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EXECUTIVE COACHING IN THE INTERNATIONAL CONTEXT

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	page
TABLE OF FIGURES AND TABLES	5
ABBREVIATIONS	7
ABSTRACT:	9
1. INTRODUCTION	11
1.1 Research question and Objectives	15
2. INTERNATIONAL EXECUTIVE COACHING	16
2.1 Defining International Executive Coaching	16
2.1.1 Executive Coaching	16
2.1.2 International Coaching	19
2.2 The distinction of Executive Coaching from other interventions	20
2.2.1 Therapy	20
2.2.2 Training	20
2.2.3 Mentoring	21
2.2.4 Consulting	21
2.2.5 Workplace Counselling	21
2.3 Background Theories of Executive Coaching	22
2.3.1 Adult Learning and Adult Development Theories	22
2.3.2 Person-centered theories	23
2.3.3 Cognitive-behavioral theories	24
2.3.4 Systems Theory	25
2.3.5 Theories of Transition and Change	26
2.4 The Executive Coaching Process	28
2.4.1 Parties of Executive Coaching	28
2.4.2 Different Process Models	30
2.5 International Coaching Frameworks	36
2.5.1 Coaching Across Cultures	36
2.5.2 The Delta Approach	41

2.5.3	Universal Integrated Framework (UIF)	44
2.6	Intercultural Theories utilized in Coaching Frameworks	47
2.7	Existing research on international executive coaching	53
2.7.1	Existing research on executive coaching	53
2.7.2	Existing research on International Coaching	56
2.8	Conclusions of International Executive Coaching Theories and Literature	59
3.	METHODOLOGY	61
3.1	Methodological Approach	61
3.2	Research Method	62
3.3	The interviewees	63
3.4	Quality of the study	65
4.	RESULTS	68
4.1	Challenges of executive coaching in the international context	68
4.2	International Executive Coach and Coachee Traits	70
4.3	International Executive Coaching Process	74
4.4	Frameworks and Models used in the International Context	78
4.5	Reasons for International Coaching	82
4.6	Outcomes of the Coaching Process	85
5.	CONCLUSIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH	88
5.1	Limitations	93
5.2	Future Research	94
6.	LIST OF REFERENCES	95
7.	APPENDIX 1. Semi-Structured Interview Layout	110
 APPENDICES		
	APPENDIX 1. Semi-Structure Interview Layout	100

TABLE OF FIGURES AND TABLES

Figure 1. Flaherty's Flow of Coaching	32
Figure 2. International Executive Coaching Process	78
Table 1. Definitions of Executive Coaching	18
Table 2. Feldman and Lankau description of the coaching process	35
Table 3. Cultural Orientations Framework	39
Table 4. UIF	47
Table 5. Seven Dimensions of Culture	52
Table 6. Demographics of the participants in the study	64

ABBREVIATIONS

APA	American Psychological Association
CBT	Cognitive Behavioural Therapy
COF	Cultural Orientations Framework
CPD	Continuous Professional Development
EI	Emotional Intelligence
GSAEC	Graduate School Alliance for Education in Coaching
ICF	International Coach Federation
IECL	Institute of Executive Coaching & Leadership
IPEC	Institute for Professional Excellence in Coaching
LAHRP	Latin American Human Resource Partnership
MAQ	Motivational Assessment Questionnaire
M&As	Mergers and Acquisitions
PTSD	Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder
ROI	Return of Investment
UIF	Universal Integrated Framework

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ABSTRACT:

Executive coaching is a multidisciplinary concept and intervention that companies acquire in order to help the constant development of their employees as well as, to overcome problems in the workplace. This concept is normally confused and compared with therapy, training, counseling, mentoring and consulting from which the differences are established. Executive coaching has evolved more on the field than it has theoretically, meaning the theorizing of it is not as advance as any other developmental theories.

Main background theories on which executive coaching is based on are adult learning, adult development, person-centered, cognitive-behavioral, systems, transition and change theories. Due to global trends that have increased the mobility of the work-force in the companies, people with different backgrounds come into contact. This in turn, has caused executive coaching to confront different challenges that come from working in international contexts by utilizing frameworks that link the traditional executive coaching models with some inter-cultural theories. These new frameworks may present different characteristics to the participants of the executive coaching, different reasons for the intervention and different outcomes.

This thesis analyzes the specific characteristics of executive coaching in the international context. Showing special aspects of it such as challenges, coach's traits, processes and frameworks. This overall, to show the coaching community, especially the coaches, a certain guideline of how international coaching is being processed and raise awareness of why understanding international coaching is important.

In this research, the methodological approach used is a qualitative one. The method to collect the data is the use of semi-structured interviews with 10 executive coaches from around the world. After, the data collected is interpreted and contrasted to the previously established theoretical background to present an answer to the main questions of this thesis.

Among the main characteristics found, when working in an international context the coach must have high levels of self-awareness and openness and have lived in a different country to their own, among others. As for the process, this was the biggest finding because it stages an 'extra step' that is normally omitted when the cultural differences are minimum working domestically. Finally, regarding the focus of the intervention, internationally, it deals with expatriation, stress-management, raising self-awareness and cultural differences management. There were no big differences found regarding the coacher's traits, outcomes or frameworks.

KEY WORDS: Executive Coaching, International, Coach, Coachee, Culture

1. INTRODUCTION

The practice of executive coaching has increased over the years. It was reported that the number of coaches working for business increased 500% between 1996 and 2002 (Berglas 2002), a number that has kept increasing exponentially since. Executive coaching has become a global phenomenon, firstly because it follows globalization trends of acquisitions and international mergers that bring a growth of diversity in the work-place (Tompson et al 2008) and second, because over the past 15 years, the growth of professional coaching has been massive due to the growing demands of the rapidly changing global business environment (Abbot, Gilbert & Rosinski 2013). As a reflection of these, there are reports that consider executive coaching as type of leadership development, an intervention that is gaining momentum and popularity (Kampa-Kokesch & Anderson 2001, Schein 2010). However, despite this interest in coaching and the extensive literature that has been formed about it, there is little research about the methods and the efficacy of executive coaching in the international context.

The coaching annual revenue is estimated to be at least 2 billion USD of which the US holds around 41% of the global share and Western Europe 38%. The total number of coaches worldwide is between 50.000 to 65.000, from which the majority are between 40 to 55 years old and 67% are female. Coaching clients range from managers, executives, entrepreneurs, personal clients, team leaders, staff members, and other varied categories. From these clients, 45% are women and most are between 35-44 years old. (ICF 2016)

Nowadays, a number of universities worldwide offer degrees in both coaching and coaching psychology. Furthermore, some attention has been brought upon the teaching of executive coaching especially in the United States. In 2009, the Institute of Coaching, a non-profit organization with the aim to build a global coaching research community and accelerate coaching research progress, was founded at Harvard University. (The Institute of Coaching n.d.) As another example, we can see the Graduate School Alliance for Executive Coaching (GSAEC), that has institutional members from several universities in the U.S, Australia and Europe. This institution has been developing a set of standards for the teaching of executive coaching at the university level. (Grant et al. 2010)

Furthermore, coaching is reported to be among the most effective talent management activities in companies and one of the key learning and organizational interventions (Chartered Institute of Personnel Development 2011) considering that in the International Human Resource Management Literature (Selmer 1999, Evans et al. 2010) it is explicitly documented that there is a shortage of talented leaders who can manage in uncertain global contexts and who possess the organizational business knowledge and cross-cultural capabilities needed. Hence, coaching is typically used as part of management and leadership development programs. (Salomaa 2017)

Traditionally, coaching has been thought of only a methodology for enhancing performance and helping people reach their personal and professional goals (Landsberg 1997) Also, it has been mostly thought under the context of athletics (Gettman 2008). However, what has been overpassed is that coaching has the potential as a methodology for exploring a wide range of issues related to intentional change on both individual and systemic levels. (Grant 2017) Hence, coaching has the potential of influencing and lead managers to change intentionally their manner of approaching an international crowd of employees in order to improve their management techniques among cultures. What is more, it has the likelihood of changing management systems in companies to make it ideal to work with a multinationalism aim.

Throughout the years, it has been poised that coaching has two broad categories: coaching in the personal realm and coaching in the business dimension (Carr 2004) This thesis will focus on the latter one, executive coaching. However, it is important to underline that most of the times, the two categories overlap when the coach is working within the organization. As an example, in a study by Coutu & Kauffman (2009:3), the responses from 140 coaches, revealed that while 97% of firms do not contract coaches to work with personal issues, 76% of these engagements expand to include them. This tends to happen because coaching is considered a ‘unique and safe space for executives’.

Coaching, as well as many disciplines -especially the ones that are born from a mixture of terms and factors-, has many definitions on which one could base upon. However, there are different factors that one can find most definitions agree on such that, coaching is a process that incentives change. For instance, according to Witherspoon and White

(1996:124), the first time that the word ‘coach’ was used in the 1500s, it was referring to a particular kind of carriage, meaning that ‘to coach’ is to develop a person’s skills from where they are to where they want to be.

Furthermore, the International Coaching Federation defines coaching as

“an ongoing professional relationship that helps people produce extraordinary results in their lives, careers, business and organizations”

They also emphasize on the benefits coaching brings, these being: improvement of performance, deepening of learning and enhancing of the quality of life. (ICF 2019a)

For the purpose of this thesis, the definition given by Bachkirova, Cox and Clutterbuck in their work ‘SAGE Handbook of Coaching’ will be used:

“Coaching is a human development process that involves structured, focused interaction and the use of appropriate strategies, tools and techniques to promote desirable and sustainable change for the benefit of the coachee and potentially for other stakeholders.” (2010:1)

Even though executive coaching literature has increased over the last decades, international coaching has not been studied deeply. This results in a problematic due to the fact that globalization and the current interconnection of the world, causes for international coaching studies, especially empirical ones, to be in high demand in order to assess if coaching may be the ideal tool to deal with problematics that come from being and work under an international context. What is more, most of the research in coaching has been done by comparing the companies when there is coaching in contrast to when there is not. (Gettman 2008)

Furthermore, the research on executive coaching can be divided into four broad categories: nature of coaching (Passmore & Fillary-Travis 2011), outcomes of the coaching process (Grant 2011) characterization of both the coach and the client separately (Bartlett, Boylan and Hale 2014) and the antecedents needed for the coaching intervention to succeed (Salomaa 2017). As for international coaching, the studies are mostly comparative studies between two countries (Beattie et al. 2014, Hamlin et al. 2006, Kim et al 2014), culturally specific studies (Nangalia and Nangalia 2010, LAHRP 2011) or target group aimed coaching such as, expatriate coaching (Salomaa 2017).

As far as international executive coaching is concerned, more research is needed because currently multinational companies are investing resources to train their line-managers and human resource professionals in coaching skills. This overall, in order to create a coaching culture, meaning a coaching based managerial practice. Also, because internationality may bring different aspects that the coach or coachee must consider in order to be able to work better together and bring more reliable and stable results brought from the coaching intervention to the coachee as a person and a professional and to the organization as a whole. (Salomaa 2017)

Considering the previous statements, the present thesis will focus on finding the main special characteristics of international coaching. These international contexts include conditions regarding when the coach works with executives that have to manage people with various nationalities, coaches that have worked with executives from different nationalities or with groups formed by individuals with various cultural backgrounds, coaches working in multinational companies, etc. Hence, the main question of this work is considered regarding these conditions. It will be focused on looking into the different characteristics of the international coach and coachee, challenges in the intervention, processes, frameworks and outcomes.

In this research paper, an abductive approach will be used. The theoretical framework brought from the literature review will be constructed first. Hence, this paper will first establish which are the characteristics of executive coaching and international coaching separately and after, will try to show how they both are assumed in practice, the same will be done regarding the coach, coachee and outcomes. The approach used will be a qualitative one and the method used will be according to this. The qualitative method chosen for this research paper is the use of semi-structured interviews with 10 international coaches.

This thesis will be structured between six sections, the first three will focus on establishing the purposes of the research, give a solid theoretical background and analyze the biography on the different considered topics in order to place the paper on a clear branch of research and provide new insights to the literature. These sections will be followed by an explanation of the methodology used. Further, an analysis of the data in contrast to the established theory will be done and finally, a conclusion will be given

where a possible answer to the main question will be provided together with a path for possible future research.

1.1 Research question and Objectives

The main purpose of the research paper is to underline what are the especial characteristics of international coaching. For this purpose, the main question of this thesis is:

“What are the specific characteristics of coaching in the international context?”

Drawing from the main question of this thesis, five main objectives can be established, these will be presented as sub-questions:

- 1) What are the main challenges of coaching in the international context?
- 2) What are the specific characteristics or traits of the stakeholders that participate in the international executive coaching?
- 3) What are the tools, approaches, models and frameworks coaches use in the international context?
- 4) What are the main reasons for which organizations and executives get involved in international executive coaching?
- 5) What are the typical outcomes of coaching in the international context?

2. INTERNATIONAL EXECUTIVE COACHING

2.1 Defining International Executive Coaching

In order to define international executive coaching, it is necessary to define executive coaching and international coaching separately.

2.1.1 Executive Coaching

Coaching can be applied in many contexts, the more known one being sports coaching. However, there are different categories of coaching that can be useful for people's lives. Among those can be found life coaching, business coaching, group coaching, health & wellness coaching, small business and professionals coaching (IPEC 2019), career coaching, leadership coaching, and executive coaching (ICF 2019b). It is in this one last category that the current paper is based on.

As it happens with general coaching, there is no unique definition of executive coaching. This happens also because executive coaching has become an established practice before it ever had a theoretical basis behind (Joo 2005:463). This means that even though coaching is used in companies, in everyday lives and routines, the literature and research done about these practices are not yet well-established and its progress is still considerably delayed in comparison to the practice evolution rate.

Often used terms to define executive coaching are relationship, goals, performance, learning (Barlett, Boylan and Hale 2014), process, partnership, balance and a new face of leadership for the 21st century (Maltbia and Power 2005). These themes show that executive coaching has some overlaps with other developmental approaches. However, it is typically considered as a set of behaviors or processes that allow individuals to learn and develop, as well as, enhance their performance and improve their skills (Ellinger & Kim 2014:130).

More common definitions will be presented in table 1. there it can be seen the definitions given by Kilburg (1996), Kampa-Kokesh & Anderson (2001), Wasylyshyn (2003), Joo (2005), Feldman & Lankau (2005), the GSAEC and the Institute of coaching. These include some other common themes such as, goals, improvement, effectiveness, per-

formance and change. Furthermore, one aspect that can be observed to vary among definitions is the people who are included in the coaching process. Kampa-Kokesh & Anderson (2001) and Witherspoon & White (1996) for example, stress on the confidentiality of the coaching relationship, including only the coach and coachee. While the Institute of Coaching includes data from different perspectives and Wasylyshyn (2003) adds the human resource manager and the boss of the coachee to the process.

For the purpose of this paper, Salomaa's (2017) definition is considered because she evolves Bachkirova's initial definition and includes an international context into it.

“Executive coaching is a human development process of the coachee that involves structured interaction and the use of appropriate strategies, tools and techniques in an international context. It is aimed to promote desirable and sustainable change for the benefit of the coachee and potentially for other stakeholders” (modified from Bachkirova et al. 2010:1 by Salomaa 2017:17).

She recognizes that the coaching relationship is understood as collaborative and egalitarian, rather than authoritarian. Hence, as Grant & Stober (2006) state, coaching is focused on constructing solutions and goal attainment processes rather than, on only analyzing problems. Furthermore, they establish coaching as a systematic mean, which is directed at fostering the ongoing self-directed learning and the growth of the coachee. Moreover, even though coaches have the expertise to facilitate learning through coaching, they do not necessarily need a high level of knowledge in the area of expertise their coachee has.

Based on this, it can be seen that over the years, coaching has evolved to different definitions to adapt to another kind of ambits such as businesses and globalization. In the next section, international coaching will be discussed.

Table 1. Definitions of executive coaching

Contributor	Definition
Kilburg (1996)	'a helping relationship formed between a client who has managerial authority and responsibility in an organization and a consultant who uses a wide variety of behavioural techniques and methods to help the client to achieve a mutually identified set of goals to improve his/her professional performance and personal satisfaction and, consequently, to improve the effectiveness of the client's organization within a formally defined coaching agreement'.
Kampa-Kokesch & Anderson (2001)	'a highly confidential personal learning process that focuses not only on interpersonal issues but also on intrapersonal ones'
Wasylyshyn (2003)	'is a company-sponsored perk for top high potential employees. It is a customized and holistic development process that provides deep behavioral insights intended to accelerate an executive's business results and effectiveness as a leader. This coaching is based on a collaborative relationship among the executive, his/her boss, his/her human resources manager, and an executive coach'
Joo (2005)	'a process of a one-on-one relationship between a professional coach and an executive (coachee) for the purpose of enhancing coachee's behavioral change through self-awareness and learning, and thus ultimately for the success of individual and organization.'
Feldman & Lankau (2005)	'a process of equipping people with the tools, knowledge, and opportunities they need to develop themselves and become more effective.'
The Graduate School Alliance of Executive Coaching (GSAEC) (n.d)	'a development process that builds a leader's capabilities to achieve professional and organizational goals.'
Institute of Coaching (2015)	'an experiential and individualized leader development process that builds a leader's capability to achieve short- and long-term organizational goals. It is conducted through one-on-one and/or group interactions, driven by data from multiple perspectives, and based on mutual trust and respect. The organization, an executive, and the executive coach work in partnership to achieve maximum impact'

2.1.2 International Coaching

Regarding intercultural coaching, the terms international, cross-cultural, multi-cultural and global are often used identically. Up to a point, every coaching is cross-cultural because coaching is affected by cultural influences as the stakeholders of the process have different cultural backgrounds like nation, organization, community team, etc (Abbott 2010:324- 327; Abbott & Salomaa 2016). Booysen (2015:242-244) states that cross-cultural coaching process is in which the coach helps the coachee address surfaced held beliefs and behaviors that come from cognitive schemas and frameworks. These schemas and frameworks are shaped by culture and identity construction. She also believes that cross-cultural coaching is appropriate when the coachee has some challenges managing in an effective way. Such problems may relate to cultural differences, or when the coach is from a different nationality from the coachee and the coachee's co-workers.

