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Liisa Minkkinen

DEVELOPING LEADERSHIP IN AN MNC

A sales personnel's perspective

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ABBREVIATIONS

IHRM	International human resource management
HRM	Human resource management
MNC	Multinational corporation
AI	Artificial intelligence
HQ	Headquarters

UNIVERSITY OF VAASA
School of Management

Author:	Liisa Minkkinen
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ABSTRACT:

The challenging and fast-paced business environment of modern-day business has led to ever increasing demands for flexibility and renewability from the organizations. In the centre of this change are sales personnel, whose work is especially affected by the changes in the market. To ensure competitive advantage, organizations need to acknowledge the importance of their employees' skills and focus on leadership development. Increasing self-leadership across organization helps them to discover their core competences, improve information flow and boost agility. Furthermore, it leads to decentralized decision-making, which further facilitates flexibility.

The research was conducted as an assignment from the Case Company and by researching sales personnel, the aim was to describe how organizational roles need to change, so the company can become more self-leading and execute effective and profit-oriented self-leadership in multinational environment. Also, the research aimed to identify how inspirational leadership can be used to support the change towards self-leadership.

The study was conducted using qualitative research methods. The data was collected from eight semi structured interviews with sales personnel from the Case Company. They had been employed in the company for several years and thus, were able to reflect the changes in self-leadership, their roles and leadership styles. The study followed an abductive research approach and the data was analysed by identifying different themes and combining similar themes so, that they eventually constructed the success factors of employees', leaders' and organization's roles in moving towards a self-leading organization.

The results suggest that overall the organizational culture needs to become more trusting, and the hierarchy less centralized. This requires action from both the employees and supervisors. Employees are required to take more responsibility over competence and performance and have appropriate team work skills. Simultaneously, the supervisors need to give the employees possibilities to participate in decision-making and trust them to monitor their own performance.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Study background

The formal CEO of Apple, Steve Jobs, once said, "If you love your work, you'll be out there every day trying to do it the best you possibly can, and pretty soon everybody around will catch the passion from you— like a fever" (Murnieks, Cardon, Sudek, White & Brooks 2016). His turnaround at Apple Computers shows the impact of simple, positive and emotional storytelling (Feser 2016: 44-45). He spread enthusiasm, energy and vision around him (Feser 2016: 1), which eventually changed Apple Computers from being a marginalized player with a small market share, to the home of small and enviable elite, the visionary who dared to think differently (Deutschman & Keeler 2007).

For years, global markets have been described with words such as change, pressure, complexity and competition. To survive in the complex global environment MNCs need careful planning in their activities. These demands are of increased importance in sales personnel's day-to-day life (Ingram, LaForge, Locander, MacKenzie & Podsakoff 2005). To balance global pressure and local expectations, companies need to choose an appropriate level of global integration and local adaptation. This extends to human resource management activities as well. The flexibility requirements and constant change strain on organizations and individuals. To battle the volatile environment, maintain motivation and perform well, it is not enough to have someone to tell people what to do, but they also need to lead themselves. Self-leading employees cope better with uncertainty and perform better (Cordery, Morrison, Wright & Wall 2010). Kurki and Kurki-Suutarinen (2014: 216) state that many companies have lost the meaning and goals of everyday business, while technology, efficiency pressure and timetables are defining one's work. To change direction and bring meaning back to work, we need inspirational leadership and leadership development – just like Apple needed before Steve Jobs. A McKinsey study in 2017 found out that out of 500 global executives, only 11 per cent perceived their leadership development efforts to produce desired results (Feser, Nielsen & Rennie 2017) and thus, research on effective leadership development is required.

The Bradon Hall Group (2015) conducted a study, which revealed that 36 percent of the organizations consider their leadership developmental actions to still be below average or poor. This study proposes that inspirational leadership is an effective tool to improve organizational performance. It is a crucial tool to foster motivation and commitment, create enthusiasm and give meaning back to work (Feser & de Vries 2016: 17, 157). It can be used as a counter move to rush, pressure and fast changes. The basic requirements for inspirational management are smooth routines, working tools, clear goals, career prospects, continuous training, motivation and social structures at work (Järvinen 2014).

