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Managerial coaching as the foundation for building felt-trust and motivation among employees working remotely

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## **Abstract**

This qualitative study examines how managerial coaching builds felt-trust among remote working employees by meeting the psychological needs of autonomy and relatedness, outlined in Social Determination Theory. In-depth semi-structured interviews with 15 employees revealed that managerial coaching plays a critical role in establishing and maintaining trust among employees so they feel trusted in their abilities and valued as a person. This fills a gap in the managerial coaching literature and supports evidence to suggest that felt-trust is more powerful than trust in the leader, in determining employee performance when working remotely. The implication is that managerial coaching training will deliver the necessary skills to effectively motivate and demonstrate trust to a remote workforce.

**Keywords: felt trust, autonomy, managerial coaching, remote working, Social Determination Theory**

## **Introduction**

Since the global pandemic of 2020, in which the UK Government mandated people to work from home where possible, there has been a dramatic increase in the number of organisations integrating homeworking into their long-term workforce operating models. Before the crisis 5% of employees in the UK reported working mainly from home, and 27% said they occasionally worked from home (ONS, 2021). Research from CPID (2020) suggests that home will be the main place of work for 22% of the workforce from 2022, and 37% will work regularly from home. For some industries as much as 49% of employees are anticipated to be full-time homeworkers in the future (ONS, 2021). For most organisations a new model of hybrid working, where employees work some of the week in the office and some at home, is becoming the prevailing way of working (CIPD, 2021). In response, HR practitioners are reviewing their learning and development programmes to provide leaders with the skills to lead a remote workforce over the long term that continues to deliver high levels of performance.

## **The role of trust**

The absence of trust was cited by HR practitioners as the main reason homeworking was not more common before the pandemic (Aitken-Fox et al., 2020), and trust was found to be the most significant factor in determining effective performance of teams during the pandemic (Garro-Abarca et al 2021). Trust-building among leaders has therefore become the new buzzword for HR practitioners, however, much of the existing literature focusses on how a leader can inspire trust in themselves (Nienaber et al., 2015) yet the nature of remote working suggests the worker needs to feel trusted if they are to be sufficiently motivated to deliver what is required

of them. This presents a gap in the literature, and the purpose of this study is to explore the leadership behaviours that build felt-trust among remote workers. Specifically, it aims to show the important role that managerial coaching plays in building felt-trust, and in turn generating greater levels of self-motivation. Social Determination Theory (SDT) has been used to understand the psychological processes behind coaching (Ryan & Deci, 2000), but has rarely been used to understand trust-building (Nienaber et al., 2015). However, the increase in self-motivation that people experience when they feel trusted, corresponds to the internal autonomous motivation described by the motivation continuum in SDT, and therefore linking SDT to trust-building through managerial coaching provides a valuable contribution to the trust literature. This study provides a qualitative exploration into the mechanisms through which managerial coaching builds felt-trust and how it relates to SDT. In doing so HR practitioners gain clear recommendations on how managerial coaching can be leveraged to build felt-trust in a remote or hybrid working environment based on empirical evidence.

## **Defining Trust**

The most widespread definition of trust is the “willingness of a party to be vulnerable to the actions of another party” proposed by Mayer, Davis and Shoorman (1995). This was later added to by Rousseau et al (1998) as being a *psychological state* in which a person accepts vulnerability on the basis of *positive expectations* of the other. Trust is more important for teams working remotely, as shown in a meta-analysis of research that found high levels of trust makes remote teams more effective and improves performance (Breuer et al., 2016). Trust has also been identified as one of the five core competencies that lead to digital resilience in remote teams (Grant & Russell, 2020). However, technology can act as a barrier to relationship building

