT. They emphasized that the change gap is identified in the first and second levels by articulating the ideal self and evaluating the real self. The third level involves planning to bridge the change gap. Underscored in the fourth level are experimentation and practice. Consistent with the ICT levels of discovery, the study participants experienced a change gap related to enrolling in the SISC training program, driven by a common desire to enhance their coaching effectiveness through embodiment. Their engagement with the somatic coaching methodology and practices facilitated their somatic change journeys and enhanced the effectiveness they attained in their coaching practices.

The study participants compared their actual selves to their ideal coaching identities while adopting practices such as centering and grounding, which aligns with Boyatzis's (2006) view that the change journey is a complex process of self-discovery. According to the author, change occurs through a series of emergent conditions. The iterative nature of ICT was demonstrated by

how self-evaluation and experimentation contributed to the coaches' transformational journey. Indicated by the current study findings is that the application of ICT is enriched by the somatic change experiences of coaches who integrate somatic coaching practices into their coaching approach and enhance their coaching effectiveness.

Revealed in the study participants' perceptions of their lived experiences with somatic coaching was a deeper understanding of Marker et al.'s (2009) six-P planning and evaluation framework elements of perception, potential, practice, and profit. Participants expressed anticipation of the somatic coaching intervention, reflecting the potential element. They illustrated the potential element by articulating their desire to achieve deeper embodiment and integrate embodied awareness into their methods to serve client-leaders better. Demonstrated by the theme of embodiment is a catalyst for change is how the coaches' lived experiences aligned with the short-term elements of perception and potential. Expectations for immediate improvements in coaching effectiveness are also aligned with these short-term elements.

Kirkpatrick (2005) discussed the effectiveness of training interventions through the lens of the four levels of evaluation. Kirkpatrick introduced and designed the four levels of evaluation to assess learner reactions to the intervention, learner learning levels due to the intervention, changes in on-the-job behavior due to skills or knowledge gained from the intervention, and changes in organizational results linked to the intervention(s). According to Kirkpatrick, the four levels can be used by training and performance analysts to design training and coaching interventions based on business needs using results from needs assessments.

Marker et al. (2009) aligned the practice element of the six-P framework with Kirkpatrick's third evaluation level, which is changed behavior in response to an intervention. Marker et al. compared the profit element to Kirkpatrick's fourth level, focusing on perceived

results associated with an intervention. Revealed in the current study findings is a connection between the six-P elements of practice and the element of profit, as aligned with Kirkpatrick's model. Representing Marker et al.'s practice element, the current study participants demonstrated changes in their behavior by engaging with the somatic coaching practices as both recipients and coaching practitioners. First, they experimented with somatic coaching practices on their somatic change journeys in pursuit of their SISC certification. As SISC-certified coaches, they then applied somatic coaching in their coaching practices. Reflecting Marker et al.'s profit element, the coaches reported perceived results from the somatic coaching methodology, including enhanced embodied presence, improved coaching relationships, and increased effectiveness in facilitating change for client-leaders.

### **Application to Leadership**

According to Brendel and Bennett (2016), traditional leadership development programs have focused predominantly on reflective practices and cognitive skills, which are inadequate in the modern, unpredictable business environment. The authors contended that relying solely on cognitive-behavioral processes is insufficient for developing effective leadership, given contemporary scientific research, leadership theory, and practice. The need to augment cognitive-behavioral processes in developing leaders, as discussed by Brendel and Bennett, was demonstrated in the current study's findings. The study participants shared instances of how they hit a wall or felt stuck in their ability to facilitate change for leaders within the parameters of cognitive-based coaching approaches.

In somatic coaching, Strözzi-Heckler (2014) explained that the way of being of the coached leader is the foundation of the coaching. Change and the embodiment of leadership skills can be facilitated through somatic coaching. The current study findings were consistent

with the literature, revealing that change was facilitated by addressing way of being, and using the body as the ground in somatic coaching. As recipients of somatic coaching, the study participants experienced a change of enhanced embodied presence in their way of being. As somatic coaches, the study participants enhanced their coaching effectiveness in facilitating change for leaders through somatic coaching.

According to Rowland (2016), it is necessary to use an experiential approach to develop leaders. Focusing on the *being* of the leader, rather than their behavior or *doing*, is essential to developing leaders. The being of leaders needs to be influenced to enable leaders to regulate mental and emotional states. The current study's findings have implications for developing self-regulation in leaders through somatic coaching. Through somatic coaching practices used to address the study participants' way of being in the SISC training, the participants gained a deeper understanding of their bodily sensations and reactions on a new level. The study participants shared a lived experience of enhanced embodied presence through somatic coaching.

Working with leaders' bodies in somatic coaching to bring about the enhanced awareness Strözzi-Heckler (2014) described enables coaches to help client-leaders transform by shifting their states of consciousness, thereby increasing individual choice and capacity. As Strözzi-Heckler asserted, greater awareness enables an increased range of choices. Through heightened awareness, additional choices become available regarding individual thoughts, moods, feelings, actions, and ways of being. The study participants facilitated heightened awareness and increased agency in decision-making for leaders through somatic coaching. Study findings indicated that agency in decision-making for leaders may be enhanced.

In support of embodied leadership development, Brendel and Bennett (2016) proposed integrating mindfulness and somatic practices. They posited that such an integration expands

awareness for leaders and transforms their way of being for enhanced authenticity. The holistic approach, rooted in way of being, proposed by the authors creates the potential to equip leaders with fresh perspectives, improved self-regulation under pressure, and greater resilience, creativity, and resourcefulness through heightened awareness. Through somatic coaching, where they addressed the client's way of being to foster change, the participants of the current study facilitated heightened awareness and enhanced authenticity for leaders. Given these findings, the potential leader development outcomes Brendel and Bennett described may be enabled through somatic coaching.

The study participants' effectiveness in facilitating change for leaders through somatic coaching is important to recognize, given the interplay between changes in leaders and changes in the organizational system. As O'Connor and Cavanagh (2013) explained, when change is created in the leader, the way the leader interacts with the organizational system is altered. The effectiveness of the coach in fostering such change is thus integral to the success of the coached leader and the associated organizational stakeholders. Given the impacts of the changes to the organizational system from coached leaders, as identified by O'Connor and Cavanagh (2013), scholars, practitioners, and other coaching stakeholders may use these study findings when considering interventions to address the performance gap of leadership development. Researchers and practitioners in the field of human performance improvement may also use the study findings when considering interventions for coaching and leadership development.

In the discipline of human performance improvement (HPI), a systems lens and systematic approaches are used to deliver business solutions, according to Lazăr and Robu (2015). Lazăr and Robu indicated that coaching is an intervention commonly used in HPI. Strözzi-Heckler (2014) stated that in somatic coaching, the body is the ground and is used to

evolve the shape of the individual. In the somatic coaching process, coaches use practices to enable individuals to make shifts in the nervous, organ, and muscular systems of the body, thereby evolving their shape in alignment with a new way of being. Through somatic intervention, the participants of the current study experienced somatic changes in their way of being and enhanced their coaching effectiveness in facilitating change for leaders. Given that the somatic coaching intervention is designed to address performance gaps through the body as a system and is applied systematically through somatic coaching practices, the somatic coaching intervention extends the field of HPI in light of the study findings.