The establishment of multi-cultural coaching is based when Rosinski (2003) linked coaching and cultural dimensions in his work 'Coaching across cultures' and for this kind of coaching, culture is the base of everything and the base of the different approaches used. Furthermore, some of the actors that benefit from cross-cultural coaching are managers working in international organizations, in multicultural organizations or in a merger-and-acquisitions environment, expatriate managers and global managers. (Booyesen 2015:242 – 243).

Global coaching as such is a term that has been increasingly used to describe coaches that are moving constantly across-countries, have international networks or provide coaching services to multinational companies and in multiple countries. What is more, it mostly deals with the sensitive treatment of relevant cultural beliefs, dimensions, preferences, orientations and practices. (Abbott & Salomaa 2017).

In this thesis, the concept of international coaching will be adopted in order to understand further aspects of international coaching that go beyond cross-cultural issues.

One of the main characteristics that distinguish international coaching from normal coaching is that while the latter works between the barriers of your own cultural norms, values and beliefs; the former seeks to break these barriers, discover solutions to over-

come them and develop an ‘outside-the-box’ thinking. (Behavioural Coaching Institute 2005)

2.2 The distinction of Executive Coaching from other interventions

Throughout the study of coaching, it has been compared and confused with other interventions. This happens because coaching has ties with counseling, psychotherapy, mentoring, leadership development and consultancy. Also, it is a multidisciplinary concept that has connections to fields such as sociology, philosophy and psychology (Bachkirova & Cox 2007, Kilburg 2000) Considering this, the most similar interventions to coaching are therapy, counseling, mentoring, consulting and training (Gray 2006). Hence, it is important to distinguish between the different fields so new coaches, clients and organizations understand the true potential of coaching (Bachkirova 2014:352).

2.2.1 Therapy

The main differences between therapy and coaching are that in therapy the “clients” are patients with mental disorders that are under a certain kind of emotional stress. Hence, the focus is on past-understanding and problem-solving. Coaching, on the other hand, is offered to non-clinical clients with a present and futuristic focus in an organizational context (Peltier 2001).

2.2.2 Training

Training has a standardized content aiming to develop technical skills and it consists usually in a set curriculum limited to a set of consecutive units. Also, training is used normally by target groups. (Herbolzheimer 2009:75, McGill 2010:120) When comparing it with coaching, the latter is more time consuming and usually more expensive. Besides, coaching is tailored to the coachee’s. Also, the coach and coachee are in equal levels in the relationship. (Salomaa 2017) What is important to understand here is that coaching is a person-centered development process and not a new, ‘fancy name’ for training (Lawton-Smith and Cox 2007:8). Also, in training, the instructor is the one setting the goals of the objectives of the intervention while in coaching, it is the individual or team the ones that establish the goals (ICF 2019c).

2.2.3 Mentoring

In order to understand mentoring, there is a need to understand what a mentor is. Such a person is typically defined as a more experienced employee, who helps a less experienced person become proficient in their role in the organization. The mentoring relationship tends to be initiated informally and lasts up to 5 years (Salomaa 2017). Furthermore, according to Herbolzheimer (2009) mentors are supposed to have some responsibilities such as career enhancing, door opening and communication facilitation.

As a contrast, in executive coaching, the relationships are formally contracted and short. Besides, coaches do not provide advice and typically are external professionals (Feldman & Lankau 2005:831, Joo 2005:474). Coaches' expertise lies in the facilitation of executive's learning and development using a certain range of validated tools (Abbott et al. 2006:302). What is more, while mentors need to show they have the appropriate career-counseling attributes, these are not present in the coaching practice. This was proven in the empirical study of Gray, Ekinci and Goregoakar (2011:425), where they also showed that coaches do need knowledge about the business, especially business ethics, company's strategy, and organizational communication.

2.2.4 Consulting

The bigger differences between coaching and consulting are that executive coaches do not take the role of technical experts, do not give any advice or recommendations and are not under a normal business consulting contract (Feldman & Lankau 2005). Coaching is seen to be more of a holistic process (Zeus & Skiffington 2007:15-17). The assumption is that the individuals or teams, under good guidance and empowerment, are capable of reaching their own solutions (ICF 2019c). With consulting, the consultant mostly tells the client what to do while the coach 'pulls the answers from the clients.' Another crucial difference between these two categories is that coaching is about building capacity and consulting is about solving problems (Forbes Coaches Council 2018)

2.2.5 Workplace Counselling

Workplace Counselling is an intervention that was born as a result of the professionalization of social work. Counseling is believed to focus more on problems and the causes

behind them whereas coaching enhances new competencies, actions, strengths and achievements. Even though coaching and counseling have many similarities, coaching has prevalence among private sector companies and it is often targeted to corporate executives. Furthermore, some authors state that coaching carries a more resource-oriented, potential-focused connotation than counseling (Herboltzheimer 2009:74-75). Also, counseling generally involves little assessment while coaching interlinks learning and development tools and behavioral diagnostic assessments. (Zeus & Skiffington 2007:13)

After having established the major differences between executive coaching and other intervention, the next section will describe the theories that lay a foundation for executive coaching. This in order to complement the understanding of what executive coaching is about and what it entails.

2.3 Background Theories of Executive Coaching

In coaching literature, there is no consensus regarding on what theoretical principles executive coaching is based on (Bono et al. 2009, Gray 2006). In this following section, the most commonly mentioned theories that are part of coaching will be briefly described.

2.3.1 Adult Learning and Adult Development Theories

The concept of change, which is the heart of coaching, is brought from the concept of learning and adult learning theories are the ones that guide all coaching practice (Bachkirova, Cox & Clutterbuck 2010:6). There are three principal adult learning theories (Bachkirova et al. 2010):

- a) *Andragogy*: This theory developed by Knowels (1970) discusses four principles that are applied in adult learning. Firstly, adults need to be involved in the planning and evaluation of their lessons. Secondly, the experience is the basis of the learning activities. Thirdly, learning subjects are more appealing to adults when these have an immediate effect on their personal lives or jobs. Finally, adult learning is problem-centered and not content-oriented. (Pappas 2013)

- b) *Experiential Learning*: Most of this theory advanced by Kolb (1984) is concerned with the learner's internal cognitive processes. For Kolb, learning involves the acquisition of abstract concepts that can be flexibly applied in various situations. He demonstrates this by a four-stage learning cycle: 1) Having a concrete experience, 2) Observing and reflecting on the experience which leads to 3) The formation of abstract concepts and generalizations which are then used to 4) Start active experimentation that will lead to the first step again. (McLeod 2017)

- c) *Transformative learning theory*: Transformative learning theory established by Mezirow (1990) states that individuals need to change their frames of reference, meaning their viewpoints of the world. To do this they follow a process of "perspective transformation" which consists of three dimensions: 1) Psychological- changes in the understanding of the self; 2) Conviction- a revision of the own belief systems; and 3) Behavioural- changes in the lifestyle (Clark & Wilson, 1991). This perspective transformation which leads to transformative learning does not occur very often, Mezirow believes that the will to involve in it comes from a life crisis or a major life change (Mezirow, 1995, p. 50). However, it has also been proved that small triggers such as the ones created in the classroom by the teacher, also promote transformation (Torosyan, 2007, p. 13).

Adult developmental theories are used in coaching because they help people understand themselves better. Besides, from a developmental perspective growth requires a change in both knowledge and in the perspective of thinking which happens when people grow up, they become more aware of others' perspectives and are more able to understand them. Also, they are in more control of their emotions. (Berger 2006:77-102)

2.3.2 Person-centered theories

Regarding the study of coaching, humanistic psychology has been found to be one of coaching's philosophical foundations in terms of values and assumptions (Gray 2006, Stober 2006). Lately, psychotherapy has developed different branches which are prac-

ticed by some coaches. For example, person-centered psychotherapy, gestalt psychotherapy and neurolinguistic programming are utilized (Gray 2006: 475-497).

The humanistic, person-centered approach has a lot of parallels on some of coaching's characteristics. Mainly because in this approach the coachee is seen holistically, a person capable of utilizing their experiences for growth and development. Besides, some central concepts of this approach are empathy, unconditional positive regard, trust, freedom of choice and authenticity. (Stober 2006:19-26)

2.3.3 Cognitive-behavioral theories

Cognitive-behavioral coaching takes the assumption that the way coachees think about life's events affect the way they feel about them, which in turn, impacts stress levels and performance (Williams, Edgerton & Palmer 2010). Main theorists influencing cognitive-behavioral coaching are Beck, Ellis and Bandurra, whose work has formed the Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT), which is based on the work of philosophers Epictetus and Marcus Aurelius (Athanasopoulou & Dopson 2015). This is based on the idea that thoughts and perceptions influence behavior and perception of reality. Which means that negative emotions, thoughts and behaviors distort one's reality. This, CBT works to identify harmful thoughts, assess whether they provide an accurate perception of reality, and if they do not, then it is needed to employ strategies to challenge, overcome and modify them. This overall in order to boost happiness and development (Psychology Today 2019).

Using this approach, coachees are guided to identify and dispute the negative beliefs or thoughts they have about themselves (Gray 2006). Further, they must identify realistic goals and facilitate self-awareness of underlying cognitive and emotional barriers to goal attainment (Bachkirova et al. 2010). There is also, an emphasis on the facilitation of practical change through personal development and learning (Athanasopoulou & Dopson 2015).

One assumption of this perspective is that a new way of thinking will naturally lead to a different behavior. Hernez-Broome and Boyce (2010) give the example of an executive that through the coaching process discovered that his avoidance to talk about the work

of his staff came from his internal belief that ‘encouraging is wrong’. Hence, what he needed to work first on, were his thinking patterns in order to change his behavior. This because he realized he wanted to be his staff’s advocate in the company. Once he changed his thinking, his reluctance to talk about their accomplishments decreased and his team started to look up to him and improve more.

As we can observe, setting objectives and goals, gaining new insights and overcoming thought barriers and beliefs are the key concepts of this approach. This results in a widely used model in executive coaching, the GROW-model (Goal, Reality, Options, Will), developed by Graham Alexander in 1980 (Salomaa 2017).

This model is overall used because it has been proved to lead to a clear result going through four phases and the coachee is fully active by identifying objects and generating solutions. The phases of this model are a) Goal, where the main objective of the intervention is set; b) Reality, where the current context of the coachee is established. This includes the overall perspectives of people surrounding the coachee as well as their self-evaluation. Here, the main obstacles are identified; c) Options, where the main ideas to overcome the obstacles and reach the goal come into fruition. Every option is evaluated and one is selected; d) Will, a complete clear plan of action is established and the coachee’s motivation is boosted. Overall, the GROW-model is a tool to construct a map of the road the coachee will travel through to reach what they are committed to. (Alexander 2006)

2.3.4 Systems Theory

A system is a group of interacting or independent elements that form a whole that unfolds over time. Each element has an impact on the order in the larger system. Holism and interdependence are common to all systemic approaches. This approach relies on the assumption that all the parts of the system are essentially interdependent. Hence, its importance to coaching is that the coach needs to understand how the coachee is related to the situations, events and systems in their environment. (Salomaa 2017)

Systems theories have a wide range of theoretical approaches like chaos theory, complexity theory and cybernetics. One of the main theorists of the systems approach is the

biologist von Bertalanffy, who between 1920 and 1960, developed the general systems theory. According to this theory, the world can be seen as a series of systems within systems, which all have some common characteristics. (Bertalanffy 1968) Furthermore, Cavanagh (2006) states that coaching can be seen as a conversation that brings the coachee to the edge of chaos, which can be seen, in a way, as a state of mind.

Mainly, all system-oriented coaches look at the different ways in which the individual effects and is affected by the actions and expectations of others. Such impacts may come directly from their team or indirectly from the board of directors since issues at the top of an organization may ripple down from 3 or 4 layers and create different impacts on all of the layers. It is also important to understand the different subsystems that there exist because of the different levels of acceptance these may have according to various issues such as conflict or pressure. Some may use these to be more productive while others see it as aggressive behavior. Only understanding the system, is it possible for the coach and coachee to generate the right behavior and reaction towards it. (Hernandez-Broome et. al 2011:14)

2.3.5 Theories of Transition and Change

According to Grant (2006), there are three key models of transition and change that are useful in coaching (a goal-directed activity, which helps individuals to create and sustain change). These are:

- a) *The Transition Model of Bridge (1980)*: This transition model works mostly in leading individuals to accept change through a three-stage model: 1) Ending, losing and letting go, 2) The neutral zone, and 3) The new beginning. (Manktelow, Jackson, Swift, Edwards, Bishop, Mugridge, Bell, Robinson & Bruce n.d) This is adapted to coaching by presenting a change curve of six steps: Blame others, blame the self, uncertainty, acceptance, problem-solving and moving on. This done to teams and organizations implies that stages 1 to 3 are going to be spent listening to the executive(s) one on one and letting them make decisions led by their own realizations. Then, steps 4 and 5 will be helping the individual arrange workshops with respect to the change, show the processes involved or

brainstorm ideas to gain engagement. In the last step, the idea is to stabilize the process and capture the things learned during it. (Gentry 2014)

- b) *The Adaptation to Transitions Model of Schlossberg's (1981)*: The adaptation to transitions is a model to help individuals go through transitions. The model has been revised 4 times, the last one done in 2012. The first part of this model focuses on how to approach transitions based on a potential coping resources model named the 4S's- Situation, Support, Strategies and Self. Once the individual realizes which resources they have in hand, they can make factual decisions and apply them. Then the next step is to strengthen the 4S's by networking. Finally, the executive needs to understand the cycle of transition. What moves them 'out' of a position, what they can do about it, moving 'in' the new position and then start again, since, situations are changing constantly. (McClaine 2014, Papay n.d)

- c) *The Transtheoretical Model of Change from Prochaska and DiClemente's (1984)*: This model seeks to integrate key constructs from different theories into a comprehensive theory of change that can be applied generally. This theory describes 5 stages through which each individual goes through to cope with the changes in their life.
 - 1) Precontemplation, executives are not ready to take action about the foreseeable future, be it because they are un, mis or under -informed. This can also be a result of demotivation due to previous failed experiences to change.
 - 2) Contemplation, individuals have the intent to change, they are more aware of the pros and cons of change. This stage is an assessment of the costs and benefits of the situation and can be delayed by chronical contemplation or behavioral procrastination.
 - 3) Preparation, people are ready to take action immediately, they already have established a path to follow. They know what they must do.
 - 4) Action, this stage is where executives realize the changes that have happened during the previous steps. Generally, by this stage, there has already been some kind of a behavioral change that can only be assessed by the coach and coachee.
 - And, 5) Maintenance, in this stage individuals work for continuing with what they have

achieved and prevent a return to any of the previous steps. By now, the person should be more aware of the self and their behavior and adapt it to different working situations. (Pro-Change Behaviour Systems 2019)

By understanding the different types of goals and their relationship to the process of change, coaches can work more efficiently with their coachees.

Understanding the different background theories of executive coaching allows to comprehend what executive aims are and the extents to which executive coaching can reach to. The next section will move from these theories to describe some of the different executive coaching processes that coaches work with depending on different factors.

2.4 The Executive Coaching Process

Coaching is a discipline that does not have standardized tools and approaches. The process of the intervention changes according to the framework used or the main goals the parties agree on. In this section, the parties of executive coaching will be defined, followed by a discussion on typical common executive coaching processes. Still, it is important to remember that these processes are established in order to be presented as a tool for the coach who tailors them according to the needs of the coachees or organizations.

2.4.1 Parties of Executive Coaching

Even though executive coaching is known to be an unstructured practice, one clear thing are the actors that directly or indirectly participate during the process. These actors are the coach, the executive/coachee and the organization.

As far as *the coach* is concerned, it has not been possible to assign exact formal attributes the executive coach needs to have. This because there is still the argument that coaching has not reached the required criteria to be considered a profession because it still lacks formal university-level qualifications, regulatory bodies, state-sanctioned licensing and a body of ethics (Brooks & Wright 2007). Also, generally certifications or accreditations are not asked by organizations when selecting a coach (Tompson, Bear, Dennis, Vickers, London & Morrison 2008:13, Gray & Goregaokar 2010). However,

there are some organizations that have emerged to try to create common global regulations and knowledge. These are the American Psychological Association (APA), the International Coach Federation and the World Association of Business Coaches. These organizations generally certify coaches around the world. Nevertheless, their certification requirements vary widely according to what each organization wants to focus on. Also, this difficulty in finding the characteristics of a coach is the result of not being able to have a worldwide standard definition of executive coaching (Peterson 2011:533).

However, there is some evidence that shows some common ground regarding the characteristics executive coaches should have. These are to have a successful relevant educational background and count with at least a Master degree, experience in management, understanding of leadership, business acumen, contextual knowledge and relevant organizational experience (Feldman & Lankau 2005:832, Judge & Cowell 1997, Kampa-Kokesch & Anderson 2001, Gray, Ekinici & Goregaokar 2011:425).

Regarding the *executive/ coachee*, executive coaching recipients typically belong to two categories; executives who have a successful background but whose behavior is not enough for their current job requirements, and managers who have been selected to promotion to the executive level but do not have some specific skills. (Feldman and Lankau 2005:834) Some evidence has shown that executive coachees should have some common characteristics that are key for coaching's success, for example, commitment to the coaching process (Bush 2005), willingness to change and learn (Bush 2005, Peterson 2011), openness to experience and emotional stability (Stewart, Palmer, Wilkin & Kerrin 2008). These are key factors for the coaching relationship to work.

Lastly, as for *the organization*, coaching is mainly used to improve individual productivity, retention rates, organizational performance and recruitment outcomes, to address workplace problems and to boost employee engagement (Tompson et al 2008:11-12). There is some evidence that firms which use central coordination of coaching, evaluate the effectiveness and concentrate on positive performance outcomes, show better results than the ones which do not do these things (McDermott, Levenson & Newton 2007:30). Also, there is a concern regarding if companies are using coaching to its full potential (McDermott et al. 2007; Peterson 2011). This is due to the fact that there is a general

lack of clarity in how coaching is supposed to be used, as well as, an absence regarding organizational learning on how to manage to coach and inconsistency in the quality of coaching (Peterson 2011:545). Hence, in order to reduce these concerns, it is essential that from the beginning of the coaching process the bases of the coaching relationship are strong in order to understand the stakeholder's aims and create a clear path to follow.

Furthermore, in order to have a successful coaching intervention, it is essential that the organization supports the coachee and the coachee's boss. Also, positive communication about the process through the whole organization is elemental (Hooijberg & Lane 2009:486, Wise & Voss 2002: 8-10).