because of the lack of feedback through physical cues (Zigurs, 2003), so managers need to change their behaviour, skills and knowledge to actively build trust in the team (Greenberg et al., 2007; Putait et al., 2015). Although trusting and feeling trusted are corresponding behaviours, they are not the same. Felt-trust describes how a person perceives the positive regard of the manager, indicated by whether the manager feels willing to be vulnerable or has a positive belief in their ability, and receiving this positive regard from others makes them more likely to feel psychologically empowered (Gill et al., 2019) and increases the subordinate's self-esteem (Lau et al., 2018). Consequently, felt trust is a stronger predictor of performance than a worker's trust in their manager (Lester & Brower, 2003; Salamon & Robinson, 2008). Gill et al argue that when an employee feels trusted, the increased feelings of self-efficacy result in greater levels of competence and self-determination. Remote teams require higher levels of intrinsic motivation and self-management, so distributed leadership styles such as transformational leadership (Bass, 1995), or servant leadership (Greenleaf, 1977), which promote greater autonomy and empowerment by establishing trust, and emphasising an appreciation of the individual needs of the team members (Gregory Stone et al., 2004), will be more effective in remote teams. On a practical skill level, managerial coaching is considered the 'trojan horse' that facilitates a modern, collaborative leadership style (Anderson, 2013) and helps to build trust (Milner & Mccarthy, 2016).

### **Defining managerial coaching**

There are broadly three categories of coaching that take place within the organisation: the external or executive coach, the internal coach, and the managerial coach. The manager coach engages in short, informal coaching opportunities that focus on organisational goals and skills, and is most commonly cited as the mechanism to achieve an empowerment culture (Fillery-

Travis & Lane, 2007). Coaching skills allow the manager to connect with the employee and unlock their own thinking (Palmer & Whybrow, 2008). When applied in this way coaching is less formal and may involve a 10-minute corridor conversation or switching in a one-to-one meeting to a coaching style to facilitate learning (Turner & McCarthy, 2015). Managerial coaching has been shown to improve job performance and increase employee satisfaction (Ellinger et al., 2003), as well as organisational commitment (Kim et al., 2013), and engagement (Ladyshevsky, 2017). The perceived efficacy of managerial coaching is so great that it is considered an essential core activity for effective leaders (Hamlin et al., 2007). Despite its apparent importance there is limited empirical research into managerial coaching compared to the research into other forms of coaching (Beattie et al., 2014; Hagen, 2012; Lawrence, 2013). One of the most notable areas in which there is a difference between formal coaching and managerial coaching is the issue of contracting. Setting up a formal coaching contract is necessary with an internal or external coach, however many managers prefer to take a more informal approach when they apply their coaching skills (Lawrence, 2013).

### **Managerial coaching and trust**

From the trust literature it is clear the perception of support from your line manager increases trust (Paillé et al., 2010). The assumption in existing literature is that trust exists before coaching takes place rather than it being an outcome of coaching (Turner and McCarthy 2015) However, Kim and Kuo (2015) found that a subordinate perceives their manager to be more trustworthy when they use managerial coaching skills. This suggests managerial coaching contributes to the perceptions of felt-trust.

## **Social Determination Theory (SDT)**

SDT describes a continuum of motivation ranging from the internal autonomous motivation in which a person acts out of interest and enjoyment, through to externally controlled motivation such as rewards, punishments, and compliance (Ryan & Deci, 2000). The social dynamics within the workplace can either increase or decrease intrinsic motivation depending on whether the basic psychological needs of autonomy, relatedness, and competence are being met. Work practices that lead to need frustration will move people further down the continuum (Manganeli et al., 2018). Whereas, when a manager relinquishes control they develop greater levels of intrinsic motivation that builds confidence an individual's ability, and commitment to organisational objectives. In this way SDT aligns with the characteristics of felt-trust, and it provides a meaningful theory-based framework for managerial coaching through its emphasis on the three psychological needs to build intrinsic motivation, and enhance psychological wellness (Ryan & Deci, 2018) that align with the principles of learning, empowerment, and communication embodied in coaching competencies (International Coaching Federation, 2021).