As Lazăr and Robu (2015) explained, HPI is underpinned by an intent to use interventions to address performance gaps. They shared that coaching is a tool in the practitioner toolkit that practitioners can use to influence positive impacts on performance, learning, and business results. The findings showed that the study participants in the current study sought to address a performance gap in coaching effectiveness through the somatic coaching intervention, enabling them to deliver improved business results through coaching. The participants perceived enhanced effectiveness in coaching and the development of leaders from the application of the somatic coaching intervention. The study participants experienced enhanced embodied presence, improved effectiveness in the coaching relationship, and increased effectiveness in facilitating change for leaders. The collective findings suggest that performance in individual and organizational contexts could be enhanced through the improved development of leaders by integrating the somatic coaching methodology into the HPI toolkit.

Possibly signaling receptivity to somatic coaching in practice, the groundwork has been laid for mindfulness practices in industry, as Brendel (2016) described. According to Brendel, meditative practices have emerged in organizational development activities, including leadership

development and coaching. Industry decision-makers have already been receptive to mindfulness practices. Organizations such as Apple, Starbucks, Google, IBM, AOL Time Warner, and eBay have adopted meditative practices. Leaders of organizations that have adopted mindfulness practices have made meditative practices, such as holding meditations before and after meetings, a behavioral norm. Each practice enables the leader to engage with stakeholders and organizational challenges through a fresh lens. Brendel asserted that there is promise across organizational contexts in each routine practice of mindfulness.

### **Recommendations for Action**

The underpinning of this phenomenological research study was an inquiry into the role of the human body in the coaching profession to deepen understanding of leadership development. This discussion includes actionable recommendations for the ongoing exploration of the role of the human body in the coaching profession, with a focus on supporting leadership development. This research informs the recommendations for action, which are drawn from the findings and conclusions about the phenomenon of the somatic coaching methodology.

### **Modernize Leadership Training Programs With Somatics**

Program owners of leadership training programs are recommended to redesign leadership training programs to integrate somatics with traditional leadership training methodologies. This process could include designing and implementing a specialized training curriculum that incorporates content and practices to support experiential learning activities in somatics. Training participants could learn about, and practice engaging with their embodied experiences, foster somatic awareness, and facilitate self-regulation. Consistent with the conclusions of this study, diversifying training programs to enable leaders to undergo a somatic transformation journey would support the development of embodied and more effective leaders.

### **Integrate Somatics in the Coaching Profession**

Large professional coaching organizations that accredit and credential training programs and coaches are encouraged to partner with somatic coaching training and certification providers, collaborating to integrate a core curriculum of somatic coaching and practice into their coach training programs and credentialing requirements. Ensuring a core curriculum in the training and development of coaches would bolster the coaching profession by enhancing embodied awareness and coaching presence for coaches certified by large coaching bodies. Coaching practitioners would be better prepared to support leaders and coaching stakeholders by integrating somatics into their coaching toolkits. Given the findings of improved effectiveness in the coaching relationship and enhanced coaching effectiveness in facilitating change with leaders, organizational coaching stakeholders, including leader-clients, may find value in these recommendations.

### **Establish a Somatics Curriculum in Academic Institutions**

Decision-makers in academic institutions could adopt a curriculum design for leadership development programs that integrates the soma and somatic practices from the somatic coaching methodology into their current leadership development offerings. The specific purpose of the curriculum would be to enhance learners' understanding and experience of the body-mind connection in leadership, fostering deeper somatic awareness and effective leadership. By combining theoretical knowledge with experiential application, the curriculum will equip leaders with innovative tools to navigate the complexities of contemporary leadership challenges better. The preceding specific purpose applies to all recommended actions where content development is suggested for leadership development programs.

### **Create Commercially Available Training Resources for Somatics**

Educators or practitioners certified in somatics could create a stand-alone, prepackaged somatics curriculum that is a commercially available training resource. The curriculum would apply to learners in academic institutions and organizations. The stand-alone support could be used to develop leaders in academic leadership development programs. Decision-makers in academic institutions could broaden the application of somatics learning in their organizations by expanding the stand-alone program to develop leadership capacity for students across their academic disciplines. Organizational stakeholders could use the commercially available training to develop their talent pipeline for leadership.

### **Develop Somatics-Based Partnerships**

Organizational decision-makers interested in incorporating somatic principles into their leadership development initiatives are recommended to partner with providers of training and certification programs in somatic coaching. Academic institutions and other organizations could partner with providers of somatic coaching training and certification programs. A principal from the organization with leadership development initiatives, along with a principal from the partnering somatic training and certification provider, could be designated to facilitate collaboration on custom-designed somatic coaching programs. Proponents of the partnering organizations could design the training to optimize the specific outcomes needed for individual institutions and organizations by tailoring the training to address the unique challenges and goals of each organization and its leaders.

### **Conduct Workshops on Somatic Awareness and Embodiment**

Organizational stakeholders responsible for leadership development are encouraged to invite certified somatic coaches to do workshop training focused on bodily awareness and

somatic practices. The somatic coaches facilitating the workshops can guide leaders in exploring their bodily sensations and physical states, helping them understand the role of their bodies in their leadership. Workshops for leaders on somatic awareness and embodiment would help leaders gain insights into how their way of being impacts their approach to leadership and will enable them to enhance their embodied presence.

### **Conduct Organizational Somatic Awareness Assessments**

The implementation of organizational assessments of somatic awareness is suggested. Organizational decision-makers interested in developing somatic awareness and embodiment for their leaders would be well served to conduct organizational somatic awareness assessments with their leadership cohort. Somatics is client-centered, meeting clients where they are. If leaders are not ready to consider somatic interventions, workshops on somatic awareness and embodiment could prove valuable. Offering workshops prior to other actions recommended in the current study may enable organizations to generate greater interest in somatic awareness and the holistic integration of body and mind for leaders.

### **Recommendations for Further Research**

A larger sample size for future research on the somatic change experiences of coaches certified through the Strozzi Institute is the first recommendation for further research. A larger sample size in a future study could enhance the generalizability of the findings. Small sample sizes are common in phenomenological research, which can limit the diversity of experiences captured, as discussed by Peoples (2020). A larger cohort of certified coaches could provide a broader array of lived experiences and potentially uncover themes that may otherwise remain unnoticed in a smaller study.

The recommended second study is a three- to five-year longitudinal investigation of the impact of somatic coaching on organizational and community leaders to explore aspects of sustainability. It is suggested that the longitudinal study be framed by action research, considering problems in the realms of environmental sustainability and social equity within organizational and community contexts. The findings of such research would inform the mid-to-long-term and large-scale potential of the somatic coaching intervention on sustained changes in organizations and communities. The three- to five-year study period would enable researchers to monitor and understand the initial impacts of the somatic coaching intervention, as well as whether the impacts are sustained over time.