2.4.2 Different Process Models

When coaching started to be studied and modeled, its process was described as something linear and strict consisting of different steps which everybody subjected to coaching needed to accomplish. However, throughout the years of research and also by empirical evidence, it is known that coaching is a process that not only happens fluidly but also evolves and varies from case to case because this is tailored according to the clients' needs. Nevertheless, as flexible as the coaching process may be, there are still some steps that are concordant in all definitions. For the purpose of establishing these, some of the processes/models that had been established by different authors such as Saporito (1996), Orenstein (2006), Flaherty (2010), Barlett (2007) and Salomaa (2017), will be described.

Back to the time when coaching's differences with other interventions were not as clear as they are now, Saporito (1996) established a coaching process which was actually drawn from consulting practices. This process consisted of four steps that are sometimes divided internally:

- a) *Setting the Foundation*: In this stage, the coach works with the organization as a whole in order to properly understand the context in which the coaching will happen and in which the individual works. This step has three main questions/objectives that need to be accomplished 'What are the organizational imperatives?', 'What are the success factors for that particular role within the or-

ganization?’ and ‘What are the behavioral requirements necessary to achieve these success factors?’. Once these questions have been asked, the coaching can proceed to the second stage.

- b) *Assessment of the individual*: Here the coach gathers data and insights to form the individual’s developmental picture. The idea of this assessment is that the assessment is done on a 360-degree basis where not only the individual is engaged in in-depth conversation or interview but also their peers, boss and subordinates are asked. Once this research has been terminated, the third phase may start.
- c) *Developmental Planning*: This stage is divided into 2 parts: Feedback, is to integrate the consultant’s insights into the relevant data to the executive and development planning is to focus on the strengths, developmental needs and experiences of the executive. Besides, a focus is on the type of coaching that will make the individual improve.
- d) *Implementation*: In this stage, there is a movement from the determination to actions. Also, coaching is considered only to be a continuation of what has already been done in the previous stages.

One criticism that is found to Saporito’s process is the fact that it is heavily based on consulting techniques and the process reflects the idea that the coach is there in order to provide expertise to solve a problem, instead of helping the executive to find the solutions themselves.

Another process to describe is Flaherty (2006)’s one. He presented the coaching process as a flow and thought of the stages as simply marks that will indicate all the stakeholders involved, wherein the path they are and how the work is progressing. He made this distinction because he wanted to clearly let the readers and coaches know that this possible structure is not an inhibition to coaches’ spontaneity and accommodation to the clients’ needs. He just emphasized that knowing the structure will give the coach the liberty to creatively respond to possible outcomes and move around the process up to a point that the goals are achieved. Flaherty’s process has five steps that can be observed in Figure 1, where a clear flow is shown. Everything starts at the moment that a relationship is created. This step is the most important one because there it is where all the

conditions of the intervention will be established, including trust, respect and freedom of expression. After this, the coach will look for an opening (a ‘place’) on the coachee’s routines in which he can start the process. Next the coaching will assess the coachee’s environment to understand the situation. In the last stage they will enroll in the sessions starting with planning the wanted outcomes and the sessions of the coaching start.

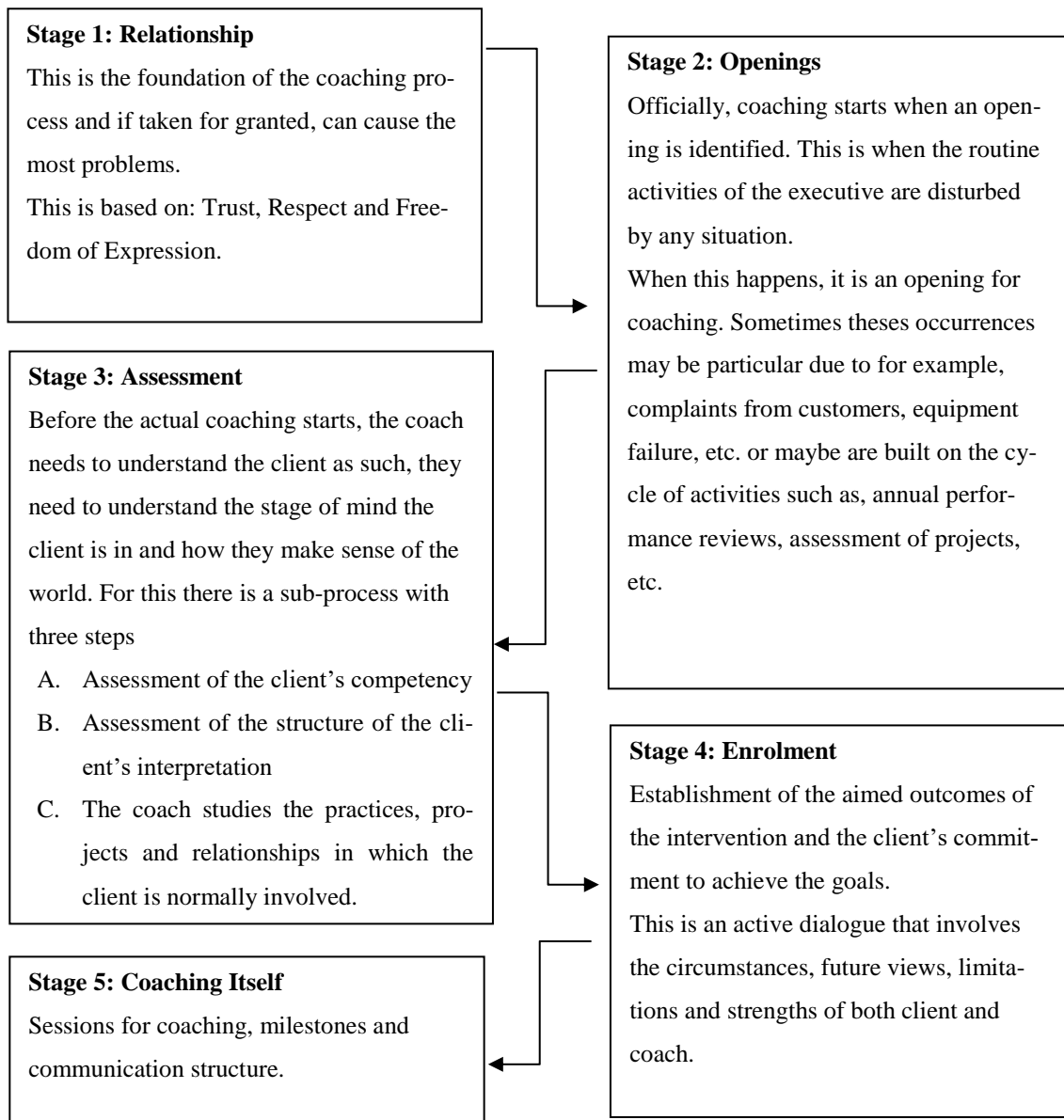


Figure 1. Flaherty's Flow of Coaching (Flaherty 2006)

The next couple of paragraphs will be describing one process that can be easily seen in an international context because it is heavily based on how to overcome the ethical difficulties that may appear during coaching due to cultural differences. This process is presented by Natale and Diamante (2005). The process they propose is as follows:

- a) *The Alliance Check:* This stage is where the executive is asking themselves why they need a coach and what will happen. Besides, the coach will influence this step by identifying the circumstances that led to the coach's presence. The executive on their part is also determining if the coaching service is 'a ploy, a good-faith effort or truly a developmental activity'. (Natale & Diamante 2005:363) This stage is overcome when the coach is factual and 100% honest. They establish what will be known by outsiders and what will not and which parties will be part of the process. This 'alliance' will trigger the agreement on a roadmap and eliminate the executive's previous resistance. It is important to emphasize that the alliance starts but never ends, because in all the other steps in the process, confidentiality will be tested.

- b) *The Credibility Assessment:* In this stage the coach tries the control of the process. Here, the coach needs to show their expertise in coaching through background, credentials and experience. Moreover, they are typically required to describe past success stories. This stage mainly appeases the executive and proves that the effect the coaching relationship will have is going to be a positive one. This step is passed as soon as the executive starts asking questions about the methods, nature of the engagement and operational concerns.

- c) *The Likeability Link:* In this stage, the executive and the coach will determine each other's preferred styles and agree on a common aspect. Also, the relationship will grow stronger because both of the parts are making a thorough assessment of each other.

- d) *Dialogue and Skill Acquisition:* This part integrates the four factors (discovery, analysis, verification and application) for the preparation of the executive to change. Broadly, the intention of this stage is to improve performance based on realism and control of emotions.

- e) *Cue-based action plans:* This is the action planning stage in which the coach plans what the executive needs to do and when.

Even though this process might be appropriate to overcome cultural factors, it can be easily perceived that it is extremely focused on the assumption that the executive is reluctant to a coaching intervention. This does not leave space to believe the client is willing to cooperate because if this happens then three out of the five stages are overcome from the beginning.

Recently, Salomaa (2017) made a reflection of Feldman and Lankau's (2005) process, which in contrast with other described processes, starts from the moment that data is being gathered. This process generally encompasses and explains the general steps that many other authors have described. The process described by them is shown in table 2. This process starts from the moment the coach assesses or gathers information about the coachee. Differing from the other processes, this one finishes in with an evaluation of the intervention. In this stage, the coach is more capable of analyzing which has been the impact of the intervention not only to the coachee but also to the organization as a whole.

As a conclusion for this chapter, it can be observed that the coaching process has been described in different ways involving different stages, different parties, different assumptions and different aims. However, it can also be observed that overall there are stages in common, though they may be named differently. Those are the establishing of the relationship, the data gathering, the assessment, the implementation of the coaching technique and finally a closure or evaluation of the whole process that can last between 3 to 18 months.

Furthermore, as it has been observed in the studies on coaching practices, it is very unlikely that coaching will ever fall into a generic structure. This is due to the fact that coaching is something that evolves through practice and the mixture, movement, interlacing and movement of styles are part of the essence of it. Hence, it will not be able to fall into fixed structures of division and boundaries. The theoretical structures that are developed need to be flexible and adaptable. (Cushion 2007:399)

Table 2. Feldman and Lankau description of the coaching process (Feldman & Lankau 2005)

<i>Data Gathering</i>	<i>Feedback</i>	<i>Implementation of the Coaching Intervention</i>	<i>Evaluation</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establishment of the relationship with the coachee and discussion of the parameters. • Coach gathers data about coachee and organization. • Coach makes an assessment of the personality, the leadership style, the values and attitudes of the executive. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coach presents the results of the data collection to the coachee. • Facilitation of the discussion of the executive's strengths and development areas. • Identification of the specific objectives of the coaching intervention. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Structured periodic coaching sessions to monitor and reinforce developmental activities, to modify plans and to discuss overcoming barriers to change. • There is no standard to the session's conduction. • A combination of different methods: Face-to-Face, over the phone, skype, etc. • Duration: 3 to 12 months or 6 to 18 months. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regular sessions have ended. • Coaches make a follow-up with coachees to assess the impact of the coaching intervention.

Overall, there are certain characteristics of the coaching process that need to be understood in order to understand coaching itself. Firstly, the coaching process is continuous and interdependent. Secondly, it is constrained to the objectives set, as well as, to the triggering point to the coaching intervention. Having checked the different processes generally used in coaching, this thesis will move on to explain the transformation of these processes into fully formed frameworks that are usually used in international coaching.

2.5 International Coaching Frameworks

Scholars have established some frameworks in which international coaching can be based upon. Overall, coaches can draw upon different intercultural theories and coaching models in order to work successfully in international environments and among different cultures. These coaching frameworks are presented as a result of increasing globalization. Due to the fact they are relatively new (2003-2013) and have until now not been much tested empirically. When working with international coaching approaches, one needs to be very careful to not fall into stereotyping individuals because most intercultural theories are based on national cultures (Abbott et al. 2013, Filsinger 2014, Passmore & Law 2009, Plaister-Ten 2009). Hence, it is important always to consider that these theories do not describe the individual fully, the coach still needs to take into consideration their personal needs and wishes.

2.5.1 Coaching Across Cultures

The first person to combine cultural theories with executive coaching was Philippe Rosinski (2003, 2010). His model utilizes Bennett's (1993) approach which consisted originally of six stages of development of intercultural sensitivity. What Rosinski (2003) did, was to expand the initial model to accomplish cross-cultural coaching's purposes. He did this by adding a seventh stage named 'leveraging differences'. Furthermore, Rosinski (2003) created an assessment questionnaire, the Cultural Orientations Framework (COF), which is claimed to be useful in international coaching settings and has been used in empirical studies (Carr & Seto 2013, Rojon & McDowall 2010).

He believes that global coaching transcends coaching without omitting it. He defines it as a holistic approach that draws upon multiple interconnected perspectives to facilitate the unleashing of human potential. (Rosinski 2003, 2010) Global coaching embodies humans' reality of interconnectedness when every reaction is caused by a chain of direct or indirect actions. The main assumption in this theory is that human potential is vast and multifaceted and the objective is to leverage the differences, in other words, to 'achieve unity in diversity'. (Rosinski 2011)

The coaching process in this model is made of three stages: Conducting the assessment, articulating target objectives and finally progressing towards the objectives.

- a) *Conducting Assessment.* In this stage, exploring of expectations from the different stakeholders. The stage includes the 'feedback' phase in which the coach makes their coachees aware of certain 'mental filters' that exist, meaning the perception of reality the coachees have. In the case of international coaching, both psychological and cultural filters are to be considered. In this stage, the COF is used which helps the coach to determine personal cultural orientations and establish a cultural profile. The goal in this stage is for the coachee to understand how these 'filters' influence their perception of others and actions around them. This awareness will permit them to consciously try to alter the filter and possibly overcome their obstacles.

- b) *Articulating Target Objectives.* In this stage, goals need to be set from a global point of view. Hence, they need to be directed towards the benefits of the coachee, their colleagues and the organization.

- c) *Progressing towards the Target Objectives.* This is the journey to success. The coach offers tools and help the coachees to apply them as real issues arise. Coachees will be learning through the path and the challenges in it are the driver for future action. Coaches also help the executives to work according to their desires, leverage their strengths and overcome their weaknesses. (Rosinski 2003)

Overall, global coaches can help by facilitating organizational development that can be achieved normally through three mechanisms: organic growth, alliances and mergers and acquisitions (M&As). The idea is to overcome the fact that mostly cultural differences cause M&As and alliances to fail (Rosinski 2010). This can be done by treating culture as an opportunity for progress since it permits leaders and employees to expand their worldview and behaviors while addressing challenges and allowing an overall growth in the organization. (Rosinski 2011)

According to Rosinski (2011), coaching in organizations operates better at multiple, interconnected levels. Hence, individual, team and organizational development should happen in harmony. This means integration of top, management and project teams in the organization. This, enables the reinforcement of more effective practices while fostering

overall alignment and coherence. The Cultural Orientations Framework is usually used for assessing what may be missing in the current culture and to stimulate a conversation about specific cultural gaps to work on.

The Cultural Orientations Framework (COF) works as a common language by which culture can be assessed in the coaching process. It is built upon the work of other interculturalists such as the ones that will be mentioned in the next section where intercultural theories will be briefly explored. The COF can be used to establish individual and collective cultural profiles, providing a scope to generate new cultural dimensions that reflect unique contexts of the coachee and the organization. (Rosinski 2011)

The COF can be observed in Table 3. there the cultural orientations that the model works with can be seen. They are grouped into seven categories of ‘practical importance to leaders, professional coaches and anyone striving to unleash human potential in organizations’: 1) Sense of power and responsibility; 2) Time management approaches; 3) Definitions of identity and purpose; 4) Organizational arrangements; 5) Notions of territory and boundaries; 6) Communication patterns; and 7) Modes of thinking. (Rosinski 2011). Each of these has their own categorical divisions in which the coachee and organizations can be more specifically assigned to.

Table 3. Cultural Orientations Framework (Rosinski 2011)

Categories	Category Dimensions	Dimensions Descriptions
<i>Sense of Power & Responsibility</i>	Control	People have determinant power and responsibility to forget the life they want.
	Harmony	Strive for balance and harmony with nature.
	Humility	Accept inevitable natural limitations.
<i>Time Management Approaches</i>	Scarce /Plentiful	Scarce: Time is a scarce resource. Manage time carefully!
		Plentiful: Time is abundant. Relax!
	Monochronic /Polychronic	Monochronic: Concentrate on one activity and/or relationship at a time.
		Polychronic: Concentrate simultaneously on multiple tasks and or people.
	Past/ Present/ Future	Past: Learn from the past. The present is essentially a continuation or repetition of past occurrences.
		Present: Focus on “here and now” & short-term benefits
		Future: Have a bias towards long-term benefits. Promote far-reaching vision.
<i>Definitions of Identity & Purpose</i>	Being/ Doing	Being: Stress living itself & Development of Talents and Relationships.
		Doing: Focus on accomplishments & visible achievements.
	Individualistic /Collectivistic	Individualistic: Emphasize individual attributes & projects.
		Collectivist: Emphasize affiliation with the group.
<i>Organizational Arrangements</i>	Hierarchy / Equality	Hierarchy: Society & Organisations must be socially stratified to functions properly.
		Equality: People are equals who happen to play different roles.
	Universalist /Particularist	Universalist: All cases should be treated in the same universal manner. Adopt common practices for consistency & economies of scale.
		Particularist: Emphasize particular circumstances. Favour decentralization & tailored solutions.
	Stability/ Change	Stability: Value static & orderly environment. Encourage efficiency thru systemic & disciplined work. Minimize change & ambiguity, perceived as disruptive.

		Change: Value dynamic & flexible environment. Promote efficiency thru adaptability & innovation. Avoid routine, perceived as boring.
	Competitive /Collaborative	Competitive: Promote success & progress thru competitive stimulation.
		Collaborative: Promote success & progress thru mutual support, sharing of best practices & solidarity.
<i>Notions of Territory & Boundaries</i>	Protective	Protect oneself by keeping personal life & feelings private (mental boundaries) & by minimizing intrusions in one's physical space (physical boundaries).
	Sharing	Build closer relationships by sharing one's psychological & physical domains.
<i>Communication Patterns</i>	High Context/ Low Context	High: Rely on implicit communication. Appreciate meaning of gestures, postures, voice & context.
		Low: Rely on explicit communication. Favor clear & detailed instructions.
	Direct/Indirect	Direct: In conflict or with a tough message to deliver, get your point across clearly at risk of offending or hurting.
		Indirect: In conflict or tough message to deliver, favor maintaining a cordial relationship at risk of misunderstanding.
	Affective/Neutral	Affective: Display emotions & warmth when communicating. Establishing & maintaining personal & social relations are key.
		Neutral: Stress conciseness, precision, & detachment when communicating.
	Formal/Informal	Formal: Observe strict protocols & rituals.
		Informal: Favour familiarity & spontaneity.
<i>Modes of Thinking</i>	Deductive / Inductive	Deductive: Emphasize concepts, theories & general principles. Thru logical reasoning, derive practical applications & solutions.
		Inductive: Start with experiences, concrete situations, & cases. Using intuition, formulate general model & theories.
	Analytical / Systemic	Analytical: Separate the whole into its constituent elements. Dissect problem into smaller chunks.
		Systemic: Assemble parts into a coherent whole. Explore connections between elements & focus on the whole system.