Overall, the aim of this study is to fill the gaps in the literature about the role managerial coaching plays in building felt-trust in the employee while working remotely. A thematic qualitative analysis was used to understand what contextual factors may influence the relationship between managerial coaching and felt-trust in remote workers. The specific research questions were:

- 1. How does managerial coaching influence felt trust in an employee when working remotely?*
- 2. What other factors contribute to the experience of felt trust?*



*3. How does the theory of SDT contribute to the understanding of the psychological processes through which managerial coaching increases felt trust?*

## **Methodology**

137 participants were recruited through convenience sampling to complete a quantitative survey measuring levels of felt-trust and perception of their line manager's coaching skills. The survey was sent to HR managers and other contacts in organisations known to the researcher, and the survey was also shared on the social networking site LinkedIn. From this data a purposeful sampling approach was used to select 15 participants based on their scores for the felt trust and managerial coaching scales. The majority of participants worked in the public sector and government (Table 1). Most did not work from home before the pandemic but all were working from home some or all of the time when the interview was conducted.

### **Table 1 here**

The **managerial coaching scale** used in this study was developed by (DiGirolamo & Tkach, 2019), as it incorporates the most widely used (Ellinger et al., 2003) behavioural scale and represents coaching behaviours aligned with the ICF competencies and does not include mentoring or leadership behaviours. The nine-item Manager and Leader Coaching Composite (MLCC) used a 5-point Likert frequency scale and had a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of .83 (Table A2). **Felt-trust** was measured using a version of the Behavioural Trust Inventory Trust scale (Gillespie, 2003) adapted by (Lau et al., 2014) to measure felt-trust from the perspective of the subordinate (Table A4). Consistent with Gillespie the felt-trust scale has two dimensions of reliance on a trustee's decisions and actions, and willingness to disclose sensitive information with Cronbachs alpha of .92 and .93 respectively.

A semi-structured interview was developed to explore the perception of felt-trust of each individual and how that related to their experience of being coached by their line manager. Example questions included: “Can you provide an example of how your manager influences the level of trust you feel?”, “How frequently do they ask you questions related to your learning and development?”, and “How does it make you feel when your line manager is directive/facilitative?”. Participants were also asked questions relating to managerial coaching, and referenced some of the specific items in the managerial coaching scale. Finally, they were asked how their line manager’s behaviours reflected those of other leaders in the organisation to explore how much of their experience was due to the interpersonal dynamic and how much was related to the organisational system (Whitener et al., 1998).

### **Data collection and analysis**

The interviews were conducted, recorded, and transcribed using Microsoft Teams. The anonymised transcripts were then re-read and codes were assigned where the text provided meaning in relation to the research questions. The researcher followed the meaning and made interpretations of the stories being told, which influenced how the data was coded (Braun & Clarke, 2006). For the next stage, initial codes were categorised based on the notations and grouped to refine the themes. An initial thematic map was developed to consider how the different parts connected with each other. This helped to refine the themes further, and converge those that overlapped. If themes didn’t hold enough data they were incorporated into other relevant themes. The final stage was to select texts that most clearly represented the meaning for each theme. Once a draft table had been produced it was shared with a fellow researcher along

with a sample of five transcripts to validate the objective confirmability of the thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

## **Research findings**

It was clear from the interview data that participants made a distinction between feeling trusted to fulfil their role, and feeling valued as a person, both of which contributed to them feeling trusted overall. Four key themes emerged from the data: managerial coaching played a key role in each of the three themes of *Feeling trusted in my abilities*, *Feeling valued as a person*, and *Establishing and maintain trust in the relationship*, but was not the only contributing factor. The fourth theme of *The Organisational Environment* highlighted the critical role that organisational culture plays in facilitating managerial coaching.