The third recommendation for future research is a three-year longitudinal case study involving somatic coaching dyads that employ the SISC methodology. Conducting a longitudinal study to follow somatic coaching dyads and monitor the mid- to long-term effects of somatic coaching on the development of leaders and organizational outcomes would provide insight into how leaders benefit from somatic coaching over time. Researchers and practitioners would gain valuable insights into the sustainability of transformations and changes facilitated through somatic coaching.

Recommended for the fourth area of future research is a comparative case study between somatic coaching and traditional coaching methodologies. Researchers could examine the effectiveness of somatic coaching compared to traditional coaching methodologies in enhancing leadership effectiveness. Researchers and practitioners could use the findings to explore further the integration of the somatic coaching methodology into broader leadership development and coaching training programs.

The fifth recommendation for future research is a comparative case study between SISC-certified coaches trained in only the somatic coaching methodology and SISC-certified coaches trained in additional coaching methodologies. This research could include an examination of the effectiveness of coaches trained only in the somatic coaching methodology compared to coaches trained in the somatic coaching methodology and other traditional coaching methodologies in enhancing leadership effectiveness. Practitioners could use the study findings to provide support for either the singular integration of the somatic coaching methodology or the integration of the somatic coaching methodology with traditional coaching methodologies into broader leadership development and coaching training programs.

The final recommendation for future research is the exploration of the intersection between somatic coaching and neuroscience, as well as psychological theories related to embodiment and emotional intelligence. Exploring somatic coaching through the suggested theoretical lenses could inform research on transformation and sustainable change for leaders. Findings from the suggested approaches for inquiry into the role of the human body in the coaching profession can be used to help facilitate an understanding of the value of somatic coaching in leadership development.

### **Concluding Statement**

Provided throughout this inquiry was a detailed analysis of the lived experiences of SISC-certified coaches practicing in the specialty areas of executive, business, corporate, or leadership coaching. Themes that emerged from the interviews with the SISC-certified coaches included embodiment is a catalyst for somatics in coaching transformation, coaches experience enhanced embodied presence in their way of being through somatic coaching practices, Using the body in coaching improves effectiveness in the coaching relationship, and somatic coaching

enhances coaches' effectiveness in facilitating client change. The somatic change experiences of the coaches' transformation journeys and the perceived impacts of the somatic coaching intervention on coaching effectiveness were analyzed.

This study included a demonstration of embodiment and using way of being as the ground in coaching. An in-depth understanding of the experience of change and somatic transformation in coaches, as well as their perspectives on the impact of the somatic coaching methodological intervention on coaching effectiveness, was gained. Learning about the phenomenon of somatic coaching enabled enhanced discovery about developing leaders. By identifying how coaches experience and enact transformation through somatic coaching practices, coaching practitioners, organizational stakeholders, and scholars are informed about the importance of embodied approaches in leadership development.

This study was an inquiry into the role of the human body in the coaching profession. Indicated in the study's collective research findings is that through the somatic coaching intervention, embodied presence is enhanced, coaching effectiveness is improved, and meaningful change is facilitated for client-leaders by SISC-certified coaches who practice the SISC methodology. Supported by the study findings is a recognition of the role of the body in coaching through somatics. This enhanced recognition is important because it suggests that somatics can contribute to leaders' personal and professional growth. The potential impact of embodiment in the coaching profession is emphasized.

The study findings underscore an opportunity to reimagine traditional leadership development in an integrative format that includes cognitive understanding and embodiment. Affirmed in the collective findings is that weaving somatic coaching into conventional coaching approaches would enable coaches to facilitate embodiment and transformational change in

leaders more effectively. Integrating the insights garnered from the study participants about the phenomenon of somatic coaching represents a valuable step toward developing capable leaders who are prepared to navigate the complexities of modern-day leadership effectively.

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## APPENDIX A

## Strozzi Study Invitation for Potential Coaching Research Participants

Subject: Voluntary Study Invitation – Somatic Coaching

## THE PERCEIVED IMPACT OF SOMATIC COACHING ON COACH EFFECTIVENESS

Dear Strozzi Institute Somatic Coaching Graduates,

My name is Christina Caswell, and I am reaching out to you to ask for your assistance in a doctoral dissertation study within the School of Applied Leadership at City University of Seattle. The purpose of the study is to explore the lived experiences of change and somatic transformation of coaches certified by the Strozzi Institute in somatic coaching.

I am inviting you to participate in this study and enable inquiry into the intelligence of the human body in the coaching profession.

Your assistance in this study would allow increased discovery of leadership development by gaining insights into the phenomenon of somatic coaching. Enabled by your participation would be a greater understanding of the experience of change and somatic transformation of coaches and coaches' perspectives about the impact of somatic coaching on coach effectiveness. Information from the study may be used by future researchers to conduct similar studies to learn more about the development of leaders and the role of the body in professional coaching in the business context.

Coaches interested in the study would participate in a semistructured interview that would take 45 to 60 minutes to complete. No personally identifiable information will be published as part of the research. Your responses will be confidential. Each interview will be conducted using a video technology such as Zoom, Microsoft Teams, or something similar. Telephone and email will be used as alternative technologies for conducting the interview if needed.

I would like to record each interview. The interview will not be recorded without your permission. If you agree to be recorded and change your mind during the interview, please let me know, and I will stop the recording. Interview notes can be taken as a contingency if you prefer not to be recorded. Interview notes and recorded interviews would be transcribed to ensure data accuracy.

If you are interested in participating in this study, please go to: <https://forms.office.com/x/xxxxxxxxx> and complete the Study Eligibility Survey. If you are found to be eligible for this study, you will be sent a link to a short demographic survey. No one except for me, my supervisor, and the Program Director will be allowed to view any information collected in the Study Eligibility Survey or the demographic survey. However, information collected can never be 100% secure. Steps will be taken to protect your demographic data. The Study Eligibility Survey and the demographic survey are housed in my password-protected City University Microsoft OneDrive account. Data collected from the Study Eligibility Survey and the demographic survey will be stored in my City University Microsoft OneDrive account for five years (5 years). At the end of that time, all data will be permanently deleted.

The research that I am conducting has been reviewed and approved by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) of the School of Applied Leadership and City University of Seattle. The leadership team of the Strozzi Leadership Team has also approved this research.

For individuals selected for this study, your participation in the interview process is voluntary, and you may withdraw from the study at any time without penalty or loss of benefit to yourself. You also have the right not to answer questions that you are not comfortable with. Following the interview, a need may arise to contact you to obtain clarification on a response to a question you provided. Within seven business days from the interview, you will be provided the transcription of the interview for you to check. Within seven business days of the send date of the email with the attached transcript that is sent to you, please review the contents of the transcription and reply to let me know if the information you shared during the interview is captured correctly in the contents provided to you. In the absence of a reply from you, it will be understood that the information you shared during the interview was captured correctly in the contents provided to you.