Overall, intercultural coaching is based on the assumption of a multiple realities view of the world. This is approached by the COF assessment giving different outcomes according to the circumstances and particular coachees. Hence, there is a need to craft a cultural profile in each situation. Culture, in this case, is highly contextual, dynamic and fluid.

The COF can be used on multiple assessment sessions and interviews by the coach. This will establish a base on which the coach will look upon together with the coachee to establish the goals of the intervention and to decide on how the process will be conducted.

2.5.2 The Delta Approach

The authors of this approach address executive coaching from a consulting psychology perspective, leveraging research on motivation and performance assessment-management (Feldman & Lankau, 2005) to establish a values-sensitive, motivational approach to executive coaching. They take the international approach because culture - being essential to understand due to globalization, has a great impact on developmental activities. Hence, they suggest that coaches nowadays not only need to have a deeper understanding of cultures but also, to be able to adapt coaching strategies when dealing under culturally different environments in order to achieve maximum effects. What is more, they argue that coaches need to understand a) why coaching techniques generally work and b) how their effectiveness may vary according to the presence and strength of certain cultural values. (Coultas, Bedwell, Burke & Salas 2011:150)

The DELTA approach proposes a research-based and prescriptive approach to coaching. The model includes five components which create the acronym DELTA: 1) Determining cultural values based on the general dimensions of culture and the personalizing them according to the individual. 2) Employing the typical coaching techniques, the coach prefers to work with. Feedback and goal setting are also done. 3) Looking and listening for motivational needs and deficiencies. 4) Tailoring coaching techniques to motivational needs and cultural values. 5) Assessing their effectiveness. With this model, coaches set a baseline explanation of cultural values and provide a motivational framework toward coaching. (Coultas et. al 2011:149) Next, these components will be discussed further:

- a) *Determining cultural values.* A coachee's beliefs and values may be influenced by the norms of the group or system in which they are a part of. Coaches determine the coachee's national and organizational values. Here, it is important to avoid the 'ecological fallacy' which is assuming that individuals from a given country will behave in a particular way (Fuqua & Newman 2002). Hence, it is suggested to assess cultural dimensions and individuals separately to bring together and establish a further individualized coaching strategy. This can be done, for example, by using Straub, Loch, Evaristo, Karahana & Strite (2002) method. According to this method, individual level cultures can be assessed by having the executives respond to scenarios indicative of culturally driven responses. (Coultas et.al 2011:152) Rosinski's cultural orientations framework (COF) can be also used in this step.
- b) *Employing typical coaching techniques.* There are four consistent elements in coaching: A one-on-one relationship, monitoring the coachee's performance and other work-related behaviors, setting goals based on the monitored behaviors and providing feedback throughout the relationship (Gregory, Levy & Jeffers 2008). This stage is concerned with the impact of culture on the effectiveness of feedback and goal-setting, due to the fact that these may not appear the same across cultures. (Coultas et. al 2011:152)

Feedback interventions impact performance by affecting motivational mechanisms and, even though they tend to improve performance, there are cases of giving opposite outcomes (Kluger & DeNisi 1996). Based on this, feedback intervention theory proposes that when feedback is relevant to the task and not directly to the person, it is more likely to be perceived as meaningful and motivational. Effective goal-setting strategies include elements of difficulty, specificity and acceptability (Grant 2006). Mainly, the goals need to be specific, difficult enough to which an individual is willing to commit in order for them to be motivational and lead to higher levels of performance. (Coultas et.al 2011:153)

- c) *Looking and listening for motivational needs and deficiencies.* This step is based on Pritchard and Ashwood (2008) motivational framework. It mainly describes four components of an individual's motivation that must be met. These components are actions, results, evaluations, outcomes and need satisfaction. The key acknowledgment in this approach is that 'motivation is only as strict as the weakest link' (Pritchard & Ashwood, 2008). This means that if the individual does not believe that a change in their behavior (action) will result in greater productivity (result), it does not matter their certainty that their coach will positively evaluate and their performance. Through this framework, the coach is capable of improving motivation on an individual basis. (Coultas et. Al 2011:153)

- d) *Tailoring coaching techniques to motivational needs and cultural values.* This step is based on the fact that coaching is tailored to the coachee's needs and presents various examples. Higher levels of uncertainty avoidance may decrease individual motivation if the person is uncertain about whether or not their actions will lead to results. Or, considering individualism and collectivism values, feedback may have implications for either the individual or the group accordingly. (Coultas et.al 2011:154)

Hence, they present six guidelines to be followed. First, there is a need to frame the implications of feedback to fit the coachee's orientations toward individualism or collectivism. Second, in highly structured societies, feedback giving by the coach should be causally given as a peer instead of as a supervisor or authority figure. Third, in high uncertainty avoidance societies, giving negative feedback should be done sensitively. It is better to talk about task processes and more general actions than focusing on what the individual issues are. Fourth, encourage coachees to participate in the development of goals, especially in their strength. However, consider that in higher power-distance cultures individuals may not be as negatively affected by assigned goals. Fifth, flexibility in goal difficulty is essential. Sixth, emphasize learning goals within the coaching relationship. (Coultas et. al 2011:154-156)

- e) *Assessing effectiveness.* In this stage, coaches tailor coaching interventions according to individual motivational deficiencies. Tools like the Motivational Assessment Questionnaire (MAQ) (Pritchard, 2008) have been used to assess motivational needs and deficiencies in certain settings. Also, tools like COF can be used for assessing cultural values. The assessment does not need to be about the full coaching intervention, but rather the motivational fluctuations attributed to the coaching intervention.

2.5.3 Universal Integrated Framework (UIF)

The universal integrated framework is a pragmatic implementation model that mixes continuous professional development (CPD) with Goleman's (1996) idea of Emotional Intelligence (EQ), communication methods and feedback mechanisms. The framework includes learning and supervision, appreciation of a cultural environment, coach/coachee fluidity/integrative continuum and cross-cultural emotional intelligence.

The UIF's unique characteristics include:

- This model is consistent with supervision and CPD (Continuous Professional Development), allowing coachees to review the coaching process and to optimize their learning. Also, it permits coaches to move from individual learning to shared learning processes. (Law 2013: 93-94)
- Appreciation of the cultural environment emphasizes the fact that our cultural environment can be observed at two levels -the micro and macro ones, or as a dimension of time -in the short or long terms. As learners, the culture or environment are identified by appreciating the distinguish features present in it such as physical objects, shared purposes, social distinctions, professional status, etc. (Law 2013:95)

In addition, the culture or context where the executive operates might be drawn from the environment they are in or the attributes they extend to it. Generally, the accurate appreciation of the context depends on the interactions of the individual's own values and their perception and assessment of their observations

and experiences. (Law 2012:96) These values are influenced by the upbringing process as well as by the family culture people were exposed to, together with the wider exposure to society. (Law 2013:97)

This theory is based on the fact that the main differences between people are the ones in their background, race, gender, physical and mental abilities, and more specifically in the professional world, functional and professional categorizations. This brings the main focus of the UIF to address the significance of culture and Law (2013:98-101) focuses on the different main intercultural theories that exist and will be mentioned later in this thesis. Overall, the UIF accepts that culture is multi-layered and also dependable on the individual's characteristics.

- *Coach/coachee fluidity*: In the UIF model, coachees are encouraged and trained to be coaches too, in order for them to lead better the coaching process. This allows them to recognize better the learning opportunities and help with the learning and developing the process. (Law 2013:98-101)
- *Integrative continuum*: In this model mentoring and coaching are assessed together regarding the process. This, in order to keep coaching at the heart of the business agenda. Through the link that exists within these two interventions, a more coherent integrated framework is developed due to the connection between personal development and performance improvement. This allows sustainability to exist which ensures that coaching, mentoring and core business are an essential part to organizations to support reforms and develop leaders.
- Cross-cultural emotional intelligence is brought upon in this model by taking into consideration Goleman's (1996) concept of Emotional Intelligence (EI) together with cultural awareness. This permits a combination of feeling and thinking with knowledge of the cultural context, which enables the coach to present the most effective results in professional engagement. (Law 2013:98-103)

These mentioned characteristics are considered when creating the Universal Framework that will be presented next.

Initially, the UIF has four dimensions: 1) Personal Competence, 2) Social Competence, 3) Cultural Competence and 4) Professional Competence. Within these competencies, 18 elements have been identified. These are assessed by a self-assessment questionnaire. The individuals are supposed to answer the questions regarding whether they agree or disagree with any statement, choosing an appropriate point on the Likert Scale (Never-1 to Always-7). After assessing the answers, the process to create a professional that can cross all the personal, social, cultural and contextual boundaries with emotional intelligence starts. (Law 2013:98-104)

In table 4, it is presented the dimensions and elements of cross-cultural EI summarized. The professional competence is not included here because this dimension has to do with the coaching outcomes. This section of questions is presented by coaches to seek authentic feedback from others. This feedback's mechanism is a Peer Rating 360-Degree Feedback, which is done online where coaches designate peers to give an opinion about the process they have just gone through with the coachees. They take into account the executives' peers and bosses. Each question is grouped with others to fit the different competency categories the coachee must have or will have to improve in. (Law 2013:98-112-114) By completing the full test, the participants are more aware of how they feel and construct knowledge for future works or to continue developing within a coaching intervention.

The previous frameworks are ones that are mostly used in international contexts due to the fact that they not only assess cultural barriers that have to do with the different nationality but also to conditions of change, emotions or characteristics of the coachee.

In the next section, intercultural theories will be briefly explored. The intercultural theories to be mentioned will be the ones on which the previously established frameworks are widely based on.

Table 4. UIF (Law 2013)

Competence	Personal	Social	Cultural	Professional
Awareness Management	Self-awareness Self-regulation	Empathy Social Skills	Enlightenment Champion	Reflective practice Continued professional development

Dimensions	Elements	No. of Questions
Personal Competence	Emotion	5
	Cognition	5
	Motivation	5
	Control	5
	Trustworthiness	5
	Conscientiousness	5
	Flexibility	5
	Creativity	5
Social Competence	Understanding	5
	Empowering	5
	Communication	5
	Facilitating Conflict Resolution	5
	Leadership facilitation	5
	Coaching the team	5
	Coaching for change	5
Cultural Competence	Appreciation	5
	Respect	5
	Champion cultural diversity	5
Total		100

2.6 Intercultural Theories utilized in Coaching Frameworks

As it can be observed from the previous section, international coaching frameworks are heavily based on intercultural management theories together with the background theories of executive coaching. Consequently, the next section of this thesis will focus on underlying the main multicultural theories in which coaching has been based upon. Intercultural researchers have influenced the field of international coaching. However, it is important to point out that coaching processes that focus only on culture tend to not be

so effective because there are more contextual factors that affect the coaching relationship that needs to be taken into consideration (Abbott 2010:326).

It is also useful to note that with culture it happens the same as with coaching, there is no unique definition of it. The definitions of culture has been taken from different perspectives such as historical, behavioral, normative, functional, mental or symbolic and for each of them, there is a different definition (Bodley 1994). For example, Genelot (1998) defines culture as

“the product of men: their representations, their visions of what is good or wrong, their behavior at work, their concepts of organizations are the fruit of the representations carried by their ancestors”

Trompernaars and Hampden-Turner (2012) see it as *“the way a group of people solve problems and reconcile dilemmas”*. Hofstede a well-known social psychologist and culturalist, on the other hand, describes culture as

“The collective programming of the mind which distinguishes the member of one human group from another” (1991:5).

There are three main features of culture that need to be considered: 1) Culture is shared, by members of a given social group; 2) Culture is learned and it is transmitted through the growing process and interaction with the environment; and 3) Culture is systematic and organized, culture is an integrated coherent logical system. It is an organized system of values, attitudes and beliefs which are related to each other and to the environmental context. These factors make culture provide predictability and stability since they equip standards and norms to societies that in many cases may substitute thinking (Wurtz 2018).

Culture has different levels Schein (1999) states, for example, that a culture starts to develop when a group of people have a shared experience. Small groups, if the shared experience is rich enough, can also develop closeness through sharing a pastime, a hobby or an occupation that will evolve into the culture. A higher level of culture may be an organizational culture, that is the behaviors, beliefs and values that the form establishes and that all members of it follow. (Schein 1999)

What in general is important to understand is: 1) Cultures cannot be evaluated from being right or wrong, they just are different from one another; 2) There is not a singular logic for culture, each culture has its own; 3) Cultural generalizations do not explain the individual in their totality; 4) The differences between cultures are the ones that cause problems, it does not matter if they are 90% similar, 5) One needs to know one's own culture in order to understand other ones' one. (Dolan & Kawamura 2015)

According to Hofstede's (1980) theory, which describes the effects of a culture on the values of its members related to behavior, culture can be assessed and understood through five dimensions:

- a) *Power Distance*. This dimension expresses the attitude of the culture towards the individuals of a society' inequality. This is the extent to which the less powerful members of organizations in a country accept that power is distributed unequally.
- b) *Uncertainty Avoidance*. Deals with the reactions of a society by knowing that the future is unknown. This is the extent to which members of a culture feel threatened by uncertainty, unknown situations and innovations.
- c) *Individualism*. This dimension addresses the degree of interdependence a society maintains among its members. Individualist societies expect their individuals to look after themselves and their direct family only, whereas, in collectivist ones, people belong to 'in-groups' that take care of each other in exchange for loyalty. Hence, this is the extent to which members of a culture are integrated into groups.
- d) *Time Orientation*. Describes how every society maintains the links with its past while preparing for the present and future challenges. The cultures with a short-term normative view, prefer to keep traditions high and be skeptical with societal change. In turn, cultures with a long-term pragmatic view, like to encourage change and support modern education as ways of preparing for the future.
- e) *Masculinity/ Femininity*. This dimension divides the societies into two groups the masculine -driven by competition, achievement and success, and the feminine -driven care for other and quality of life. Mainly, the fundament lies on

what motivates people if being the best (masculine) or liking what you do (feminine). (Hofstede Insights 2018)

In 2010 Minkov's World Values Survey data analysis of 93 representative samples of national populations, led Hofstede to identify a sixth dimension to his model (Hofstede 2011):

- f) *Indulgence/ Restraint*. This dimension is the extent to which people try to control their desires and impulses. (Hofstede Insights 2018) This dimension can be also measurement to happiness since, an indulgent society is the one that allows almost free gratification of natural human desires related to enjoying life, and a restraint culture is one that controls gratification of needs and regulates it by strict social norms. (Hofstede 2011)

Before Hofstede, there was another work that describes some analysis of culture, the one done by Kluckhohn and Strodtbeck (1961). They focus their theory on an anthropology perspective based on three assumptions: 1) There are only a limited number of problems that affect all humans, 2) That there are a great variety of solutions to the problems and 3) That everyone has their preferences regarding solutions. Further, they describe five orientations to culture that are to be described through some questions asked and according to each culture's answers then they can be assessed:

- a) *Human nature*. Concerns the fundamental quality of character and whether or not this quality can change. Are human beings essentially good, evil or can they be seen as both? And those natures be changed?
- b) *Man-Nature*. Focuses on how humanity should relate to nature; should they control nature, live in harmony with it or should they submit to it?
- c) *Time*. Does the culture focus on the past, present or future?
- d) *Activity*. Describes what motivates individuals to acts, because actions concern the primary drivers of behavior. Should action be based on being? Acting according to internal motivations and desire for self-expression. Should actions focus on becoming? Growing aligned to internal motivations. Or, should action focus on achieving? Acting based on external motivations?

- e) *Relational*. Concerns how we should relate to one another. Does society divide itself through hierarchies and systems of authority? Are they all equal? Or are the people in this culture fully individualists and with an autonomous decision main capacity? (Wurtz 2018)

Further, Hampden-Turner and Trompenaars (2000) have identified seven common dimensions across which individuals tend to vary as a response to common changes faced by groups and communities. (Salomaa 2017) They distinguish cultures according to where the people's preferences fall according to the dimensions showed in Table 5. Universalism vs Particularism, Individualism vs Communitarianism, Specific vs Diffuse, Neutral vs Emotional, Achievement vs Ascription, Sequential time vs Synchronous time and Internal direction vs Outer direction. (Manktelow et.al n.d b)

Table 5. Seven Dimensions of Culture (Hampden-Turner & Trompenaars 2000)

<i>Universalism</i> VS <i>Particularism</i>	People believe that laws, rules, values and obligations are very important. Rules come before relationships.
	People think that each circumstance and relationship, impose the rules they live by. The response to a situation varies on the circumstances.
<i>Individualism</i> VS <i>Communitarianism</i>	Individuals believe in personal freedom and achievement. Each person makes their own decisions, takes responsibility from their consequences, and take care of themselves.
	The group is more important than the individual. The group provides help and safety and it comes always before then the individual.
<i>Specific</i> VS <i>Diffuse</i>	People believe that relationships do not have much of an impact on work objectives. They believe that individuals can work together without necessarily having a good relationship.
	There is an overlap between work and personal life. Good relationships are thought to be vital to meeting business objectives. Relationships are the same whether at work or under a social context.
<i>Neutral</i> VS <i>Emotional</i>	Individuals need to control their emotions. The reason is the main driver for action rather than feelings.
	People want to find ways to express their emotions. It is welcome and accepted to show emotion, even at work.
<i>Achievement</i> VS <i>Ascription</i>	‘You are what you do and you are worth accordingly’. Performance is valued over personality.
	‘You are valued for who you are’. Power, title and position matter and according to the role, the behavior is defined.
<i>Sequential time</i> VS <i>Synchronous time</i>	Events are supposed to happen in a certain order. Punctuality, planning and staying on schedule are highly valued. ‘Time is money’
	Past, present and future are interlaced periods. Plans and commitments are flexible.
<i>Internal direction</i> VS <i>Outer direction</i>	People believe they can control nature and their environment to achieve goals.
	People think that nature or their environment controls them. Hence, they must work with the environment to achieve goals.