### **Theme 1: Feeling trusted in my abilities**

A prominent theme through the interviews was the extent to which the individuals felt trusted to do their role while working remotely. The theme combines perspectives from those who felt trusted to perform their role, and those who did not feel trusted. It is clear from the data that feeling trust is more important when working remotely, and since the pandemic people have generally felt more trusted to complete their work. For example:

*INT10: There was always a little underlying concern, I think, about allowing people to work from home all the time. What they've realised is things can get done, the work is happening.*

The extent to which people felt trusted to do to their job while working remotely related to the level of confidence they had in their own abilities and skills and how much their line

managers recognised their competence. Two thirds of the participants said they felt trusted to complete their role because their line manager had confidence in their abilities.

*INT15: I'm generally very trusted. In that the areas that I work in I'm seen as being the expert... I think trust is high that I deliver and that generally I've demonstrated credibility.*

If people didn't feel that their skills were valued or the line manager didn't have confidence in their abilities, they were more likely to feel anxious about being challenged or judged in their daily activities, which contributed to lower levels of felt trust:

*INT1: I am aware of not feeling trusted in some of my actions. For instance, if I go to the toilet and I hear that Teams noise I think OMG they will think I've gone shopping, I mean why would they think that? But you know that's the kind of stuff that's going through my head.*

The participants who were senior in their organisations said they needed less coaching from their line manager because they already felt highly competent in their role, and didn't need coaching to feel more valued, suggesting that when there are higher levels of self-efficacy subordinates require lower levels of managerial coaching.

*INT5: everyone needs coaching at any part of their career, but you know, I guess it's a different amount of coaching that you need as you become more experienced and progress within your seniority level.*

When people felt their skills and abilities were trusted they felt a greater level of autonomy to get on with their role which more than half the participants stated was highly important. Central to having autonomy was being clear about their work objectives and feeling empowered to complete the work without seeking permission or input from the line manager too frequently. For instance:

*INT3: Fundamentally, he allows me just to get on with it. And I know he's there whenever I've got a question, or struggling, or if I need to check in something he's there. But there's not a dynamic of permission asking.*

When it came to the behaviours that made them feel trusted it was clear that managerial coaching played a pivotal role. They needed to have clarity on their goals and expectations to feel they had autonomy, and when a manager used coaching skills to establish those goals the participants felt a greater level of ownership because they had an equal contribution to them. When their line manager coached them on any problems they were encountering in their work, rather than telling them how to solve it, they felt more trusted and empowered to come up with their own solutions:

*INT15: I think when it is done well, it would be trusting people to come up with their own solutions. I think there is something about hearing and acknowledging people's experience. Yeah, and that support for finding solutions.*

This in turn gives them confidence that their managers trust their judgement to make decisions. Managers who coach their subordinates when making decisions, rather than stepping in to provide the answers, create a conversation that allows the employee to feel their opinions and skills are respected, which also relates to the *Feeling valued as a person* theme.

*INT1: [MC] It builds a different kind of conversation instead of almost being instructed which makes you feel like you are not trusted.*

The term micromanaging was mentioned by more than two thirds of the respondents, and was often described as the opposite of being coached by their manager. Those who experienced micromanaging found it had undermined their felt-trust. Micromanaging took a number of

different forms; for some it was when their line managers were too controlling, or instructive when it came to decision making. Another way in which people described micromanaging was checking in too frequently while they were working from home, as this undermined their sense of autonomy.

*INT12: Some people who were working from home had to give a report of everything they did at the end of the day. And I think that feels to me like micromanaging, because they need to have control and they need to literally visually see everything.*

The high level of monitoring would instil fear and anxiety in those who experienced it:

*INT13: There's not fear all the time, but you know, sometimes there is fear, I suppose. Yeah. If you're worried that you haven't done something.*

Participants said that when their line manager focused too much on tasks rather than the goals or outcomes it created a transactional relationship that undermined their sense of feeling trusted.

*INT14: It's not that I think he doesn't care he just so focused on delivery. Everything is about tactical task.*

The idea that people wanted to feel that they were doing more than just completing tasks relates to the second theme of feeling valued as a person.