For any questions concerning the research study, please contact me at my cell, xxx-xxx-xxxx, or my email, xxxxxx@cityuniversity.edu. I will collaborate with you to arrange an interview time that is convenient for you.

Thank you in advance for considering this research opportunity.

With Genuine Appreciation,

Christina Caswell  
Doctoral Candidate  
School of Applied Leadership  
City University of Seattle

## APPENDIX B

## Study Eligibility Survey

Thank you for considering this research opportunity.

Questions	Response
Name (First and Last).	_____
Preferred Email Address(es):	_____
Preferred contact number(s):	_____
1. What are your areas of coaching specialty? (Check all that apply)	<input type="checkbox"/> Business <input type="checkbox"/> Leadership <input type="checkbox"/> Corporate <input type="checkbox"/> Executive <input type="checkbox"/> Other coaching specialty not listed
2. How many years did you practice as a coach in your area(s) of specialty prior to enrolling in the Strozzi Institute Somatic Coaching training program?	<input type="checkbox"/> Less than 2 years <input type="checkbox"/> 2 to 5 years <input type="checkbox"/> 6 to 10 years <input type="checkbox"/> 11 to 15 years <input type="checkbox"/> 16 to 20 years <input type="checkbox"/> 20 + years
3. How many executives and business and organizational leaders did you coach in your listed area(s) of specialty prior to enrolling in the Strozzi Institute Somatic Coaching training program?	_____
4. What year did you complete your Strozzi Institute Somatic Coaching certification with the Strozzi Institute?	_____
5. Did you pass the Strozzi Institute Somatic Coaching training program certification exam on your first attempt?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
6. How many years did you practice as a coach in your area(s) of specialty after receiving your somatic coaching certification with the Strozzi Institute?	<input type="checkbox"/> Less than 1 year <input type="checkbox"/> 1 to 5 years <input type="checkbox"/> 6 to 10 years <input type="checkbox"/> 11 to 15 years <input type="checkbox"/> 16 to 20 years <input type="checkbox"/> 20 + years
7. How many executives and business and organizational leaders did you coach in your listed area(s) of specialty after	

receiving your somatic coaching certification with the Strozzi Institute?	_____
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Thank you for completing the Study Eligibility Survey. Your time is greatly appreciated.

## APPENDIX C

## Interview Invitation Email

Dear [Potential Participant],

Thank you for completing the Study Eligibility Survey. I am pleased to share that, based on your responses to the study eligibility questions, you are qualified to participate in my research on The Perceived Impact of Somatic Coaching on Coach Effectiveness.

The next steps in the study process are to:

- 1) Set up a time to review the attached City University Research Participant Informed Consent form from the School of Applied Leadership to help you make your decision about whether to join the study; and
- 2) Complete a demographic survey in Microsoft Forms prior to the interview that is available for you to access at: <https://forms.office.com/x/xxxxxxxxxx> should you decide to consent to participate in the study.

The primary items we will discuss to help inform your decision-making about whether you would like to participate in the study include:

- The purpose of the research
- The procedures of the research. That is, what you will be asked to do and how much of your time will be required.
- The risks of participating in the research.
- The benefits of participating in the research and whether participation is worth the risk.

Should you decide to consent to participate in the study, we will schedule an interview time that is convenient for you. The interview will take approximately 45 to 60 minutes. During the interview, you will be asked 10 questions and may be asked some clarifying questions during our discussion.

The preference for the interviews is a video platform such as Microsoft Teams or Zoom where the interviews will be video, or audio recorded with your permission. If you consent to be recorded for the interview you will be invited to reconfirm your verbal consent after the recording has begun. As a contingency, a telephone interview can be conducted. If you are not available to schedule an interview time and still would like to participate in the study, the interview questions can be emailed to you in an encrypted file where you are invited to provide your responses back to me electronically in an encrypted file. I will be happy to walk you through the file encryption process as needed. What is your preferred email address to send the interview questions to [if applicable]?

Please let me know a few dates and times that you may be available to visit about potentially joining this research study and include the time zone you will be in on the dates you indicated you have availability.

When we connect to discuss the attached informed consent, I will ask you the following series of preference questions to successfully prepare for the interview. What dates and times are you available to do an interview? What time zone will you be in on those dates? Are you able to do the interview in Microsoft Teams or Zoom or another web platform? Please share the alternative platform if not Microsoft Teams or Zoom. Are you comfortable having the interview recorded? If yes, is your preference video recording or audio recording? If you are comfortable with a recorded interview, I will have a digital recorder as a back-up in case there are any technological difficulties. If you prefer not to have the interview recorded, I will be able to take notes during our interview.

As shared in the informed consent form, you do not have to answer any questions you do not feel comfortable answering and you can withdraw from the study at any time. Please let me know if you have any questions that have not been addressed.

Thank you for your continued interest in this research. I look forward to connecting with you.

In Gratitude,

Christina Caswell  
Doctoral Candidate  
School of Applied Leadership  
City University of Seattle

## APPENDIX D

## Informed Consent for Participants in Research Activities



## School of Applied Leadership

## CITYU RESEARCH PARTICIPANT INFORMED CONSENT

**You are being invited to participate in a research study.**

I, \_\_\_\_\_, agree to participate in the following research project to be conducted by Christina Caswell, student, in the EdD in Leadership Program. I understand this research study has been approved by the City University of Seattle Institutional Review Board.

I acknowledge that I have received a copy of this consent form, signed by all persons involved. I further acknowledge that I have been provided an overview of the research protocol and a detailed explanation of the informed consent process.

**Title of Study:** The Perceived Impact of Somatic Coaching on Coach Effectiveness

**Name and Title of Researcher(s):** Christina Caswell, Doctoral Student

**Faculty Supervisor:** Dr. Susan Cathcart

**Department:** School of Applied Leadership

**Telephone:** xxx-xxx-xxxx

**E-mail:** xxxxxx@cityu.edu

**Program Director:** Dr. Pressley Rankin

**Key Information about this Research Study**

This research study will be explained to you before you are asked to participate in the study and before you sign this consent form.

**What should I know about being a participant in this research study?**

This form contains important information that will help you decide whether to join the study. Take the time to review this information carefully.

- You are eligible to participate in this study because you:
  - Are a certified graduate of the Strozzi Institute Somatic Coaching training program who passed your certification on your first attempt;

- Are a currently practicing professional coach practicing in the coaching specialty area(s) of executive, business, corporate, or leadership;
  - Have at least two years of professional practice in your coaching profession before enrolling in the Strozzi Institute Somatic Coaching training program and one year of professional coaching practice after being certified in the Strozzi Institute Somatic Coaching training program; and
  - Will have coached at least four client-leaders: two before enrolling in the Strozzi Institute Somatic Coaching training program and two after being certified in the Strozzi Institute Somatic Coaching training program.
- About 12 to 15 individuals will participate in this study.

To make your decision, you must consider all the information below:

- The purpose of the research
- The procedures of the research. That is, what you will be asked to do and how much of your time will be required.
- The risks of participating in the research.
- The benefits of participating in the research and whether participation is worth the risk.