International executive coaches use these theories in order to create models and an appropriate environment in multinational organizations. Furthermore, in the last couple of years, concepts related to Cultural Intelligence, the capability for consciousness and awareness during intercultural situations (Ng et al. 2009), and the Global Mindset- construct of psychological, social and intercultural capital (Javidan et al. 2010) have been utilized in some theoretical and empirical coaching papers (Abbott et al. 2013, Booyesen 2015). (Salomaa 2017)

After having analyzed the main theoretical backgrounds behind international executive coaching, the next section will focus on the existing research on this topic.

2.7 Existing research on international executive coaching

This section will present the existent research on both executive coaching and international coaching in order to position the present study in the field.

2.7.1 Existing research on executive coaching

Considering the different categorizations of executive coaching, Passmore and Fillary-Travis (2011) divided coaching research into six categories: 1) coach-client relationship studies, 2) coach behavior studies, 3) nature of coaching, 4) coaching impact studies, 5) client behavior studies and 6) the future decade for coaching research. Another way for categorizing coaching can be by the one brought upon by Bachkirova, Cox and Clutterbuck (2015:5), who considered the four quadrants of Wilber (1998, 2001) as the road by which research on coaching has been done so far, dividing it into four major dimensions: I- Coach and coachee as individuals, IT- behaviours, processes, models and techniques, WE- coaching relationships, culture and language; and finally, ITS- systems like organizations, families and societies. (Salomaa 2017)

In this thesis, executive coaching research has been divided into four broad categories, nature of coaching (Passmore & Fillary-Travis 2011), outcomes of the coaching process (Grant 2011, Theeboom et al. 2014, Feldman & Lankau 2010) characterization of

both the coach and the client separately (Barlett, Boylan & Hale 2014) and lately, the antecedents for success (Salomaa 2017).

As far as the nature of coaching is concerned, executive coaching research is taken from a variety of angles. For example, Passmore & Theebom (2015) take it from a coaching psychology perspective, Campone (2008) from a research evolution's one and McCarthy (2015) from a cross-disciplinary that involves the angles adopted in coaching research, coaching education and coaching practice. (Salomaa 2017:32) After several meta-analytic studies were conducted, (Sonesh, Coultas, Lacerenza, Marlow, Benishek & Salas 2015, Theebom, Beersma & van Vianen 2014) coaching showed to be an effective tool for improving and developing individuals, their positions and their organizations. However, there is still the need for larger evidence-based research that contributes to the evolution of empirical coaching, especially in the international coaching (Abbott et al. 2013, Booysen 2015, Ellinger & Kim 2014, Feldman & Lankau 2005, Passmore & Fillery-Travis 2011, McGill 2010, Peterson 2011).

Another area of executive coaching research focuses on the outcomes of this intervention. Some studies are about the effectiveness of a coaching method (Foster & Lendl 1996), others explore the case studies of some individual coachees (Peterson & Millier 2005) or groups of coachees in the organization (Moen & Federici 2012, Lawrence 2015, Ben-Hador 2016). Also, there is research regarding the outcomes depending on specific intervention factors (De Haan, Duckworth, Birch & Jones 2012; Smith and Brummel 2013). Regarding the methods used, it has been found that the most often used are the cognitive-behavioral approach, solution-focused and positive psychology/strengths coaching approaches. (Athanasopoulou & Dopson 2015) As mentioned before, despite the growth of executive coaching research, there is still a lack of studies that analyze the real efficacy of coaching. This is because measuring the outcomes of this process is very complex and it takes a great amount of time. This last point is considered since changes in human behavior take long. Though the financial return of investment (ROI) is one of the instruments that can be used to measure the coaching outcomes, it does not take the results from different perspectives that are not economical. This makes it an unreliable and insufficient measure, because it lacks awareness of the

full range of positive outcomes that are possible through executive coaching (Grant 2012, Theeboom et al. 2014).

Furthermore, Feldman & Lankau (2005) use Kirkpatrick's (1996) framework for evaluating training interventions to understand the effectiveness of executive coaching as an intervention for top managers. This evaluation is divided into 4 levels: 1) effective reactions to the coaching experience, meaning how the participants feel about the coaching experience; 2) learning, knowledge acquired as a result of coaching; 3) behavior changes, change of the coachee's behaviors after the coaching process; and 4) organizational results, the effects of the coaching on productivity, quality and achievement of organizational objectives. Also, there are a few studies that show conflicting or negative outcomes. Still, these outcome results seem to be low on academic rigor regarding research design, execution and analysis (Athanasopoulou & Dopson 2015).

As for the characterization of the coach and coachee, there are some studies that focus on coaches' effectiveness (Nikolova, Clegg, Fox, Bjørkeng & Pitsis, 2013). Most studies focus on the coachee alone or together with other stakeholders, like their boss or peers, while there are only a few studies that focus on the coach. (Athanasopoulou & Dopson 2015) In addition, Feldman & Lankau (2005) found that coaches still do not have specific backgrounds needed in order for them to be considered professionals in coaching. Finally, they posit that the most important concern on coaching must be to define differences between coaching and other developmental interventions, to identify specific skills that may influence coach's effectiveness, to instigate on the needs of executive clients and to focus on critical elements of the coaching process that characterize functional and effective relationships. Also, Barlett, Boylan & Hale (2014) have concluded that there is no empirical research regarding the characteristics of an effective coach and that it is of utmost importance to continue to define the differences between coaching, mentoring, counseling and consulting. Starting by clearly defining the difference in tasks between a coach, a mentor, a counselor and a consultant.

Finally, Salomaa (2017) emphasizes a new line of research that focuses on the antecedents for the success of executive coaching. She posits the works of De Haan & Duckworth (2012), McGill (2010), McKenna & Davis (2009) and Grant (2014). These works together with the ones from Smith & Brummel (2013) and Sammut (2014) among oth-

ers, study the different factors that can influence the outcomes of the intervention. Such factors are the coaching process, the organization, the coachee, the coach and the relationship of the stakeholders. From these factors there are a few subcategories that have been tried on experimental studies and have shown a real impact these are from the process a) Personality assessment tools and b) Coaching setting, duration and means, from the coachee c) Coachee's learning style, d) Pre-, during and post-coaching motivation, and e) Job rank and from the coach f) Behaviour, skills, abilities and quality. Most of these sub-categorical factors were considered to have a positive relation regarding the success of the coaching intervention. (Athanasopoulou & Dopson 2015) Also, with these- often referred to as the 'active ingredients', organizations will be able to predict the effectiveness of executive coaching (Salomaa 2017).

Overall, the studies of the previous mentioned authors together with Kilburg (1996), Kampa-Kokesch and Anderson (2001), Joo (2005), Fedlman & Lankau (2005), Fillery-Travis and Lane (2006), Passmore et al. (2010), Passmore and Fillary-Travis (2011), Peterson (2011), and more recently, Athanasopoulou & Dopson (2015) have reached the conclusion that research on executive coaching is short of evidence which compares the different executive models. Moreover, it has not shown how the involvement of different stakeholders influences the success or failure of the process or how the different factors can influence the success of the intervention.

2.7.2 Existing research on International Coaching

Lately, the number of researches done on global coaching has increased. Most of these study intercultural coaching perspective of the coach. The papers are mostly being published in peer-review journals and are the result of the increase in globalization and cultural exchanges that are nowadays constant in companies around the world. This, in turn, makes societal adaptation to different environments key for human development in organizations and the perfect opportunity for coaching to step on. Coaching has taken the international perspective from different angles, for example, managerial coaching, coaches working internationally, and expatriate coaching. (Salomaa 2017: 52)

This thesis divides the research on international coaching in three parts: comparative studies between two countries (Beattie et al. 2014, Hamlin, Ellinger & Beattie 2006; Kim, Egan and Moon 2013; Noer, Leupold and Valle 2007), culturally specific studies (Nangalia and Nangalia 2010, LAHRP 2011) and target group aimed coaching (Salomaa 2017).

As for comparative studies, these focus on managerial issues, processes and outcomes that are present in different cultural environments. (Beattie et al. 2014; Hamlin, Ellinger & Beattie 2006; Kim, Egan and Moon 2013; Noer, Leupold and Valle 2007) In addition, the number of empirical articles focusing on coaches working in global contexts has increased. For example, Plaister-Ten (2009) has examined 25 coaches that talk about culture in coaching. Based on this, she established four key qualities that an international coach has: 1) Coping with ambiguity, 2) remaining open-minded, 3) cultural self-awareness and 4) challenging assumptions. Furthermore, Filsinger (2014) inquired into managerial-virtual coaching in a cross-cultural context. As a result, she realized that more research is needed regarding a manager-as-coach relationship, coaching across cultures and coaching virtually.

As far as culturally specific studies are concerned, Asia and Latin-America are considered opened potential markets for coaching and the research on them is on the rise. In Asia, Nangalia and Nangalia (2010) explored how the hierarchical differences influence the coaching relationship in Asian countries. As a result of this study, they established a framework that allows cultural adaptation when coaches work in Asian contexts. For instance, the coach is seen not as equal, they are seen more as a respected elder or a teacher. Furthermore, the gender roles are strict in some Asian cultures and a female young coach might not be truly appreciated by a male old executive because she would be seen as an unknowledgeable person that cannot guide an older man better than the man himself. As it can be observed, the coach in this context is seen more as a mentor than as the 'pure' coach definition that the western world has. This makes the lines between these two interventions blur more in countries such as China, Thailand and Japan. What is more, the time of interaction before the 'real' coaching relationship starts is longer due to the fact the coachee must feel completely comfortable with the coach and must trust them completely. (Nangalia & Nangalia 2010)

As for Latin America, LAHRP (2011) analyzed 182 companies in four main country areas in Latin America -Mexico, Brazil, Chile and Argentina to understand the extent to which leading organizations utilize coaching for. The outcomes of this study mapped out a road for future research to be based on. In this geographical area, executive coaching is focused on the upper parts of the organizations. In fact, top management and senior managers take more than half the coaching interventions in Latin-American firms. Also, in general, coaching is used for solving specific issues, enhancing the coachee's development, supporting high potentials and in leadership development programs. The approach mostly used is the performance coaching one. Finally, this study determined that companies may benefit more from the coaching intervention by applying a top-down and systemic approach. (LAHRP 2011)

Finally, regarding target group aimed coaching in the international context, expatriate coaching seems to be the leader. Most research done on expatriate coaching is theoretical, these papers describe the adjustment processes of workers when they are designated to work in another country or compare coaching to traditional development interventions. (Chmielecki 2009) Through these studies, it has been discovered that executive coaching in international contexts is effective because of the shared characteristics it has with the expatriate's acculturation experiences. (Salomaa, 2017) Another aspect considered with expatriation is the spouse situation. For example, Miser and Miser (2009) suggest that coaching may be beneficial in an expatriate process because it may help the couple with different issues such as situational change, problem-solving, designation or responsibilities, among others. Furthermore, there are some papers that discuss the restraints of expatriate coaching. These lay mostly on managers not responding properly to coaching, the dependence between the coach and the coachee, timing of the coaching intervention, lack of professional coaches in developing countries, cost of coaching, (Abbot et al 2006) and lack of coaches' commitment (Herbolzheimer 2009).

As a conclusion of the previous literature discussion, executive coaching has been explored by understanding the skills needed in global settings and how some environmental factors can impact a particular global coaching intervention. Furthermore, it can be seen that there is still the need for establishing the characteristics of an international executive coach.

2.8 Conclusions of International Executive Coaching Theories and Literature

This section is dedicated to giving a brief overview of what has been understood about international executive coaching through the theory and to be able to position the present thesis research among the existent literature.

Executive coaching is a multidisciplinary concept and intervention that works in companies in order to help the constant development of its employees as well as, overcome problems in the workplace. Easing individuals to accept change, adapt and develop professionally. Hence, executive coaching is a developmental process. Executive coaching is usually compared and confused with therapy, training, counseling, mentoring and consulting from which the differences have been established. Coaching is a discipline that exists in everyday lives and routines in organizations. However, it is more empirically evolved than it is theoretically. Which means that it started being ‘done’ before being ‘thought and shaped’.

Internationality brings different challenges into the coaching intervention, due to the fact that the coach must address believes and behaviors whose roots come from the individual’s cultural and identity construction. Also, cultural differences between the coach and coachee might represent a barrier for the process. As far as the parties of the executive coaching process are concerned, the coach is attributed some characteristics such as having a relevant education background, experience in management, understanding of leadership, business acumen contextual knowledge and relevant organizational experience. As for the coachee, the executive coaching clients typically belong to two categories, executives whose behavior needs to improve for their new job requirements and managers who are confronted with a promotion to the executive level. Finally, the organization needs to show full support for the coachee and the coachee’s boss, in order for the coaching intervention to be successful. Main reasons why organizations involve in international coaching are to improve individual productivity, retention rates, organizational performance and recruitment outcomes, to address workplace problems and to boost employee engagement (Tompson et al 2008:11-12).

Main background theories on which executive coaching is based on are adult learning, adult development, person-centered, cognitive-behavioral, systems, transition and

change theories. Which one can see are reflected in the different executive coaching processes and frameworks that there are. Which some of them are mentioned in this thesis. As for the parties that take part in the executive coaching process, they are the coach, the executive/coachee and the organization. Regarding the frameworks used in international coaching, the most utilized ones are the Cultural Orientations Framework, the DELTA-approach and the Universal Integrated Framework. These frameworks are based on different intercultural theories that are mentioned in this paper in order to give a deeper understanding of global approaches and differences.

As far as the outcomes of the intervention are concerned, they typically regard leadership development, behavioral changes, expatriate acculturation and high-potentials support. As for how these outcomes are measured, the ROI is one of the instruments that can be mostly used. Still, some scholars believe this is not the most appropriate method because it lacks awareness of the full range of possible outcomes that executive coaching may present. Measuring the outcomes is very complex since executive coaching deals with human behavior and the particular modifications of it are not easily reflected.

Regarding the existent literature, it is established that the bigger needs on international executive coaching lie on larger based research that imprints the evolution of empirical coaching, especially in the international context. This, due to the fact that because coaching is flexible and adaptable, what is needed is for it to be widely understood, so organizations know how to apply it and make good use to. Furthermore, there needs to be an established process which reflects the work of coaches in the international context. In addition, there is still the need to continue defining the uniqueness of the international executive coach and coachee characteristics. Also, a comparison between the different executive models that are used in international coaching is to be considered.

Concluding, this paper will be placed in the literature by presenting an overall understanding of what international executive coaching entitles, especially what is different when internationality is taken into account, how the coach and the coachee differ from the typical cases and what are the typical outcomes and how they are analyzed. Overall, the aim is to imprint international executive coaching in its current state.

3. METHODOLOGY

In this section, the methodology used in this thesis will be exposed. First, the approach used and the reasoning behind it will be explained. Also, the characteristics of the people to be interviewed and study will be described and finally, the quality of the study will be assessed by establishing the credibility of the data gathered.

3.1 Methodological Approach

In this research paper, a qualitative approach will be used because qualitative research covers interpretative techniques that describe and analyze the meaning of commonly happening phenomena in the social context instead of analyzing the frequency of it. Also, the method used emphasize in closing the distance between theory and data. (Van Maanen, 1983:9) This, being one of the main needs of executive coaching research. Furthermore, while doing qualitative research, different methods may be mixed because in this kind of research no method is more valid than another one, all of them are equally privileged and can be used simultaneously. (Flick 2002; Denzin & Lincoln 2011)

When comparing qualitative research to a quantitative one, qualitative research has certain benefits in international business and management research (Marschan-Piekkari & Welch 2004). Qualitative research permits a deeper understanding of cross-cultural issues in comparison to quantitative research. It is also less possible for it to have cultural biases than when using any survey instruments. Furthermore, international business, as well as international coaching, are not mature disciplines, hence, they require exploratory and theory-generating research over theory-testing one. (Abbott et al. 2013; Booysen 2015) Also, qualitative research studies the phenomenon regarding the contextual factors, considering the subject of the study as a holistic being. In addition, qualitative research surpasses the measurement of observable behavior to understand the meaning and beliefs behind the actions (Marshan-Piekkari & Welch 2004: 7 – 8).

Regarding the methods, case studies are generally popular in studies on executive coaching's. (Joo 2005; Athanasopoulou & Dopson 2015) When including the international context, different qualitative approaches have been used. The constructivist-

interpretative approach, for example, is naturally appealing to coaching because coaches need to interpret and help others in their overall environment. (McCarthy 2015)

3.2 Research Method

Considering the umbrella of qualitative research, the method to collect data in this thesis will be the use of semi-structured interviews. The types of interviews to be drawn from are explain further. Even though these interviews are explained separately they are not strictly exclusive from one another, they can be inter-linked and used. Regarding the characteristics of a semi-standardized interview, the interviewer will introduce certain topic areas, allow the individual to speak and after it, if necessary, will present further a confrontational question. The purpose of the questions in a semi-standardized interview is to transform the interviewee's implicit knowledge about the topic into explicit knowledge. Furthermore, the confrontational questions will be done to re-examine certain notions when there are certainly other alternatives. (Scheele and Groeben 1988)

As typical for an expert interview, the individuals to be interviewed are seen as representatives of an expert group. The experts here are seen as specific kind of professionals that accomplish specific functions according to the context and have experience and extensive knowledge on the topic at hand. (Meuser and Nagel 2002) This kind of interview questions are done for the exploration in the international executive coaching field, collect information about the context under which the individuals have worked and possibly to generate a small typology or theory. (Bogner and Menz 2002: 36-38) This type of interview is particularly appropriate when there is some kind of time pressure and a narrow focus needs to be integrated (Flick 2002).

Finally, regarding problem-centered interviews, the interview questions are designed to support a narrative guide to the interviewee. However, they are mostly presented as guidance to bring back the conversation to the relevant topic. Hence, the four central strategies in this kind are the entry into conversation, usual and specific prompting and ad hoc questions. (Witzel 2000) Mostly these questions will be used in order to guide knowledge about facts or socialization processes.

The interview is designed to guide the individuals to feel more comfortable in the conversation. The initial questions will be done to place the coach in the target group of the study, their personal nationality and professional career will be asked. After general questions about the topic will be asked to understand the coach's knowledge and opinion regarding the theoretical background established. Finally, the last part of the interview allows the coach to tell more detailed stories and information about particular cases relevant to the study.