## **Theme 2: Feeling valued as a person**

As mentioned in the remote working sub-theme, participants needed to feel that the skills they offered the organisation were valued, but to feel valued they also needed to know their line manager took an interest in their wellbeing and development, which in turn contributed to them

feeling trusted. The distinction participants made between feeling valued and trusted varied. For some feeling valued meant being listened to:

*INT12: I guess being valued is just giving somebody time, and actively listening and remembering and caring about what happens with them.*

Others felt that feeling trusted demonstrated a level of confidence that feeling valued didn't represent.

*INT10: I think trust is where you've just got that open relationship. You know there's confidence there perhaps with trust that maybe being valued doesn't necessarily give.*

However, around half the respondents agreed that central to feeling valued was feeling like their opinion on major decisions was being taken into account:

*INT10: My old boss, I would like go to war for her she was just brilliant, the best boss I've ever had, complete trust and she just valued your opinion, she would still make decisions, but would take your opinion into consideration.*

Managerial coaching contributed to people feeling valued by focusing on their learning and development. If they were given time to reflect, and asked questions that stretched their thinking they felt their line manager had their personal interests at heart.

*INT12: ...because it actually made me kind of think and consider a bit more and it was just really helpful prompts. So rather than just somebody being like, oh, how are things going? It was questions that were a bit more stretching.*

The opportunity to discuss their career aspirations in a coaching way was also critical in making people feel valued:

*INT8: I think I would probably feel more valued because I would see it as an investment in me, somebody is investing their time to develop my skills. Therefore, they must want to have me around and must see me as a valued member of the team, and must trust in me.*

Those whose line manager didn't pay an interest in their development didn't feel as valued.

*INT15: I don't remember any manager in the time that I've been here asking me what I wanted from my work and my career and job development. I suppose I've never really felt that the one to ones were about me, it's more about what I'm doing.*

Central to feeling valued was when participants were asked questions about their wellbeing, and this also contributed to them feeling more trusted.

*INT15: I suppose the support I am looking for is that emotional support and helping me navigate my way up the chain of command.*

Strikingly, more than half of the respondents said when they don't feel trusted it has a damaging impact on their wellbeing.

*INT2: I think that if you don't feel like someone trusts you it can raise anxiety levels, which generally means that you're going to be second guessing a lot of the things that you do, which feels like it's makes it more likely that you're going to actually make mistakes, because you're second guessing yourself all the time*

The stress of not being trusted would also impact their productivity and creativity which illustrates the link between felt trust and motivation:

*INT7: I lose energy and motivation to keep striving for the things I think are important*



### **Theme 3: Establishing and maintaining trust in the relationship**

The third theme highlighted the relational aspect of trust and the role that coaching plays in helping to build and maintain the feeling of trust, and in particular how managerial coaching skills influence felt-trust. Being actively listened to was the most commonly mentioned skill that contributed to felt trust as well as feeling valued.

*INT11: It was all about her interpersonal skills, the empathic engagement, the active listening, you know, the ability to keep your mouth shut not talk too much. And, yeah, I did feel listened to. And the way that she engaged me to ensure I came up with the answers, you know, she wasn't prescriptive.*

Not being listened to had a direct impact on their levels of motivation:

*INT15: I think I've been in my sort of fight flight freeze place sometimes because I have felt not listened to or actively told to shut up at points. He will sometimes listen and acknowledge, but it almost feels like sometimes I need to say it two or three times and in different ways.*

Another coaching skill that contributes to establishing felt-trust is being able to give and receive feedback. Where trust exists the employee actively wanted to hear feedback on their performance.

*INT2: They've managed to build a relationship where they can see exactly how I operate and say... is that something that you think we need to think about and develop, is there some sort of target that we can have around that.*

Almost half the participants said that it felt more authentic when line managers naturally integrated coaching into their conversations which reflects the different way that a manager

needs to apply their coaching skills in comparison to the more formal coaching arrangement between an internal or external coach and their coachee.