If you decide to join the study, you will be asked to sign this form before you can start study-related activities, and to complete a brief demographic survey at: <https://forms.office.com/x/xx/xxxxxxx>.

You are invited to talk to the researcher about the study and ask them as many questions as you need to help you make your decision.

### **Purpose and Benefits of the Study:**

The purpose of the study is to explore the lived experiences of change and somatic transformation of coaches certified by the Strozzi Institute in somatic coaching. Provided in the study results will be information useful to scholars, practitioners, and other coaching stakeholders about the experience of change and somatic transformation of coaches and coaches' perspectives about the impact of somatic coaching on coach effectiveness. Information from the study may be used by future researchers to conduct similar studies to learn more about the development of leaders and the role of the body in professional coaching in the business context.

### **Research Participation:**

I understand I am being asked to participate in this study in one or more of the following ways:

Respond to interview questions conducted using video technology such as Zoom, Microsoft Teams, or something similar, or telephone or email as alternatives to video technology as needed. Review interview transcripts and study findings for accuracy.

I further understand that my involvement is voluntary and that I may refuse to participate or withdraw my participation at any time without negative consequences. I have been advised that I may request a copy of the final research study report. Should I request a copy, I understand I may receive digital copies at no charge and may be asked to pay the costs of photocopying and mailing for any physical copies.

With your permission, interviews will be recorded. You will be asked for your verbal consent to be recorded before the recording is started. You will be invited to provide your verbal consent for study participation at the start of the recorded interview. The interview will not be recorded without your permission. If you agree to be recorded and change your mind during the interview, you can advise the researcher that you have changed your mind, and the researcher will stop the recording. In the absence of

a recording, interview notes would be taken. Interview notes and recorded interviews would be transcribed to ensure data accuracy.

You may refuse to answer any question or any item in verbal interviews, written questionnaires, or surveys, and you can stop or withdraw from any audio or visual recording at any time without any penalty or negative consequences.

### **Potential Risk(s)**

During the collection and analysis stage, research data may be temporarily stored and secured on a personal PC or external drives if the network is down and the researcher's One Drive account is temporarily not available. The device and data files are password protected, and the data are encrypted. PC will be locked when not in use. Data will be coded, that is, each study participant is assigned a random identifier. Informed consent forms, data, and the master key will be transported, transmitted, and stored in independent password-protected files with the data encrypted. Any files transmitted by email will be encrypted. Should you provide any written responses back to me in the absence of a virtual or telephone interview, you will be asked to provide your responses back to me electronically in an encrypted file. I will be happy to walk you through the file encryption process as needed. All notes in electronic format will be password protected. Any notes taken by hand will be transcribed into an electronic file that will be password protected. Any files that are transmitted over email will be provided and requested in an encrypted file. Handwritten notes will be immediately shredded once the original notes are transcribed into electronic format. Paper notes will be kept in a locked filing cabinet until transcribed into electronic format and then shredded. All research data will be uploaded to the researcher's secure City University Microsoft OneDrive account as soon as possible.

### **Confidentiality**

I understand that participation is confidential to the limits of applicable privacy laws. No one except the student researcher, their supervisor, and the Program Director will be allowed to view any information or data collected, whether by questionnaire, interview, and/or other means.

Steps will be taken to protect your identity; however, information collected about you can never be 100% secure. Your name and any other identifying information that can directly identify you will be stored separately from data collected as part of the research study. The results of this study will be published as a dissertation and potentially published in an academic book or journal or presented at an academic conference. To protect your privacy, no information that could directly identify you will be included.

All data (the questionnaires, audio/video recordings, typed records of the interview, interview notes, informed consent forms, computer discs, any backup of computer discs, and any other storage devices) are kept locked, and computer files will be encrypted, and password protected by the researcher. The research data will be stored for five years (5 years). At the end of that time all data of whatever nature will be permanently deleted. The published results of the study will contain data from which no individual participant can be identified.

### **Signatures**

I have carefully reviewed and understand this consent form. I understand the description of the research protocol and consent process provided to me by the researcher. My signature on this form indicates that I understand to my satisfaction the information provided to me about my participation in this research project. My signature also indicates that I have been apprised of the potential risks involved in my participation. Lastly, my signature indicates that I agree to participate as a research subject.

My consent to participate does not waive my legal rights nor release the researchers, sponsors, and/or City University of Seattle from their legal and professional responsibilities with respect to this research. I

understand I am free to withdraw from this research study at any time. I further understand that I may ask for clarification or new information throughout my participation at any time during this research.

Participant's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Please Print

Participant's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Researcher's Name: Christina Caswell, Doctoral Student

Please Print

Researcher's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

If completing this form electronically, please provide electronic consent.

**ELECTRONIC CONSENT:** Please select your choice below.

Clicking on the **“agree”** button below indicates that:

- you have read and understand all of the above information, and
- you voluntarily agree to participate, and
- you are at least 18 years of age.

If you **do not wish to participate** in the research study, please decline participation by clicking on the **“disagree”** button.

Agree

Disagree

If I have any questions about this research, I have been advised to contact Christina Caswell and/or her supervisor, Dr. Susan Cathcart, as listed on page one of this consent form.

Should I have any concerns about the way I have been treated or think that I have been harmed as a research participant, I may contact the following individual(s):

Pressley Rankin, Program Director, City University of Seattle, at  
521 Wall St #100, Seattle, WA 98121, xxx-xxx-xxxx and xxxxxxxx@cityu.edu.

This study has been reviewed and has been approved by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) of City University of Seattle. If you have questions about your rights as a participant in this study or to discuss other study-related concerns or complaints with someone who is not part of the research team, you may contact the IRB at IRB@Cityu.edu.

## APPENDIX E

## Interview Appointment Confirmation

Dear (Participant),

Thank you for participating in my research. As discussed, we have set up the interview for:

\_\_\_\_\_

Date

\_\_\_\_\_

Time

Meeting Link / Phone number: \_\_\_\_\_

If you have not already, please complete a demographic survey in Microsoft Forms prior to our scheduled interview appointment that is available for you to access at:

<https://forms.office.com/x/xxxxxxxxxx>.

Finally, should you wish to contact me for clarification on this request or have any general questions, please let me know how I can help.

Thank you again for your time and help!

Sincerely,

Christina Caswell  
Doctoral Candidate  
School of Applied Leadership  
City University of Seattle

## APPENDIX F

## Interview Follow-Up Email

Dear [Participant],

Thank you very much for participating in my research on The Perceived Impact of Somatic Coaching on Coach Effectiveness. Your participation will help to inform scholars, practitioners, and other coaching stakeholders about the experience of change and somatic transformation of coaches and coaches' perspectives about the impact of somatic coaching on coach effectiveness.

Within approximately one week, a transcript of our interview will be emailed to you at the email address you have provided. You will be asked to verify descriptions in the transcript and determine if what you have said in the interview is accurately reflected. Please feel free to advise me if there is anything in the transcript that does not match what you have said or meant in the interview. Your feedback and comments on the transcript will help me to ensure and improve the overall reliability of the data for this research.