3.3 The interviewees

Considering the previous statements, 10 semi-structured interviews of executive coaches were carried on. They work or have worked in international contexts, one is a member of the International Coach Federation as director of coaching science doing academic-style research and one is retired.

These coaches were selected in two different manners. The first one was through personal relevant references such as coach Raija Salomaa, writer of one of the studies used in this thesis. She referred to the author some executive coaches that are appropriate for the present study and hence, were probably willing to participate in the interviews. Secondly, interviewees were identified through social media such as Linked-in where the profile of the professionals was analyzed and finally the identified coaches were contacted for a Skype interview.

All coaches were executive coaches, have three to more years of coaching experience, are certified as executive coaches, have some kind of executive coaching professional experience in international contexts and have knowledge regarding the different theoretical advancements in both executive and international coaching. Overall, they were willing to give information about the processes they have used, as well as, to give details about some particular experiences they have had. They come from different countries and all of them have had some kind of experience abroad, be it working as a coach, as expatriates or as self-initiated expatriates. They were from 10 different countries, it was to have at least one person from each continent so there could be a greater understanding of executive coaching from an international perspective. More demographics of the

interviewees such as name, position besides executive coach if it applies, gender, industry, nationality, location and years of experience are found in Table 6.

Table 6. Demographics of the participants in the study

Name	Nationality	Gender	Position	Industry	Location	Years of Experience
Joel DiGirolamo	American	Male	Director of Coaching Science	International Coach Federation	Kentucky	Over 20 years
Philip Thrush	Australian	Male	Managing director	Consulting and Coaching	Sydney	Over 40 years
Alan Chazen	South African	Male	Owner of Capacity Corporation	Self-Improvement	Johannesburg	40 years
Miguel Frau	Mexican & Spanish	Male	HR Director	Finances	Mexico City	Over 10 years
Gregory Pascoe	American	Male	Consultant	Leadership Development	USA	Over 30 years
John Maxwell	Scottish	Male	Managing Director	Coaching and Consulting	Edinburgh	Over 20 years
Anonymous	Turkish	Female	Executive Coach	Leadership	N/A	N/A
Ravi Santhanam	Indian	Male	Executive Coach & CEO	Leadership	Chennai	Over 20 years
Vivian Cruz	Philippine	Female	Managing Consultant	Management & Consultancy	Manila	Over 20 years
Sari Vuohyoniemi	Finish	Female	Leadership Consultant	Leadership	Helsinki	Over 20 years

Prior to the interviews the coaches were assured confidentiality and offered interview guidelines upon request. With the consent of the participants, all interviews were audio-recorded and subsequently transcribed. Also, all the participants but one gave permission to divulge their names.

Two of the interviews were taken as pilot interviews, still, there was some information relevant to the present study that was taken into consideration. The interviews were done at times convenient to fit into the agenda of the coaches between the first weeks of April of the present year.

3.4 Quality of the study

When analyzing the quality of the research in social sciences and in business research, there are two main concepts to base the evaluation framework: Reliability and Validity. (Eriksson & Kovalainen 2016:305) In quality research, they evaluate how much access the researcher has to the knowledge, opinions and experiences of the participants, besides analyzing the correct interpretation of what the participants expressed. (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill 2009)

Validity of research refers to the appropriate use of methods, the correct analysis of the results and the possibility to generalize the findings (Saunders et al. 2009). Meaning that the findings reflect accurately the phenomenon referred to in the study and that they are appropriately supported by evidence. Researchers differ in their opinion about whether validity is adequate to evaluate the quality of the study in qualitative research. For this, the term ‘validity’ means something slightly different in qualitative research to a quantitative one. Here the intention is to provide studies with correct descriptions or reports of the phenomenon. (Eriksson & Kovalainen 2016:305) As for the possible generalization of the findings, the present thesis does not aim for this. The general aim of the author is to interpret correctly a small set of data and to describe possibly a phenomenon.

Reliability of the research refers to the extent of which the research can be replicated and yield the same results, this means consistency. As with validity, opinions on whether reliability can be applied to qualitative research are divided. (Eriksson & Kovalainen 2016:305) This because most qualitative studies are not intended to be replicated due to the fact that they analyze a certain phenomenon at the time the study happened, conditions which may not happen in the future repeatedly. Furthermore, contexts -which tend to be the focus of qualitative research, are complex and dynamic, which in turn will require flexibility in the study. (Saunders et al. 2009)

Considering the previous statements, in qualitative research besides evaluating validity and reliability, the credibility of the data gathered is analyzed. In this study the credibility of the information will be established by two different methods of triangulation. Theoretically, which states that multiple theoretical perspectives will be used to analyze the data and triangulation of sources which is done when different data sources under

the same method are used, in this case, are the differences in nationalities and career positions of the executive coaches. The second one will be the member-checking technique. Once the analysis and conclusions are made, the author will share the final work with the interviewed coaches so they can clarify intentions, correct errors and if necessary, provide additional information. (Statistics Solutions 2019)

Finally, when conducting interviews there are certain biases that may occur. In this study the main concerning one is the interviewer bias. This refers to the possible signals such as comments, tone or gestures of the interviewer that may affect the interviewee's responses. This may happen specially in topics that regard cultural differences or personal styles of work like in this thesis. (Saunders et al 2009)

3.5 Analysis of the data

This section is going to be explained how the collected data was analyzed as well as how the processes of the interviews took place. The author started analyzing the information from the moment the interviews were taking place, she made notes highlighting the main findings and rectified or emphasized the participants' statements later in the interview. The interviews were all recorded and later transcribed and printed. With the notes taken during the interviews, the author created seven divisions to categorize the information. After having the categories and with the paper version of the transcripts, she gave color distinctions for each category. Hence, the full categorical division was: coach information-red, coach characteristics-blue highlighter, nationalities mentioned-green, processes-orange, challenges-yellow, context information-grey, focuses-pink, outcomes-blue pen and finally, models-black pen. Afterward, the author read each transcript and started highlighting or underlining each statement according to the categorical colors. The author listened to the recording at least once again after the transcription to re-check information and compared her notes with the recordings in case of misinterpretation of words.

When all the interviews were categorized, the author started compiling the information according to the frequency of terms or words. She sat in her living room and laid all the interviews in front of her and started comparing them between each other. Afterwards, she started summing up all the findings according to the main objectives of this thesis.

After having these groups of answers all together, she started writing the results and searching for the appropriate quotes of the interviews that could help her convene the general idea of the result.

After having writing the general results, she contrasted them with the general theoretical background explained before in this thesis. She did this by selecting one group of results such as ‘coach and coachee traits’ and go by all the theory searching for the description or mention of them in each section -not only on the explicit ones that described exactly the, in this case, ‘coach and coachee traits’. Consequently, she would continue with the next group and do the same until the last group of results could be connected to the theory. Also, there were some theoretical inputs given by the coaches. These were connected by the author already in the results section for relevance and to show the triangulation of the data.

Finally, having written the results and their possible connection with the theory, she gave a final answer to the main question of this thesis in the conclusion by giving a more explicit link of the findings and theory. Besides, for the future research, she used some of the uncommon answers given by the coaches, to encourage others to look into these facts.

4. RESULTS

One of the main things that came out during the interviews is that executive coaching is widely used and acknowledged by business professionals and organizations. The frequency and acceptance of the intervention may vary but its presence is known. For example, Mr. Joel DiGirolamo has worked and conducted coaching studies in various countries mainly in the Americas and Western Europe, right after these in intensity are included Oceania, Russia and Eastern Europe, then a little bit in Africa (Mostly in Kenya and South Africa) and lately, there is an ongoing study about coaching in the Middle-East. Many of the coaches work with people that come to work from opposite parts of the world different from themselves and work with or within a multinational firm.

4.1 Challenges of executive coaching in the international context

The main challenges that coaches find when working in an international context are related to the speed of the interventions, communication (personal styles, language and approaches) and cultural distances/differences. All of these aspects are connected to one another most of the time. Another minor challenge that came up was the fact that some coaches struggle from telling the person their own opinion.

The speed of the interventions ‘slow-downs’ in an international context in comparison to domestically because coaches, especially the ones that have English as their first language, feel the need of asking more reassurance from the coachee. This, to see if they are being understood correctly and if their words are being interpreted the same way. These interpretations may vary due to the fact that the coaches and coachees are more separated culturally (not only national or societal culture, but also by different organizational cultures or business practices that are used). The cultural distances/difference also cause the intervention to be slower due to the fact that the coaches may take more time, in the beginning, to create a trusting relationship, for example

“Because of language differences and cultural differences, sometimes it is better to spend one or two extra sessions in order to have a better discussion about the measurements, success indicators and things that will allow dealing easier with some issues that would come up in the future”

This statement also reflects beliefs with respect to the fact that sometimes the longer assessment is, deeper insights are found and a more successful engagement is established. On the contrary, other coaches believe that in domestic coaching, you can reach the central issue quicker. The coach can explore more things with and in the coachee than when they have to spend more time going through the layers of the person's cultural differences. Because of the time spent analyzing the culture, this creates an extra stage within the executive coaching process.

As for communication, some issues in regard with paucity are raised for example, when for Finish silence is accepted and sometimes even wanted, in some western societies like the U.S., it can be very uncomfortable staying quiet during a conversation even if it is only for a few seconds. Also, the approaches might be the same but what is important is how differently the coachees may react to certain communication types. For example, the Latin-Americans tend to avoid more the issues than people from the U.S. because of 'politeness issues', Latins want to keep front, while Americans are more direct. According to these communication clues the coach adapts their communication strategies, as it can be seen in the following statement

"In Latin cultures is very common that people is so polite, that they don't say what they are thinking about. So, I use a lot of tools to make them talk and say the truth, but not making them go uncomfortable. When you do this work with Anglo-Saxons, that part is easier because they are more direct. They are so practical, so they don't make circles in vain."

As for further issues caused by cultural differences. Some coaches expressed that sometimes when coaching internationally it is more difficult for them to find clients because they cannot establish easily a first personal approach and the coachees do not know the coach that well. This is, for example, a mini-step that can be omitted when dealing domestically. The reason is that on which the understanding of the culture, the expressions or the approaches are easily assumed when people are from the same contexts.

Other issues regarding cultural differences come because of gender divisions. It was reflected by some coaches that there are still places and organizations where men are more supposed to take leadership or managing roles. This may affect the intervention due to the fact that, as stated at the beginning of this thesis, coaching is a more feminine

dominated discipline and there are some clients that are not receptive to a 'leader' woman. Also, in the middle east this might become an issue,

“So, for example, the middle east is a patriarchal society, there is a lot tribalism but you know this “clan” kind of stuff and so a lot of this zone is male dominant and coaching is more of a feminine kind of thing, right? So, we explore some of these differences”

Another challenge to be overcome in domestic and international coaching is the tendency that with a consulting or mentoring background, it is very difficult for coaches to suppress themselves from offering the coachee a solution.

“when you ask questions, and you get an idea of what the problem is, there's a strong desire to tell the other person what's the what's the solution, very strong desire. So, that's been the biggest challenge for me, okay. Because I come from a consulting background, and consultants tell a solution. Okay. So I had to, I had to stop myself from doing that. And so so that's my biggest challenge. Okay. And that's the biggest challenge the rest could be the technique or listening.”

Overall, what almost all the coaches explicitly stated is that even though culture and language may become like an extra layer, it does not overcome this term of 'just a layer'. They believe that the core problems of people across the world, are basically the same because the needs are essentially the same across cultures and languages.

Everybody wants: “*A decent place to live, a decent job, a decent education*”, everybody worries about “*Their kids, paying the mortgage, their parents, the job they want*” and finally “*They [the clients] are all interested in being happy*”.

Regarding the challenges, it can be concluded that internationality is a challenge as long as the layers or barriers are still in place. Once these barriers are overcome, executive coaching is the same as domestically. However, how the commonalities are worked around is done a bit differently.

4.2 International Executive Coach and Coachee Traits

As far as the coach is concerned, there were a variety of characteristics mentioned that a coaching professional must have in order to work in an international context. Among those are having lived in a different country to their own, having business world experi-

ence, self-awareness, self-evaluation and self-sense, openness, personal resilience and finally, *not* tell the coachee what to do.

The first and foremost common characteristic was that they must have some kind of expat experience in another country. They must have lived in another country for at least six months to a year minimum. This, because the more exposure you have to internationality better possibilities you will have to understand and value other people's perspectives. As expressed,

“Having lived and experienced physically living outside of their home country, not just flying, and working outside their own country, I think if they're going to be authentic, they need to understand what it's like to be inside of the environment”

Another aspect agreed on was the fact that the executive coaches must have some kind of business world experience. Not to serve as an expert guide because as established before, the executive coach is not an expert in the coachee's area, but to be able to understand the coachee better. Coaches need to understand the perspective of the coachee almost to 100%, hence, they must have some sense of what it is like to be the executive. Mainly, they need to have a generally good understanding of how the business operates. As a result of this understanding, they will acquire credibility, a characteristic which is essential to earn the trust in which all the process will be based upon.

Even though understanding of the business is an attribute that both the international and domestic executive coach must have equally, in the international context there must be more exposure regarding better practices of the business. Having this previous exposure will allow the coach to create a common business ground where everybody can overcome misunderstandings caused by cultural and/or communication differences. Coaches will be able to do this because *“You've seen some of those in your business, and your business life”*. They understand what they are dealing with generally.

Furthermore, self-awareness, self-evaluation and self-sense seemed to be the second most common characteristics. Coaches need to know which are their strengths and positions regarding the coachee, the organization and the issues at hand. This because they need to assess each case with a clear head for every session. They must not have any kind of biases towards the cases and furthermore being aware of these biases will allow

them to see every possibility as a blank page to write on. Having self-awareness will allow the coach to stay balanced under strange circumstances and focused on the issues at hand.

“being attentive to your reactions, thoughtful about what your reactions may indicate regarding possible concerns or subtle biases, and drawing on such self-evaluation to enhance your way of being the coach.”

It is important to establish that possible biases must not be necessarily negative, this can mean familiarity with a topic or a situation but they can also be based on a bad experience that causes stereotypes. Hence, the need for self-evaluation is to understand if the coach is truly seeing the case in an objective way and filter down only the useful things that may come from positive experiences. Also, to be more aware of other cultures, the coach must study first their own culture because by doing this they will open up more.

One way used to describe these key traits of the coach was the 5 Factor Model (the Big Five traits model) that describe the five basic dimensions of personality using the acronym O.C.E.A.N, Openness, Conscientiousness, Extraversion, Agreeableness and Neuroticism. (Cherry 2019) The participants believe that the international coach must have a special high score in openness and more specifically in the openness sub-factor or being open to other values. This because the values across cultures can vary and the coach and coachee both must be open to accepting the idea that there are other values to assess things but that these are not necessarily wrong. As a result, this converts into an awareness of other cultures. In this model it can be also reflected the thought of some coaches who said that international coaches must have high EQ skills which can be seen in the conscientiousness and agreeableness parts of this model.

A particular characteristic that was discussed was the personal resiliency factor when the coach is confronted with new environments, especially the international one. This trait is particularly to help the coach retain the orientation of the intervention, is their strategy to initiate self-awareness and self-evaluation. Also, it is the moment by which the coach asks themselves

“What's the best way for me to gain my own sense of being personally centered at the moment, what can I do at the moment? What can I do before I come into the coaching session? What are the things that I need to be attended and alert to

that fit the customs and culture here, so that things are more easily discussed more easily digested by the coachee”

To close this discussion about the coach, one last trait will be discussed. This trait is a ‘must not’ rule that is applied as internationally as domestically and is the fact that the coach must fully retain themselves from telling the coachee what to do. If the coach for some reason, tells directly the coachee the solution of the situation then they pass to be mentors or consultants. I was overall found that the confusion regarding the differences of these interventions, still takes place in the organizations. In addition in this study, this issue could be seen more reflected in domestic coaching than internationally.

As for the coachee, their characteristics do not show much difference internationally or domestically due to the fact that the commonality trait agreed on is that they are willing to participate in the intervention. Another minor issue mentioned would be awareness to cross-cultural issues in their work-place.

The ‘coachability’ or normally called ‘likelihood to change’ is determined by the willingness of the participant to have a coaching intervention. If they are not willing and do not change their mind after the ‘recognition meeting’ with the coach, the process will have bumps all the way until the end. Some coaches state,

“It is possible, but it's hard work and doesn't really produce much of positive outcomes. Unless the coachee has a willingness to be coached or to at least try the experience.”

The coachee needs to want to be involved. There were different answers regarding how to deal with these situations, most of the coaches answered that they would try to convince the potential-client during the recognition or introduction meeting. From these some said that almost 100% of the cases result in accepting the intervention, some did not comment on negative or positive agreeableness. However, the minority of coaches said they would reject from the first moment if the coachee was not willing. In that case, they would explain to the organization that no-willingness equals no results.

Minority descriptions of the coachee came in some of the interviews, such as awareness of cross-cultural issues in their job, openness and flexibility. This summarized,

“it's much easier for an executive if the people that you're managing and leading meet or exceed what you expect; if job performance or personal style of your team members are below your expectations, your reactions to those individuals—and others with whom you interact—may have a negative tone”

Hence, the executive must have knowledge about their staff being conscious of the individual group differences among their people and be open enough to accept these differences. Which in turn, results in not being surprised and be able to run a smooth business.

The organization, which can be the client as well, was not attributed to specific characteristics during the interviews. The only mentioned treats were that they need to have enough financial power to pay for the interventions and enough knowledge to comprehend if the coaching intervention is needed.

4.3 International Executive Coaching Process

Regarding the processes that were reflected in the interviews, they were varied regarding the usual participants and the specific steps. As for the participants the ones mentioned were the human resources representative of the organization, the coachee's direct boss (which would be often the CEO), the coachee and the coach. Some interviewees excluded the HR person and the CEO from their description and compile them into only the 'organization'.

As for the process as such, the steps that were commonly expressed was a mixture of the previously mentioned processes in this thesis. The procedure can be presented in five steps. Firstly there is *the recognition interview*, here all the parties that will take part in the intervention meet in order to recognize each other. In this stage, the coach makes the first approach and analysis of the coachee to be. If the coachee is fully willing to the procedure, in this meeting all the parties set down the objectives of the intervention and the measurement techniques of how the outcomes are going to be determined. If the coachee has some reluctance to the intervention, some of the coaches will try to work to convince them and some will terminate the process at this first attempt. The ones that choose to continue with it will proceed to set out the objectives and outcomes' measurements. The objectives regarding the intervention are set regarding what the company wants for itself out of the coachee and the coachee establishes what they

want in regard to their situation in the company. Future personal objectives might come up later under the confidentiality of the coaching sessions.