*INT7: He has got the skills and the attributes as a person, those skills of coaching just come out naturally to him when he's having a conversation.*

Five of the participants mentioned a change in their felt trust over time. The reciprocal nature of trust was evident in the way they described the trust diminishing. One factor that particularly diminished trust is when the manager was inconsistent in their actions and what they said. This relates to the line manager's integrity which is one of the first elements of building and losing trust.

*INT8: I think my trust has been dented because there seems to be this, we're going to do one thing, and then my line manager has gone off and done things completely differently. So it's almost like he said one thing to keep me keep me happy and then gone yeah whatever, and gone off and done a completely different thing.*

Regular communication was important for trust to build and the quality of the communication is what makes a difference between it building or diminishing trust. The degree to which the line manager is open with their subordinates plays a key role. Three of the participants mentioned that since working remotely they noticed their line manager had been more open with them, which made them feel more trusted. When their line manager is more open and shows vulnerability, it helps to build a stronger relationship:

*INT6: I think if you are a manager, and you share a little bit of yourself, I would hope that makes you more human. And makes you look a bit more vulnerable to your team member.*

Almost half the respondents said it made them feel more trusted when their line manager was more open. However, professional boundaries that restrict over sharing need to be adhered to.

*INT2: I like that this manager maintains those boundaries really clearly and strongly. And actually, it makes me feel more trusted and respected as a professional.*

#### **Theme 4: The organisational environment**

The fourth theme reflects system trust, and how it influences the participants' felt-trust. For those individuals that had a high level of felt-trust they perceived the organisation as placing a strong emphasis on managerial coaching behaviours and saw it being role modelled at CEO level:

*INT10: The CEO really supports coaching and would expect someone to call her up and give her feedback.*

For those who had low levels of felt-trust, they perceived the organisation to be driven by the command-and-control culture of the senior leadership, which runs counter to the autonomous leadership style facilitated by managerial coaching.

*INT 1: the CEO doesn't trust anyone, he is a control freak.*

In fact, two thirds of respondents reported lower levels of managerial coaching when there was more emphasis on the hierarchical nature of decision making. This demonstrates how the organisational environment contributes to an individual's empowerment to make decisions described in the *Trusting abilities* theme.

*IN7: I know my line manager has to go through these other two layers and then the answer will then come all the way back down those layers. So it's quite hierarchical ..even managers above*

*feel they can't do anything without getting the sign off from someone else. And that's the bit where they don't feel trusted... [they are thinking] surely my judgement, as the person in that role should count for something.*

## **Discussion**

This study sought to address gaps in the literature related to how felt-trust could be developed through managerial coaching among remote workers. It suggests that a key priority for organisations wanting to implement hybrid working is for leaders to learn coaching skills that demonstrate trust in their teams. It also adds further insight into the nuances between trust in the manager and felt-trust. The evidence addresses the research question of how managerial coaching increases felt-trust by showing that when a manager applies their coaching skills, they demonstrate to the employee they have confidence in their ability, and believe them to be acting with benevolence and integrity. The perception of high opinions in their ability that this creates for the employee contributes to them feeling empowered (Lau et al., 2018) and inspires a positive emotional state which increases their level of intrinsic motivational quality on the continuum defined by Ryan and Deci (2000).

Importantly, this study highlights the critical role organisations have in creating the culture in which remote teams can be successful. The 'command-and-control' style of leadership was identified as a barrier for trust in remote teams as it undermines organisational trust by reducing autonomy in decision making and thus reducing intrinsic motivation. Managerial coaching provides the skill set through which an authentic or empowering leadership style can be established (Amundsen & Martinsen, 2014; Ellinger et al., 2005) as it places a greater emphasis on the relational nature of the manager-employee dyad, and breaks down the heroic or

hierarchical leadership models (Anderson, 2013). In addition, this study indicates the importance of leaders naturally integrating coaching into their leadership style so that it creates a more authentic ‘coachable moment’ (Turner & McCarthy, 2015) rather than setting up formal coaching opportunities.