Thank you again for your time and effort in this research.

In Gratitude,

Christina Caswell  
Doctoral Candidate  
School of Applied Leadership  
City University of Seattle

## APPENDIX G

## Transcript Accuracy Check Email

Dear [Participant],

Thank you for participating in my research.

I have attached a transcription of the interview. As indicated in my earlier follow up email to you, you are invited to review the attached transcription for accuracy and let me know if you believe your views and beliefs on the subjects we discussed are accurately captured in the transcription of your interview. Should you find areas that may need updates or improvements, or where corrections are needed, please make those adjustments and additions and return them to me. Please email your feedback to me at xxxxx@cityuniversity.edu within seven business days of the send date of this email.

In the absence of a response by the end of the seven business days from the send date of this email, I will infer that your views and beliefs on the subjects we discussed are accurately captured in the transcription of your interview.

Lastly, should you wish to contact me for clarification on this request or have any general questions, please let me know how I can help.

Thank you kindly for your time and assistance.

In Gratitude,

Christina Caswell  
Doctoral Candidate  
School of Applied Leadership  
City University of Seattle

## APPENDIX H

## Practices of the Five Domains of Somatic Coaching

Somatic Domain	Practices
Somatic Awareness	<p>Practices for the somatic coaching domain of somatic awareness:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Body/Self Awareness—notice sensations, breath, shape, qualities, actions, stories, and moods; scanning the body</li> <li>2. Awareness of and access to emotions and their connection to sensations</li> <li>3. Centering: Leaning to balance along the dimensions of length, width, depth, and an organizing principle</li> <li>4. Embodied meditation (attention training)</li> <li>5. Seeing somatically and not only cognitively: building the skill of observing oneself and other through the life of the body and not only the content of what is being said or thought</li> <li>6. Ongoing practice of bringing attention to life of the body in all activities (Strözzi-Heckler, 2014, pp. 62-63)</li> </ol>
Somatic Opening	<p>Practices for the somatic coaching domain of somatic opening:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Being with, blending with, and healing the emotional and energetic wounds that are carried in our bodies</li> <li>2. Strozzi Bodywork</li> <li>3. Spirited commitment to dignity: building the skill to fight for what we care about and to take an embodied stand for our dignity and values</li> <li>4. Listening beyond the self; spirit, landscape, interdependence, human history, what wants to come to form beyond the self</li> <li>5. Feeling and allowing deep emotions</li> <li>6. Emotional/political/professional/spiritual autobiographies: an embodied understanding of the narratives and stories that make up who we are</li> <li>7. Becoming aware of and gaining mastery over conditioned tendencies</li> <li>8. Accessing authenticity, yearning, and declarations (Strözzi-Heckler, 2014, pp. 73-74)</li> </ol>
Somatic Practices	<p>Practices for the somatic coaching domain of somatic practices:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. CFEEB: Center—a commitment to become present; Face—a commitment to integrity; Extend—a commitment to</li> </ol>

	<p>listening; Enter—a commitment to courageous action; Blend—a commitment to collaboration</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2. Embodying the speech acts: Declarations—a commitment to a future possibility; Assessments—a commitment to intimacy and future action; Assertions—a commitment to an existing reality; Requests—a commitment to a future action; Offers/Promises—a commitment to producing satisfaction</li> <li>3. Centering in action</li> <li>4. Shifting states of consciousness—Increasing choice and capacity</li> <li>5. Embodying competencies we need for our personal declarations and leadership roles (Strözzi-Heckler, 2014, pp. 84-85)</li> </ol>
<p>Social Context (pp 91-92)</p>	<p>Practices for the somatic coaching domain of social context:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Ongoing education, awareness of and accountability for systemic shaping, oppression, and privilege, and one’s location in it. How has it shaped you and others? How has it shaped your worldview, options, beliefs, and embodied habits?</li> <li>2. Sites of Shaping, past and present: discovering how your individual and collective conditioned tendencies have been shaped by broader historical and social forces</li> <li>3. Sites of Change: recognizing that creating change at different Sites takes different skills and actions</li> <li>4. Somatic practices done collectively build resilience and grounded alliances in teams, communicates, and organizations.</li> <li>5. Centered accountability</li> <li>6. Through somatic practices, conflict becomes a generative force rather than a precipitation into aggression and violence (Strözzi-Heckler, 2014, pp. 91-92)</li> </ol>
<p>Landscape</p>	<p>Practices for the somatic coaching domain of nature/landscape:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Include metaphorical and literal examples of nature in the discourse</li> <li>2. Invite nature to shape us</li> <li>3. When practices are don’t outside include the landscape in the narrative</li> <li>4. Utilize sustainable environmental practices such as shifting from fossil fuels to renewable energy, decreasing consumerism, buying and/or local growing of organic food</li> <li>5. Encourage students to get outside and build relationship to the landscape since Nature is a major resilience factor for most people</li> </ol>

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>6. Express gratefulness for Nature</li><li>7. Have conversations about how the landscape has shaped you</li><li>8. Have conversations about the cost of “separating” from Nature (Strözzi-Heckler, 2014, pp. 97-98)</li></ol>
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## APPENDIX I

## Processes and Practices Relevant to the Four Stages of the Somatic Arc of Transformation

Stage	Process and Practices
Historical Shape	<p>Processes and practices for the historical stage of the somatic arc of transformation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Building a Somatic Awareness</li> <li>▪ Building the experience of body as self</li> <li>▪ Building the experience of working through the body for transformation</li> <li>▪ Grab practice—a standing exercise that reveals the Conditioned Tendency</li> <li>▪ Increasing awareness of Sites of Shaping, for Somatic Coach and clients</li> <li>▪ Centering</li> <li>▪ Extending energy by moving the attention internally and externally</li> <li>▪ Conversations around commitment (Strözzi-Heckler, 2014, pp. 161-162)</li> </ul>
Unbounded Shape	<p>Processes and practices for the unbounded stage of the somatic arc of transformation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Somatic Awareness</li> <li>▪ Energy awareness</li> <li>▪ Somatic Bodywork: touch, breath, gestures</li> <li>▪ Releasing historical embodied patterns and narratives</li> <li>▪ Meditation</li> <li>▪ Centering in the self</li> <li>▪ Centering in spirit</li> <li>▪ Increasing your ability to experience a wide range of emotions from anger, fear, and resentment to happiness, joy, and contentment (Strözzi-Heckler, 2014, p. 168)</li> </ul>
New Shape	<p>Processes and practices for the new shape stage of the somatic arc of transformation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Somatic Awareness</li> <li>▪ Extending along the somatic dimensions of length, width, and depth</li> <li>▪ Learning to live with the unknown</li> <li>▪ Settling into and listening to the deeper somatic currents</li> <li>▪ Centering in spirit</li> <li>▪ Dissolving the significant armoring bands</li> <li>▪ Shifting states of consciousness is an embodied practice that increases choice about the level of awareness from which we can operate (Strözzi-Heckler, 2014, p. 172)</li> </ul>