Secondly an *assessment and establishment of the relationship* is done. In this stage, the coach gathers information about and with the coachee. The coach may acquire this information through conversations or interviews with the coachee's peers, bosses and employees under his charge. This is in order to understand the coachee's context in which they work. The conversation with the coachee will build the base of the relationship in which the first and foremost principle will be confidentiality which in turn, will create trust. As a coach explains,

"So, the most important thing is complete confidentiality between the coach and the coachee [...]. If you can't have complete confidentiality, you won't get trust. You don't get trust; you won't have a good relationship"

In the discussion with the coachee, the coach will see their context from the perspective of the coachee themselves. In this stage, possible cultural distances between the coach and coachee will be clear. From this point (considering the commonality of the interviewee's responses), the coaches will take different optional paths, 1) continue to the coaching sessions, 2) revision of the topics and goals/ check for clear understanding or 3) close the distance with the coachee.

Considering the path taken, the process may take extra time due to the fact that if the distances between the coach and coachee are too big the coach needs longer to overcome them. As an example, here is an explanation for possible path 2)

"there's going to be a bigger gap between yourself and the coachee, just from a cultural standpoint. Maybe instead of one meeting, to really decide whether you want to move forward in a coaching program, and an international assignment, it could take longer. So, maybe it takes two meetings, to talk to the coachee, to again check for understanding"

On the other hand, one coach explains the common difference in the process between domestic and international coaching (considering the fact that the coach is Australian),

"with the Australian person, I know where they're coming from, I understand the cultural context. Yeah, very quickly. And they know, I know. So, we're on the same page makes it very simple"

At the end of this stage, the coach and the coachee are clear about each other's styles and have created the base of trust which will be reinforced at every other stage.

Thirdly *the coaching sessions* take place to do development activities or to develop change. There is a combination of different methods. However, because the majority of the coaches interviewed worked mostly internationally, online services as Skype or Zoom are commonly used to conduct these meetings. They, of course, can be face-to-face. The number of sessions between feedback is according to the coach, as well as, the time between gatherings depends on the sub-objectives of each activity discussed with the coachee in the session. The confidentiality principle here is very strong because the only ones that take part in them are the coach and the coachee. Some issues may arise in this step because companies sometimes want to know the contents of the sessions still the information in these stay fully-confidential. Regarding the keep of confidentiality, there was an interesting particular fact that came up in the Filipino market. This fact is that Filipino managers or HR representatives, hence, the company's representatives, tend to ask more information about the coaching sessions than a foreign manager or foreign HR person. The coach states,

“if the immediate manager is a foreign talent, so they don't go that far of asking for details of the conversation. But if the immediate manager is a Filipino, and the HR is a Filipino, then they really would like to know everything. So, that's where I need to really calibrate and always remind them of the coaching ethics”

Fourthly *Feedback* is done, this stage can be done multiple times. These are the follow-ups on which the coach assesses the coachee in regard to their process until an specific point in time. There were some coaches that included the organization in this step due to the fact that this could be considered a ‘mini-outcomes presentation’. One coach prefer their coachees to be the ones updating the organization on a frequent basis. Also, some coaches ask for feedback from the coachee and the organization to analyze if they need to change something in their approach.

Finally, an *Evaluation* of the intervention is done. In this stage, all the parties gather and analyze the outcomes according to the measurement that was agreed at the beginning of the recognition session.

This process shown was built up, uniting the responses of the coaches interviewed. As communally expressed, the process is basically the same internationally to the one done domestically. However, internationality might create an extra semi-step in the second stage of *assessment and establishment of the relationship* in which the coach might need to invest some more time overcoming possible distances between themselves and their coachee. Furthermore, in this step, the coachee may inform the coach of the cultural differences that they need to be aware of or the coach must infer them themselves. Figure 2. Shows how the process would look like.

After having assessed the distance between the coach and the coachee, there are two possibilities: 1) There is a short almost to no distance between them because the culture (both organizational and societal) and/or styles are very similar or 2) There is medium to large distance because the cultural values and/or styles are different and there is a higher possibility to misunderstandings. If the case is number one -which happens mostly in domestic coaching or when the cultures and business styles are very similar, the coach may be able to understand easier the coachee, their context and core issues. In turn it allows the coach to move faster to the coaching sessions. However, if the case is number 2 there are two possibilities, a) to go back and check that all the points are clear and that the interpretation of what has been said and agreed on is the same one for both. As well as, checking if the speed of the process is in accord or not. b) To close the gaps with the coachee, this requires more time. The coach must analyze possible biases they might have and overcome them. Also, the coach must spend more time alienating their styles with the coachees and ‘poking’ and ‘raising’ the layers of culture to reach the core issues and fully assess the coachee and their needs. These both possible extra steps become into the coach to be able to fully understand the coachee and create trust.

This process is just a possible depiction of how internationality is included in the executive coaching processes. Regardless, this process is also adjusted to personal needs as coaching has always been tailored to individuals or groups.

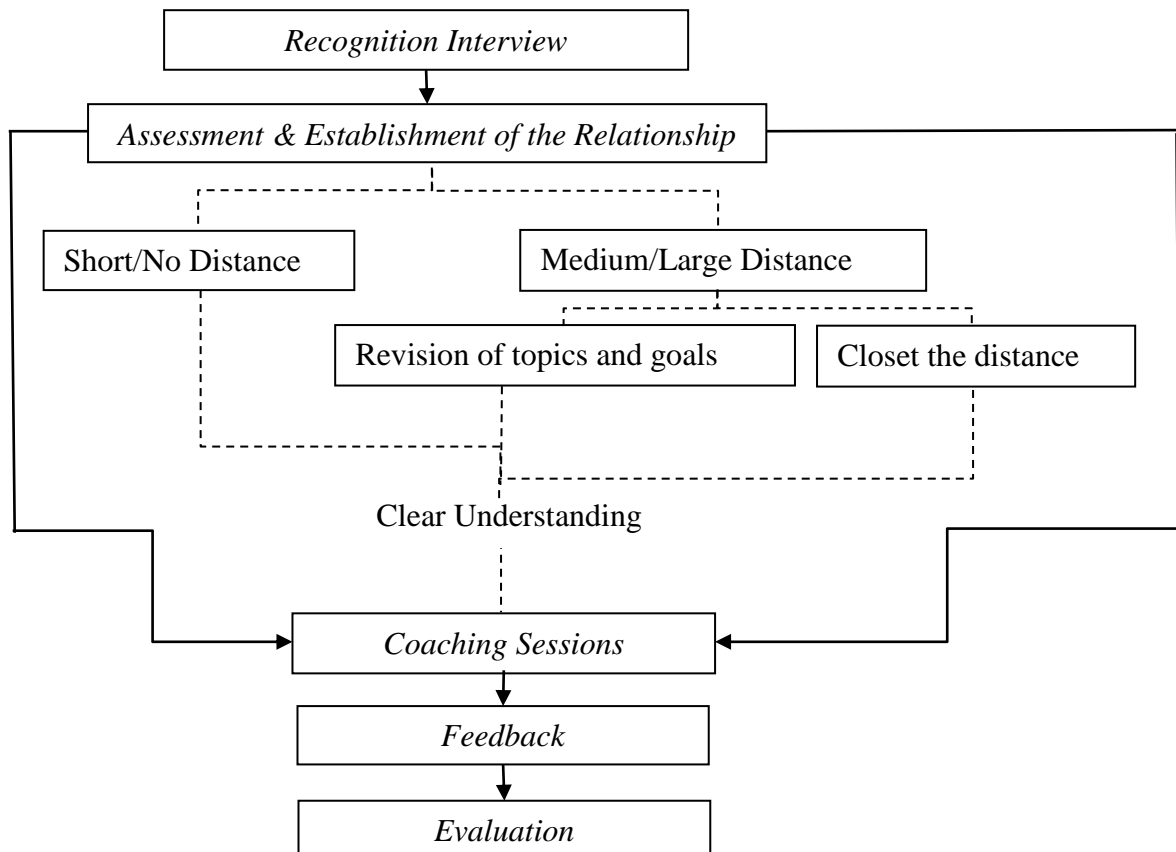


Figure 2. International Executive Coaching Process

4.4 Frameworks and Models used in the International Context

As far as the frameworks are concerned, there was an overall reluctance to base the coaching intervention on theoretical frameworks due to the fact that these are considered to box and limit the flexibility of the coaching intervention. Still there were some frameworks reflected like the DELTA approach and the UIF. Also, there were some methods mentioned by the coaches themselves such as the GROW-model, co-active coaching, Enneagram, NLP and Mind-Body bridging. Finally, regarding cross-cultural theories Edward Hall and Erin Meyer were mentioned.

Some coaches explained that it is necessary to live and learn from experience and not base all knowledge in only what has been learned in class. Also, there was the belief that based on experience the efficacy of the intervention relies only in small part on the tool used by the coach. Other coaches explained that the coach cannot assume that all individuals will fit the same model and sometimes even presume to obligate the coachee

to fit in. They state that there must be a certain “*practice pragmatism*” in terms of applying and that the models and methods are great starting points but are not all.

“having a theoretical orientation can be a blessing or a curse. A curse because on being based on that you might be left with big gaps. Or a blessing that they will provide you a way of reflecting and checking where you are in the process”

As it can be seen in the last part of this quote, even with an overall reluctance to follow certain unique frameworks, models can be of positive used. Everything depends on how they are utilized and if the coach is willing to accept them as guides but not as a clear-cut strict path. What is more, there were some methods that were mentioned by some interviewees. Two coaches talked about the GROW-model and how they adapt it to the needs of the coachee and also their own coaching strategies. Which on one example, would be for making the coachee see things in a different perspective. Which is why the coach mixes the GROW-model with the strength-based coaching approach. This strength-based approach is how the coach supports the coachee to reach their goals basing on the different strengths the individual has innate (Kermeen 2012).

Another method that came up was the co-active coaching approach, explained by one coach that says the main principle of this approach is to

“dance with what is happening at the moment. So that's the reason why you need to be at level three of listening and you work with what is happening at the moment with the coachee”

He also explains that there are three ways to approach a coachee in this model. The fulfillment coaching, the process coaching and balance coaching. The fulfillment, is about finding the values of the coachee and if they are acting according to them. Process coaching is about exploring the emotions and feelings of the coachee about one issue, and balance coaching is about helping the coachee reach a faster decision regarding the issue by allowing them to see the issue from various perspectives. (Kimsey-House, Kinsey-House, Sandahl & Witworth 2018)

Finally, as for individual methods exposed, one coach states she uses a mixture of various methods. The ones she uses the most are Enneagram, NLP and Mind-Body Bridging. Enneagram is a system that represents nine personality types (Ellis & Abrams 2009). NLP is neuro-linguistic programming which is an approach to communication,

personal development and psychotherapy that explains the connection between neurological processes, language and behavioral patterns (Tosey & Mathison 2006). Finally, Mind-Body Bridging is a transdiagnostic branch of Mind-Body medicine, design to deal with psychological issues like PTSD and anxiety. (Utah State University n.d) However, this particular coach utilizes it and arranges it to works with stress management and skills to manage oneself.

As for if these methods are different from the ones used domestically, the coaches commonly agreed that there is not a clear-cut difference between the ones they use internationally or domestically. However, what the answers and exposure of methods showed is a reflection of the DELTA approach mentioned previously in this paper. The connection points among this approach and the data collected are as follow: One of the first steps that coaches tend to take when working in an international context, is the analysis of the cultural values of both the coachee and themselves. This connects with the D part of the model, *Determining cultural values*. After having understood the position of the coachee, they engage their typical coaching techniques, set objectives, monitor the behavior and provide feedback. Which connects with the E part of the approach, *Employing typical coaching techniques*.

Even though the next steps come in a different position to that in the established process and in the DELTA approach, they are proved of connection points. L represents *Looking and listening for motivational needs and deficiencies*, this one connects with the motivation check that the coaches interviewed mentioned making at the beginning of their process, where they asset the participant willingness. As for T, which stands for *Tailoring coaching techniques to motivational needs and cultural values*, the connection can be seen together with the engagement in the typical and personal coaching techniques that the coaches then tailor according to that particular individual or group. Finally, the last point of connection is the evaluation point of the process, where the stakeholders participating in the process assess the outcomes of the intervention, which links with A, *Assessing their effectiveness*. (Coultras et. Al 2011:149)

As far as the other international coaching frameworks are concerned, the COF and the UIF, are not as strongly reflected as the DELTA approach. The biggest connection with the UIF is the 360-degree feedback system that was mentioned been used by some of

the coaches in order to profile the coachee in the entirety of their context. Also, some of the coaches use this method not only for the coachee but also for themselves, like one coach explains

“I ask my coachees for feedback and I ask the senior executive who they may be reporting to or the CEO. And I, that's all part of this front end, you know, is a shared understanding of what we're gonna do, is I'm going to be asking you for feedback, I'm gonna be asking you about how this is working”

As for the COF, there was no exposure to this framework. The only connection that can be found for it is the direct link it has with the intercultural frameworks which were mentioned but commonly used. Most of the coaches do not utilize any of the mentioned and previously analyzed theories in this thesis for two reasons. Firstly, they want to understand their coachee for their individual culture and persona, meaning that overall, they do not see their culture as the main issues to work on due to the fact that it can be overcome it is just an extra layer that the international coach must be aware. Secondly, there were two other intercultural theories mentioned. These theories are not used as such, however, are guidelines of knowledge to be able to maybe understand the cultural context of the coachee easier.

Two coaches mentioned the framework of Erin Meyer the Cultural Map which reflects in itself a new scale model of 8 dimensions in which cultures can be categorized to and serve as a guide of what to expect when you are dealing with people from a certain place. These 8 dimensions are: 1) Communicating: Low-context vs High-context, 2) Evaluating: Direct negative feedback vs indirect negative feedback, 3) Persuading: Principles-first vs applications-first, 4) Leading: Egalitarian vs Hierarchical, 5) Deciding: Consensual vs. top-down, 6) Trusting: Task-based vs. Relationship-based, 7) Disagreeing: Confrontational vs. Avoids confrontation and 7) Scheduling: Linear-time vs. Flexible-time (Meyer 2014). As it can be observed it this framework is a mixture and evolution between Hofstede's (1980), Kluckhohn and Strodtbeck's (1961) and Charles Hampden-Turner and Fons Trompenaars' (2000) ones that are explained in this thesis before.

Another framework mentioned was Edward Hall's one by only one coach. In this framework Hall classified society in three boxes. Context: Low-context vs High-

context. Time: Monochronic vs Polychronic and Space: High territoriality vs Low territoriality. (Hall 1990) Still, Mr. Santhanan expresses that using this kind of tools “*doesn't solve all your problems but it helps*”.

Another aspect that was brought up by some coaches is the possible limitations to using some tools in international coaching. One coach expressed that there are some issues regarding the languages because there are some psychometric tests that are better delivered in the mother tongue of the coachee and not everything is available in every language. Why the mother tongue is better is due to the fact that the outcomes of the intervention would not be the same, some complex issues that the metric wants to achieve would be lost in translation. Another coach on her part, describes a limitation in the international context, the fact that many sessions are held via Skype or Zoom and she is not able to do the same exercises with the coachee as the ones she would face to face.

4.5 Reasons for International Coaching

The first main reason why the international coaching intervention takes place, are regarding the need of the organization to thrive which may include factors such as an increase on self-awareness, leadership development and professional development. As a second reason, there is the need to overcome aspects or situations on which culture might be a difficulty. The aspects could be self-awareness and openness and stress and difference management. As for the situations, expatriation is the main one coaches work on. Finally, the third broad reason is not only subjected for international coaching but also domestically. This one is to deal with all the personal particular needs of the coachee.

Most of the coaches established that the main issues for which the companies require international coaching for, are circling the need of the organization to strive forward and keep in track with new globalization trends and better practices. Mainly because,

“the executive position needs some of the kinds of skill sets that you have today, but you're going to need very different skill sets in five years because the organization needs to transform”

Also, they want their local leadership teams to be aligned with the global agenda and the global culture. They believe that coaching is asked as the manners of the companies to

keep changing regularly. To do this, the easier way is to link and financial strategy together with a people-focus one. The coach then is asked to help with the people strategy in order for the coachee or coachees to develop faster so they can align with the financial one. The coaches are mainly needed to motivate the coachees to continue innovating and changing. Based on this, the focus of the intervention will spell down to be around capacity and skills building (professional development) because the companies believe that the executives or managers do not have the necessary skills up to date that will allow them to increase revenue and profit. Another spell down requirement is the one to help the coachee-to-be reach or feel comfortable in a new higher position to the one they were before.

Another broad focus of international coaching intervention is the overcoming of cultural issues. This cultural may be caused by different reasons which are to be worked on by the coach. These are self-awareness and openness, stress and difference management. Mostly, all of these issues have to deal with increasing the coachee's capability to deal and accept different cultures and situations that may be raised by these cultural differences.

Regarding self-awareness and openness to culture, one coach explains that this is

“for the leader to be able to be agile to difference. Okay, so it's really more about making sure that you'll be able to adapt quickly to the environment.”

As far as difference management is concerned, coaches explain that this is to help the executives or CEO's to deal with the differences not only in cultures among their employees but also, with their personalities and to understand that personal differences are overcome for the well-being of the organization. Furthermore, when it comes to stress management, the issue identified is that stress may increase in situations where cultural differences are high. This adds to the stress that may come from the fast and critical decisions executives and CEOs need to often take. Hence, the coach is there to help the executive to develop strategies to deal with the cultural differences and stressful situations that may occur in their work.

In addition, a particular situation that may cause cultural difficulties and that is dealt with by coaches is expatriation. In this situation the coachee is in need of preparation for

the entrance to a different cultural environment where everything or almost everything will be different and may cause stress or unhappiness if they are not prepared enough. Also, a part of expatriation is preparing foreigners to enter the country of the coach so they know what they will be confronted with once they arrive. This work with expatriates is in order for the company to be certain that the executives will be as effective as possible.