This study indicates that senior leaders reporting into CEO or board level directors were less likely to experience managerial coaching, but due to their high levels of competence maintained high levels of felt-trust. However, it does not offer any conclusive evidence to explain the differences. Given that the lack of managerial coaching research featuring different levels of leaders (Lawrence, 2013) this would provide an interesting area for future research. This study also answers a question posed by Beattie et al., (2014) about the effectiveness of ‘e-coaching’ and confirmed that coaching remotely can be as effective as face-to-face coaching to stimulate learning and may actually create the informal, equalising environment that that is more likely to give rise to informal coaching opportunities.

Working in remote teams requires leaders to adopt more effective communication skills and pay greater attention to the psychological needs of employees. Higher levels of trust make remote teams more effective and this study supports evidence that felt-trust moderates organisational behaviours (Dirks and Ferin 2001) by creating the motivational incentives for employees to work effectively in a remote setting. Managerial coaching reduces the risk that employees do not work productively, or lack motivation to work independently, and this study shows that empowering employees to work autonomously is a critical way of building felt-trust. Leaders can use their coaching skills to establish and maintain felt-trust by demonstrating their confidence in the employee’s abilities, showing they care about their personal interests, and being authentic in their communication style.

## **Limitations**

There are several limitations of this study to be addressed. First is the sampling bias. Due to it being a convenience sample there is bias toward public sector workers which has been shown to have motivational differences to private sector workers, as well as a different emphasis on work life balance and wellbeing (Rashid & Rashid, 2012). Public sector workers have greater levels of intrinsic motivation stimulated by a core alignment with the values of the organisation (Buelens & Broeck, 2007). A further limitation is that this study was conducted at a single point in time, rather than taking an experimental approach through which felt-trust could be compared between workers who receive managerial coaching and a control group. A longitudinal experimental method of study would provide valuable insight into how the relationship between managerial coaching and felt-trust develops over time. Finally, the lack of literature exploring the nature of the relationship between SDT and trust in the workplace (Nienaber et al., 2015) made it more difficult to identify the degree to which managerial coaching meets the antecedents of trust through the empowerment mechanisms of SDT rather than reciprocity as suggested by Social Exchange Theory (Blau 1964). Future studies into the dynamic between the two theories would provide meaningful insight into the subject.

## **Implications**

HR practitioners will need to consider how organisations can create the organisational culture that role models managerial coaching behaviours. The most trusting organisational environments in this study were led by CEOs and directors who also embraced a coaching approach. HR practitioners will need to design leadership development programmes that place an

emphasis on alternative leadership styles, and establish performance management processes that support a coaching approach. When designing managerial coaching training HR practitioners should not replicate training that is suitable for external coaches as there are differences in the skill set that make it effective. Managerial coaching training should allow time to develop awareness of when coaching moments arise, what the objectives are, and how they can naturally integrate coaching skills into their leadership style.

## **Conclusion**

Working in remote teams requires managers to adopt new skills that place greater emphasis on them communicating effectively and paying greater attention to the psychological needs of employees. This study supports evidence that felt trust moderates organisational behaviours (Dirks and Ferin 2001) by creating the motivational incentives for employees to work effectively in a remote setting. This study also shows that autonomy is an essential part of felt-trust when working remotely and managers who use their coaching skills will establish and maintain felt-trust through the mechanisms of demonstrating their confidence in the employee's abilities, showing they care about their personal interests, and being authentic in their communication style.

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**Table 1 Participant sector**

<b>Sector</b>	<b>Participant Sector</b>
Public Sector and Government	9
Healthcare	1
Education	2
Information Technology	1
Research and Development	1
Real Estate	1