Embodiment	<p>Processes and practices for the new shape stage of the somatic arc of transformation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Meditation</li> <li>▪ Centered presence</li> <li>▪ A spirited commitment to dignity</li> <li>▪ Being able to decline—to say no—in which everyone’s dignity is maintained</li> <li>▪ Insisting on what is right, true, and beautiful</li> <li>▪ Quitting the relationships, practices, behaviors, and conversations (both inner and outer) that no longer lead to a generative life</li> <li>▪ Declaring the future you envision for yourself and your loved ones</li> <li>▪ Grounded assessments that lead to intimacy and a new future</li> <li>▪ Requests: asking for what you want to further your values and commitments</li> <li>▪ Jo Practice: a set of thirty-one moves with a Japanese staff that increases a somatic awareness and a centered presence</li> <li>▪ Facing life with integrity</li> <li>▪ Extending energy to cultivate a deeper listening to others and the world</li> <li>▪ Entering into conflict as a way to generate relationship and creative solutions</li> <li>▪ Blending as a way to work collaboratively and work with others’ concerns</li> <li>▪ Somatic Bodywork (Strözzi-Heckler, 2014, pp. 177-178)</li> </ul>
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## APPENDIX J

## Organizational Informed Consent

**Organizational Informed Consent Form**

Name of Organization Strozzi Institute

Address 2900 Lakeshore Ave  
 City, State, Zip Oakland, CA 94610  
 Telephone 510-444-1232

By signing this consent form, I understand that Christina Caswell (the researcher) is a  candidate for an advanced degree, or  a faculty member of City University of Seattle. I understand that the researcher is conducting a study entitled THE PERCEIVED IMPACT OF SOMATIC COACHING ON COACH EFFECTIVENESS. The purpose of this research is to explore the lived experiences of change and somatic transformation of coaches certified by the Strozzi Institute in somatic coaching.

I understand the findings of this research study are solely the responsibility of the researcher. It is understood that any and all information/data the researcher collects from contacts within and/or about our organization outside the research protocol will not be part of the research findings. I understand the researcher may publish findings following completion of this study. Any information published will be limited to the findings of the research. No research participants will participate in this study without organization and City University of Seattle Institutional Review Board (IRB) knowledge and approval.

- I grant the researcher permission to contact members of the organization for the purpose of requesting participation in the study as required by the research design.
- I grant the researcher permission to use organizational premises as necessary to conduct the research.
- I grant the researcher permission to collect, use, and store organizational documentation related to the project under study. I understand that in granting permission to access organizational documentation, the researcher will store copies in a secure manner outside of the organization in a secure manner as approved by the City University of Seattle IRB.
- The researcher will maintain all documentation and findings regarding this organization in confidence and confine its use to this research study.
- On behalf of the organization, I request a final copy of this research report.

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Organization Representative and signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Date

Print Name and Title \_\_\_\_\_  
Organization Strozzi Institute

Name of Research Supervisor or Advisor: Dr. Susan Cathcart  
Contact Information xxxxxx

3/2019

## APPENDIX K

## Demographics Survey

Thank you for taking time to complete this brief survey.

Questions	Response
Name (First and Last).	_____
Please indicate your gender.	_____ Female _____ Male _____ Non-binary _____ Prefer not to disclose _____ Other
Please indicate your age category.	_____ 18-24 _____ 25-34 _____ 35-44 _____ 45-54 _____ 55-64 _____ 65+ _____ prefer not to answer

Thank you for completing the Demographics Survey.

Your time is greatly appreciated.

## APPENDIX L

## Data Collection Outline

*Data Collection Outline*

Task	Audience	Condition, if applicable
Sent interview invitation email	To potential participants found qualified for the study	Prior to data collection, using a CityU email address
Included link to demographic survey and an attached consent form in the interview invitation email	To participants found qualified for the study	
Collected an electronic copy of the signed consent form	From qualified participants	Electronically
Scheduled and conducted interviews	With the first 10 qualified participants who consented to the study and completed the demographics survey	Used email and phone to schedule the interviews
Conducted pilot study	With the first two eligible individuals who responded to the study interest email	
Interviewed study participants	The next eight qualified participants who consented to the study	
Sent study invitation reminders	To qualified participants	From the researcher's CityU email address and via phone when needed, at intervals of five business days for a period not exceeding 28 calendar days
Asked for referrals	From qualified participants	Implemented snowball sampling to select the participants for the study

*Note.* The task, audience, and applicable condition(s) for the data collection plan were outlined.

Contingencies were incorporated into the data collection plan to 1) address initial unresponsiveness of

individuals for study consent and interview appointment scheduling, and 2) address lack of response and insufficient sample size.

## APPENDIX M

## Coach Interview Questions

Research Question	Interview Question
<p>RQ 1: What are the somatic change experiences of coaches certified in the somatic coaching methodology by the Strozzi Institute?</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Why did you enroll in the Strozzi Institute Somatic Coaching training program?</li> <li>2. What was your vision for yourself as a coach when you enrolled in the Strozzi Institute Somatic Coaching training program?</li> <li>3. What were your expectations for becoming a Strozzi Institute certified somatic coach?</li> <li>4. What was your declaration when you received somatic coaching as part of the Strozzi Institute Somatic Coaching training program?</li> <li>5. What practices did you use throughout the somatic coaching process to support your somatic transformation as a coach in the Strozzi Institute Somatic Coaching training program?</li> </ol>
<p>RQ 2: What is the perceived impact of the somatic coaching methodological intervention on the coaching effectiveness of experienced coaches who become certified graduates of the Strozzi Institute Somatic Coaching training program?</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>6. In what ways did you somatically reorganize yourself as a coach as a result of the Strozzi Institute Somatic Coaching training program?</li> <li>7. How do you use somatic coaching in your coaching practice as a SISC-certified coach?</li> <li>8. How has using somatic coaching with your clients influenced your coaching relationships as a SISC-certified coach?</li> <li>9. What has been the impact on the ability of your coaching clients to transform and achieve sustained change as a result of</li> </ol>

Research Question	Interview Question
	<p data-bbox="786 233 1305 302">your use of somatic coaching as a SISC-certified coach?</p> <p data-bbox="740 342 1312 449">10. In what ways have you benefited from using somatic coaching in your coaching practice as a SISC-certified coach?</p>

## APPENDIX N

## Process for Gaining Access to the Population

*Process Outline for Gaining Access to the Population*

Task	Audience	Condition, if applicable
Sent study invitation email with link to a study eligibility survey and researcher's contact information	To members of the Strozzi Institute	From a CityU email address
Study invitation email was embedded into a new email	By a designated member of the Strozzi Institute team	Entire content of study invitation email was included in the new email
Designated Strozzi Institute team member transmitted original study invitation email with link to study eligibility survey en masse from a Strozzi Institute email address	To the email addresses of the SISC-certified graduates	Using a CRM software
Included a brief introduction indicating that the Strozzi Institute had approved the voluntary study invitation in the email that was sent	To the email addresses of the SISC-certified graduates through the CRM	For the purpose of letting the SISC-certified graduates know that the study invitation email was legitimate and not spam mail
Selected link in the study invitation email and completed the study eligibility survey at the survey link	Potential participants interested in participating in the study	(see Appendix B for survey eligibility questions)
Collected contact information	For qualified participants	From study eligibility survey response data
Sent interview invitation email with link to demographic survey and an attached informed consent form	To potential participants qualified for the study	Used CityU email to contact qualified participants to discuss informed consent and schedule interviews

*Note.* The task, audience, and applicable condition(s) for the process used to gain access to the population are outlined.