A perfect example of this could be when an American goes as an expatriate to Italy,

“you know the Italians, it's "Mañana Mañana" (tomorrow, tomorrow). [...]. So, they could really close their shops at 14.00 and don't open until 16.00 or whatever and I am like "None of these people ever get anything done" So, those are the kind of cultural differences that we have to adapt to... that's the way they live their lives you know, for their culture”

The coach that explained this draws this example from his own experiences in Italy and expresses that if the coachee is not well prepared, they might not understand the others. Hence, they need to learn to be more aware of the differences and respect them.

A third broad focus that came up was the personal particular need of the executive, this issue is not only worked on in international coaching but also domestically. These facts are the core issues that are (according to all the interviewees) the same across cultures, professions, religious beliefs and gender. These particular needs of the executive, as explained by the interviewees, have as base the need for *Love, acceptance and respect*. The coaches explain that everybody wants a stable love relationship, which not necessarily implies romantic love but all kinds of it. Everybody wants to be accepted in their job position, their group's activities for their particular hobbies, in their family, with their friends and everybody wants to be respected by everybody else. When there is a lack of any of these aspects in the person, which can be reflected in other issues, they will diminish in any of their capabilities. For example,

“a lot of the idiosyncrasies that stem from lack of acceptance of things like jealousy, possessiveness, simulation, criticism, judgment, arrogance, pride, you know, all the things that cause human discomfort come from a need of acceptance”

Any executive coach, be it internationally or domestically, will work on these personal issues of the coachee if they are identified.

4.6 Outcomes of the Coaching Process

As far as the outcomes are concerned, the first thing that was left clear is that these are agreed on from the beginning of the process as well as how these will be measured and observed. These are agreed between the coach, coachee and organization. These are varied and dependent on the person and the objectives they want to achieve. Some of the outcomes reflected were an increase in self-awareness, new attitudes and behaviors and development in leadership skills and styles. Other less common outcomes for international coaching mentioned were an improvement in confidence and in self-management.

The outcomes are easily agreed on the *recognition meeting* at the beginning of the process when the coach, coachee and organization representative discuss and get to know one another. The outcomes can be established strictly or flexibly. Strictly, would be when there is a document to be signed by all parties where everything is exposed. Contrary, flexibly would be to establish the outcomes while different issues are discovered during the process.

The most common outcome reflected was the increase in self-awareness in the coachee, which leads to a more sense of comfort, acceptance to differences and ownership of the coachee's behaviors and communication styles. After these are identified then the coachee themselves can see the aspects on which they need to change. Identifying issues on the executive-self may lead to a need of acquisition of skills.

"I think the biggest one's, really an increase in self-awareness. So, the individual, the executive, becomes fully aware of the impact that some of the behaviors and communication style that they have on the team, the customers, the people around them, and they accept, you know, they take ownership for that. And then, then they decide which parts of that they want to change"

As all outcomes, self-awareness aspects are agreed at the beginning of the process. As an example, the case of an executive was presented. The executive realized during the coaching sessions that the reason why the employees are demotivated is because he is not presenting the numerical data accordingly and everybody is confused. Hence, he needed to work on acquiring the skills to read the numerical data accordingly and transform it in a simple language that everybody could easily understand. In this case, the

outcomes observed are the increase of self-awareness on the part that the coachee realized his weakness and his improvement on the presentation of results.

Other typical outcomes are the coachee's new attitudes and behaviors towards something, which internationally would be towards difference. These kinds of outcomes could be reflected in basic forms such as

“it might be better behavior with your employees, it might be, you know, not upsetting clients, whatever it is still needs to be agreed up front”

Development in leadership skills and style was also a quite common outcome. This could be reflected on the new image the employees have about their executive

“the outcomes could be more employee satisfaction. The outcomes could be they were thinking about firing somebody and they don't fire them and instead of that they have more productive partner. That's what we help organizations to reach”

Regarding the way the outcomes are 'measured' or reflected in the organization can be agreed on different things. Besides the ones mentioned before, better behavior with the employees or clients can be reflected in less filled complains against the executive passed to HR. Also, another example of this could be the reflection of work improvement and more empowerment in the workforce.

“So, for example, in this case, the number of reviews that he has to do on the material that they produce, if the number of reviews decreases, that's an easy way for him to see that the quality of work has improved. And the same, if they're asking him fewer questions about storyline. So, if they're taking more ownership, asking fewer questions, then again, he would interpret that as they're becoming more as a team, they're becoming more empowered.”

Another common outcome is the improvement of the working environment which could be measured by less turn-over and more employee satisfaction would be reflected in the employee surveys. Only one coach talked about the ROI being a measurement by which the organizations can see the effectiveness of the coaching intervention.

Another way of measuring the outcomes would be to do two 360 Feedback assessments. One at the beginning to see how the situation was before the coaching and another one after when the coaching intervention is finished. This will allow to the results of the process through time. One coach called this measuring process as the 'as-is to-be' pro-

cess. 'As-is' is the condition of the situation before the coaching intervention and 'To-be' is the aim of the intervention, the outcome.

Regarding this outcomes part, there are not big differences between the outcomes reported internationally to the ones reported domestically. The main finding in this section is the fact that the outcomes of the intervention depend heavily on the reason for why the organization or executive are asking for the coaching intervention and that is why most coaches did not talk much about how these were agreed or reflected. Also, because sometimes the outcomes are personal results for the executives that are under the confidentiality clause.

5. CONCLUSIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

In this section a final answer to the main question if this thesis will be given. To do this, first the sub-goals as questions are presented and after, a specific answer to each of them is given. At the end of this the main question is answered

The five goals presented at the beginning of this thesis were as follow,

- 1) What are the main challenges of coaching in the international context?
- 2) What are the specific characteristics or traits of the stakeholders that participate in the international executive coaching?
- 3) What are the main reasons for which organizations and executives get involved in international executive coaching?
- 4) What are the tools, approaches, models and frameworks coaches use in the international context?
- 5) What are the typical outcomes of coaching in the international context?

Regarding the challenges in the international context, these are related to the speed of the interventions, communication and cultural distances. All these aspects are connected to one another as well as, be the trigger point for each other. Also, even though early in this thesis it was established that executive coaching is a discipline on its own and differs greatly from other interventions such as therapy, training, mentoring, consulting and workplace counseling. There were coaches that expressed difficulties at the beginning of the process with the coachees because the executives still expect the coach to give them advice and tell them what to do, instead of being a guide allowing the individuals to find the answers for themselves. These misunderstandings regarding the clear definition of executive coaching may still represent challenges to create trust or credibility among the executives in general. This is why this paper pursues the information about the different interventions that may occur and how these differ from coaching.

As for the characteristic of the stakeholders of the executive coaching process in international contexts, the coach was attributed distinctive traits internationally to the ones domestically, the coachee was given general characteristics and the organization was not overall described. As far as the coach is concerned, as stated before, certifications or

accreditations are not asked by the organization when selecting a coach (Tompson, Bear, Dennis, Vickers, London & Morrison 2008:13, Gray & Goregaokar 2010). The interviews showed that a good reputation and experience are more important criteria to choose the appropriate coach. This creates a trusting comfortable relationship with the coachee. Nevertheless, all or almost all of the participant coaches of this study are certified by different institutions such as the ICF or the IECL (Institute of Executive Coaching & Leadership). Regardless, it was established that there are some common agreed traits previously mentioned by scholars. These could be having a successful relevant educational background and count with at least a Master degree, experience in management, understanding of leadership, business acumen, contextual knowledge and relevant organizational experience (Feldman & Lankau 2005:832, Judge & Cowell 1997, Kampa-Kokesch & Anderson 2001, Gray, Ekinici & Goregaokar 2011:425).

As a result of this study, it was identified that an international working executive coach must have certain characteristics that might be more used under this context than when they are working domestically. Still, some of them are consistent with the ones previously stated. These found traits are a) to have worked or live in a different country to their own from 6 months to a year minimum; b) business world experience, not being an expert in any field but to have a sense of how the business world functions; c) self-awareness, self-evaluation and self-sense, to be able to understand in which point they stand in comparison to the coachee; finally d) openness to having tolerance different values that there might exist regarding the organizational culture or the coachee's one. These traits are established to be appropriate for international coaching. They allow the coach to have a greater view of the coachee's environment, as well as, permitting them to understand more fully the executive and create a more harmonious work environment where trust and no-judgment is fundamental.

Regarding the international executive coachee, they do not need to have any specific traits in comparison to domestic executive coaching. Agreeing with Feldman and Lankau (2005:834) statements, mostly the only condition they need to accomplish with is that they agree on and are willing to participate in the intervention, which has been clearly exposed before by Bush (2005), Stewart, Palmer, Wilkin & Kerrin (2008), Peterson (2011). Moreover, the organization was not given any specific characteristics only

that they have the financial resources to get involved in executive coaching which can be expensive.

Even though executive coaching is a discipline on its own nowadays it is based on other theories whereby exposed such as adult learning and adult development theories, person-centers theories, cognitive-behavioral theories, systems theories and theories of transition and change. These background theories are clearly exposed in the different models and approaches used in international executive coaching. As a matter of fact, the GROW-model (Alexander 2006) is an established cognitive-behavioral model that is mostly used in international executive coaching as exposed in the interviews. The coaches expressed that they use the GROW-model as base and add some aspects from their personal styles or other models in order to better tailor the coaching process to the coachee. Also, systems theories were clearly exposed in some interviews in which coaches exposed their need to see the person and the organization as systems inside systems to be able to better understand them and create a more appropriate process to the coachee.

The coaching process was analyzed because it reflects characteristics that may be unique to the coachee, the model, the coach or the type of coaching that is applied. For this part, the stakeholders of the intervention are analyzed in order to understand the process as such.

Regarding the process of executive coaching in the international context, this was the biggest finding of this research due to the fact that an 'extra step' was found to be in practice in the international coaching that normally is omitted in domestic executive coaching. This step comprehends the action the coach and coachee must subject to in order to overcome the 'distances' created by internationality. These distances may be cultural differences, customs and language or business practices. These could also be the reactions to the differences such as biases, pre-judgments or assumptions on both parts. After these distances have been closed, the process continues as it would domestically. This extra step does not appear in domestic executive coaching because the coach and the coachee have the same 'basic knowledge', they understand each other's values faster and assume differentiation factors to the minimum. Another aspect that might

change in the international executive coaching process is the time it will take because the added step may cause the passing to the next stage in the process to take longer.

Regarding the previously explained processes by the coaches represent a mixture of all of them. Still, there were some steps that were more heavily seen. For example, Natale and Diamante (2005) process is more represented when there is certain unwillingness from the coachee to participate in the intervention because this process heavily relies on this precise fact, most of the stages in it The Alliance Check, The credibility Assessment and the Likeability Link are spent on reassuring the coachee that coaching is to happen for their benefit and that the coach is there to help them. After then the coaching intervention may start smoothly. As for Flaherty's (2006) process, the assessment stage of it was highly reflected because the coaches spend a great deal of time understanding the coachees' contexts, their competencies, practices, project and relationships, which is exactly what Flaherty (2006) emphasizes on. As for Saporito's (1996) process, it is seen when the foundation in the process is set because as he explained it is the key stage of the intervention. Finally, Feldman and Lankau's (2005) process is strongly reflected on the evaluation part of it because coaches do indeed follow-up their processes and regard the impact of their intervention in the coachee as a professional and personal as well as, the impact on the organization.

It was confirmed that there needs to be open communication between all the parties in the process and that the organization must support equally the coachee and the coachee's boss (Hooijberg & Lane 2009:486, McGovern, Lindemann, Vergara, Murphy, Barker & Warrenfeltz 2001).

As for the frameworks used, the DELTA approach (Coultas et. al 2011:149) previously explained was the framework most reflected by the models the interviewees described. Still, there is a general reluctance to the use of certain models because these may box executive coaching and make it lose its main characteristic of been tailored to the particular individual. Nevertheless, some of the frameworks and models mentioned by the coaches include the GROW-model (Alexander 2006), NLP (Tosey & Mathison 2006), Co-Active coaching model (Kimsey-House, Kinsey-House, Sandahl & Witworth 2018) and Enneagram (Ellis & Abrams 2009). Regarding the cultural theories, these were reflected serving as 'help' to the coaches and coachees as tools to have a general idea of

the other's culture previous to the coaching intervention. Two main intercultural theories were mentioned the one from Erin Meyer (2014) and the one from Edward Hall (1990). One unexpected result from this research was the fact that internationality may bring possible limitations to the tools that could be used be it because of technical difficulties or because of language. Also, the use of intercultural theories consists of the previous statements that management and international executive coaching use these theories in order to create models and an accord environment in multinational organizations (Salomaa 2017).

After having created a solid theoretical background, a research of the existent literature on both executive coaching and international coaching was done, which brought upon the last two topics to be understood empirically, the reasons of the intervention and the typical outcomes brought from international executive coaching.

Regarding the reasons behind of the intervention, internationally they are mostly regarding the need of the organization to thrive which may include factors such as an increase on self-awareness, leadership development and professional development. Also, there is te general need to deal with aspects or situation where culture might cause a difficulty. The aspects could be self-awareness and openness and stress and difference management. As for the situations, expatriation is the main one coaches work on. Which at some points consist and in others differ from Thompson et al (2008:11-12) that establish organizations to use executive coaching to improve individual productivity, retention rates, organizational performance and recruitment outcomes, to address workplace problems and to boost employee engagement.

As for the outcomes of the interventions, they do not vary so much from domestic executive coaching due to the fact these are clearly set at the beginning of the process and are tailored according to the organization's and coachee's needs. The most common outcomes are an increase in self-awareness, reflection of new attitudes and behaviours and development in leadership skills and styles. Also, how the outcomes are measured is agreed on from the beginning and it depends heavily on the objectives set at the beginning of the intervention. This follows research trends that are based on outcomes depending on specific intervention factors (e.g. De Haan, Duckworth, Birch & Jones 2012; Smith and Brummel 2013). The outcomes measurement techniques can be varied and

also tailored, they can be as simple as looking at employees' surveys or checking the customer complain rates or as complex as analyzing the retention rates in the company or the ROI. Even though the ROI is known as the common instrument to measure coaching (Grant 2012, Salomaa 2017, Theeboom et al. 2014) there was only one coach that mentioned it as a measurement technique.

Finally, giving an answer to the main question of this thesis,

“What are the specific characteristics of executive coaching in the international context?”

The main characteristics of executive coaching in the international context can be seen in the processes and focus of the intervention, as well as the different characteristics the international executive needs in order to succeed under an international context. There are no clear especial characteristics on the outcomes and coachee's traits in international executive coaching. As for the frameworks theoretically used in the international context, these are not explicitly consciously used by international executive coaches. Still, they can be drawn upon from the usual techniques they utilize.

5.1 Limitations

Because of the use of an interpretative approach, the findings cannot be generalized, not only because it is suggested by scholars such as Denzin & Lincoln (1995) and Marshall & Rossman (1989) to minimize intention of generalization in qualitative research but also, because the interpretation of the results and the chosen theoretical background are fully subjective and dependent on the author of this thesis as well as the small sample size. Also, her analysis of the interviewees is subjected to the particular single situations at the point in time they were in when the interview took place. Hence, these results do not represent one single objective truth. Furthermore, the current study only takes into consideration the point of view of executive coaches, omitting the perspectives of other stakeholders such as the executive/coachee and the organization.

5.2 Future Research

Based on the previous delimitations and the overall results, there are several possible areas where future research could be based upon. For example, analyze the differences of the international and domestic executive coach from different perspectives. To consider here is not only the coach but also the coachee, the organization, and possible observance of the process but these are not directly included in it.

Furthermore, during the research, there was the discovery that internationality may present possible limitations to the use of certain executive coaching tools. The analysis of these different aspects may permit the tools to creators, to be aware of them, and begin solving these limitations.

As noted in the middle of this thesis there is still more work to be done regarding the definition of international coaching. It would be interesting to analyze if there is a clear difference between international coaching, global coaching and cross-cultural coaching. Also, this helps to observe which one is more commonly used.

In addition, an aspect to consider for future research that came in the interviews was to note the difference of international coaching when applied to a group in contrast to when applied to an individual. Because according to John Maxwell, international coaching is more explicit and deems better results are expected when in a group instead of when is done to an individual in the organization. This causes an interesting concept to look into.

Generally, it would be positive to continue digging the knowledge of international executive coaching. Companies are constantly under an international context due to globalization movements and international coaching may even be more commonly used in the future than domestic coaching. With that being the case, having a clear understanding of what this entails will be helpful for future coaches and coaching researches.

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7. APPENDIX 1. Semi-Structured Interview Layout

- 1) Introduction: Name, Nationality, Age, Career experience
- 2) What are you currently working as? (Is executive coach your full-time job?)
- 3) Where are you currently working?
- 4) How long have you been working as a coach?
- 5) With which nationalities have you had contact when working as a coach?
- 6) How do you define international coaching?
- 7) What are the main challenges regarding working in an international context? (e.g. Language, communication, culture, any other)
- 8) Which language do you tend to use when engaging in international coaching? Do you consider it better to conduct coaching in the local language where the company is currently based?
- 9) Which general differences do you see regarding domestic coaching and international coaching? (Please indicate regarding the coach, coachee and organization)
- 10) What different characteristics must have an international executive coach contrary to a coach that only works domestically?
- 11) What different characteristics must have an internationally working client have to engage in international coaching contrary to a coachee that works domestically?
- 12) Are the methods that you use in an international context different from the ones you use with domestic coaching?
- 13) Are the processes differ in different countries or for example, domestically do you omit some stages in the coaching process that you need as extra internationally?
- 14) Who is typically included in the process? Does this change when in an international context?
- 15) What typical benefits are found for the executive as an individual and as a worker after the coaching intervention?
- 16) What typical benefits are reflected in the organization?
- 17) How do you keep track of these benefits? Is this follow up included in your way of working as a coach?
- 18) What focuses are found in the international coaching intervention? (e.g. Leadership, stress management, team skills, culture, expatriate?)

- 19) When you are working in a company for international coaching. What are the main focuses that people are asking help with are those in order to be professional development, team skills, stress management, leadership, which are like the main the most usual ones that are there? The basis for looking for coaching.
- 20) What do you believe are the main reasons organizations and individuals seek international coaching for? Are these reasons different in domestic coaching? How? Why?
- 21) How was the first time you needed to work in an international context? (e.g. What did you need to change or adapt in your methods, approaches, professionally? Or not? What were the issues that brought you to work in this case?)