## APPENDIX O

## Revised Coach Interview Questions with Descriptions of Changes

Research Questions: With Description of Changes to Interview Protocol	Revised Interview Protocol: Revised Questions with Introductions Added
<p>RQ 1: What are the somatic change experiences of coaches certified in the somatic coaching methodology by the Strozzi Institute? <i>Changes to interview protocol for questions used to address RQ1 in response to feedback from Pilot Study Participant 1–</i></p> <p>RQ1 Change 1: Replaced the wording of “Strozzi Institute of Somatics, Somatic Coaching training program” with the word ‘program’ to reduce wordiness in the first five interview questions. Added to the interview protocol was a brief introduction for the first five interview questions. The introduction was used to inform the study participants that when the term ‘program’ was used in a question, being referred to was the Strozzi Institute of Somatics, Somatic Coaching training program.</p> <p>RQ1 Change 2: Removed original question number four that was used to inquire about the coach’s declaration for the training program. The coach’s intention for enrolling in the SISC training program were already able to be addressed in the first three interview questions that were used to ask participants why they enrolled in the program, and their vision and expectations for enrolling in the program, respectively, interview questions one through three.</p> <p>RQ1 Change 3: The question about practices, Question 5. On the original interview protocol was moved to Question 4. on the revised protocol given the removal of the declaration question.</p>	<p>I am going to ask you 10 interview questions and a follow-up question. When the term ‘program’ is used in a question, I am referring to the Strozzi Institute of Somatics, Somatic Coaching training program.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Why did you enroll in the program?</li> <li>2. What was your vision for yourself as a coach when you enrolled in the program?</li> <li>3. What were your expectations for becoming a Strozzi Institute of Somatics certified somatic coach?</li> <li>4. What somatic coaching practices did you find most helpful throughout your somatic transformation journey as a coach in the program?</li> <li>5. In what ways did you shift how you apply yourself in your role as a coach as a result of the program?</li> </ol>

<p>RQ1 Change 4: A suggestion was made to inquire about the impacts of the somatic coaching practices on the study participants. Recommended was to structure one question to ask how use of the practices personally affected the study participants and design a second question to ask about how use of the somatic coaching practices used in the training affected the work standard of the coaches interviewed. In lieu of adding two questions about impacts from use of the somatic practices during the coaching training, a new fifth question was created for the interview protocol: Question 5. In what ways did you shift how you apply yourself in your role as a coach as a result of the program?</p>	
<p>RQ 2: What is the perceived impact of the somatic coaching methodological intervention on the coaching effectiveness of experienced coaches who become certified graduates of the Strozzi Institute Somatic Coaching training program?</p> <p><i>Changes to interview protocol for questions used to address RQ2 in response to feedback from Pilot Study Participant 1–</i></p> <p>RQ2 Change 1: To reduce wordiness in interview questions, substituted the language “as a SISC-certified coach” in the individual interview questions with an introduction for interview questions six through ten: For the remaining questions, I am interested in your response being from your perspective as an SISC-certified coach.</p> <p>RQ2 Change 2: Removed original interview Question 6: In what ways did you somatically reorganize yourself as a coach as a result of the Strozzi Institute Somatic Coaching training program? The interview questions about coaching practice and</p>	<p>For the remaining questions, I am interested in your response being from your perspective as a SISC-certified coach.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>6. In what ways do you use somatic coaching in your coaching practice?</li> <li>7. How has using somatic coaching with your clients influenced the effectiveness of your coaching relationships?</li> <li>8. In what ways has using somatic coaching influenced your approach to the coaching process?</li> <li>9. How has your use of somatic coaching affected your clients’ ability to make sustainable change?</li> <li>10. What are the benefits of using somatic coaching in your coaching practice?</li> </ol>

<p>coaching relationships, respectively questions 7 and 8 in the original interview protocol became questions 6 and 7 in the revised interview protocol.</p> <p>RQ1 Change 3: A question was added to the interview protocol to ask about the coaching process piece of the coaching engagement: Question 8: In what ways has using somatic coaching influenced your approach to the coaching process?</p> <p>RQ1 Change 4: Question 9. used to inquire about client change was rephrased to achieve conciseness as follows: How has your use of somatic coaching affected your clients' ability to make sustainable change?</p> <p>RQ1 Change 5: To reduce wordiness, Question 10. used to explore benefits of the use of somatic coaching was re-written as: What are the benefits of using somatic coaching in your coaching practice?</p> <p>RQ1 Change 6: A Question 11. was added to the interview protocol to expand discovery about the coaches' perceptions of how being an SISC-certified coach has impacted their work as a coach.</p>	<p>11. In closing, is there anything about how being an SISC-certified coach has impacted your work as a coach that I have not asked you about that you would like to add?</p>
<p>Pilot Study Participant 2: Indicated he was so engaged with the interview questions to ensure that he was not holding something back in the interview engagement process that he did not have additional constructive feedback for the interview protocol.</p>	

## Original Coach Interview Questions

Research Question	Interview Question
<p>RQ 1: What are the somatic change experiences of coaches certified in the somatic coaching methodology by the Strozzi Institute?</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>6. Why did you enroll in the Strozzi Institute Somatic Coaching training program?</li> <li>7. What was your vision for yourself as a coach when you enrolled in the Strozzi Institute Somatic Coaching training program?</li> <li>8. What were your expectations for becoming a Strozzi Institute certified somatic coach?</li> <li>9. What was your declaration when you received somatic coaching as part of the Strozzi Institute Somatic Coaching training program?</li> <li>10. What practices did you use throughout the somatic coaching process to support your somatic transformation as a coach in the Strozzi Institute Somatic Coaching training program?</li> </ol>
<p>RQ 2: What is the perceived impact of the somatic coaching methodological intervention on the coaching effectiveness of experienced coaches who become certified graduates of the Strozzi Institute Somatic Coaching training program?</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>11. In what ways did you somatically reorganize yourself as a coach as a result of the Strozzi Institute Somatic Coaching training program?</li> <li>7. How do you use somatic coaching in your coaching practice as a SISC-certified coach?</li> <li>8. How has using somatic coaching with your clients influenced your coaching relationships as a SISC-certified coach?</li> <li>9. What has been the impact on the ability of your coaching clients to transform and achieve sustained change as a result</li> </ol>

	<p>of your use of somatic coaching as a SISC-certified coach?</p> <p>10. In what ways have you benefited from using somatic coaching in your coaching practice as a SISC-certified coach?</p>
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