1.2. Case company

The Case Company has merged into a Swedish company already over 15 years ago. In 2016 the company adopted the name, brand and practices of the acquirer. The pre-merger company had slowly changed their brand towards the acquirer's over the years. Though the change was well researched before adopting the new brand, there are still some issues related to the processes and job descriptions as the practices face global pressure after the company became part of an MNC.

Sales personnel are in crucial role in this company, as they are the front line in all customer interactions. Not only are they in charge of gaining new customers, they are also in charge of communicating brand values and increasing customer loyalty. Therefore, their motivation, commitment and values should be in line with organizational strategic goals. The company works in a rapidly changing business field with constant pressure for technical improvement. Thus, there is a high degree of uncertainty present in the work environment.

To face the global challenges the company has invested in employee competency development in creating a flexible, efficient and profit-oriented work environment. Their focus has been on self-leadership, to improve the skills, motivation and sense of security for

their employees. To take things one step further, the company was interested in studying self-leadership among their sales personnel.

1.3. Research question

The Case Company is going through a change towards a self-leading organization, thus by researching sales personnel, the aim is to describe how organizational roles need to change, so the company can become more self-leading and successfully execute effective and profit-oriented self-leadership in multinational environment. Furthermore, the research aims to identify how inspirational leadership can be used to support the change towards self-leadership. There are three objectives in this study, which are related to sales personnel's and leaders' roles as well as leadership development activities among sales personnel. The objectives are:

How sales personnel's role should change to enhance self-leadership?

How team leader's role should change to support sales personnel's self-leadership?

Which methods MNCs use to improve their leadership development?

Answering these questions aims to create a comprehensive image about leadership development among sales personnel and how inspirational management influences the leadership development process.

1.4. Terminology and key concepts

The key concepts in this study are leadership development in multinational corporation, self-leadership and inspirational leadership, which this study considers as approaches to leadership development. The key concepts are described in detail below.

Leadership development

Leadership development efforts often refer to improvement of general knowledge and abilities of individual leaders (Day 2001). Leadership development generally refers to the development of leadership competence, which include solving problems (Dixon 1993) managing knowledge, values, emotions and self-image (Day 2001; Edwards & Turnbull 2013).

Self-leadership

Sydänmaalakka (2011) describes management of self as a continuous learning and influencing process, in which the individual gains a deep understanding of their body, mind, feelings and values, and thus, can manage their actions, thoughts and emotions better. Self-leaders understand their own skills, can make decisions, monitor their performance and improve their competence. (Cordery et al. 2010; Hauschildt & Konradt 2012; Järvinen 2014).

Inspirational leadership

Inspirational leadership focuses on increasing motivation, energizing employees and creating a compelling vision, which motivates the employees to want to accomplish great things (Joshi, Lazarova & Liao 2009). Feser and de Vries (2016: 15) describe inspirational leadership as "a set of *behaviours* that leaders use to appeal to followers' inner motivators´ with the aim of creating commitment *to action and change* and *empowering* them to act".

1.5. Structure of the study

After the introduction, the second chapter of the study consists of a literature review regarding strategic human resource management in MCNs and leadership development. Also, different globalization and localization strategies are reviewed in this chapter. The third chapter presents a literature review regarding self-leadership and its specific features among sales personnel. These main chapters aim to review past research to build foundation to this current study.

The fourth chapter begins with the research purpose and approach. Next, the data collection and sample are explained, and the case company is introduced. Data analysis methods are also explained. Issues of reliability and validity concerns of this study, as well as ethics of research will be discussed.

The fifth chapter consists of findings of the study. The findings are divided in themes and presented with a similar structure as the literature review. Conclusions are presented in the last chapter. This chapter reflects back on research objectives presented in this chapter Conclusions are drawn from the theoretical background of the study and empirical findings. The suggestions for future research and limitations of the study are reflected in the end of this chapter.
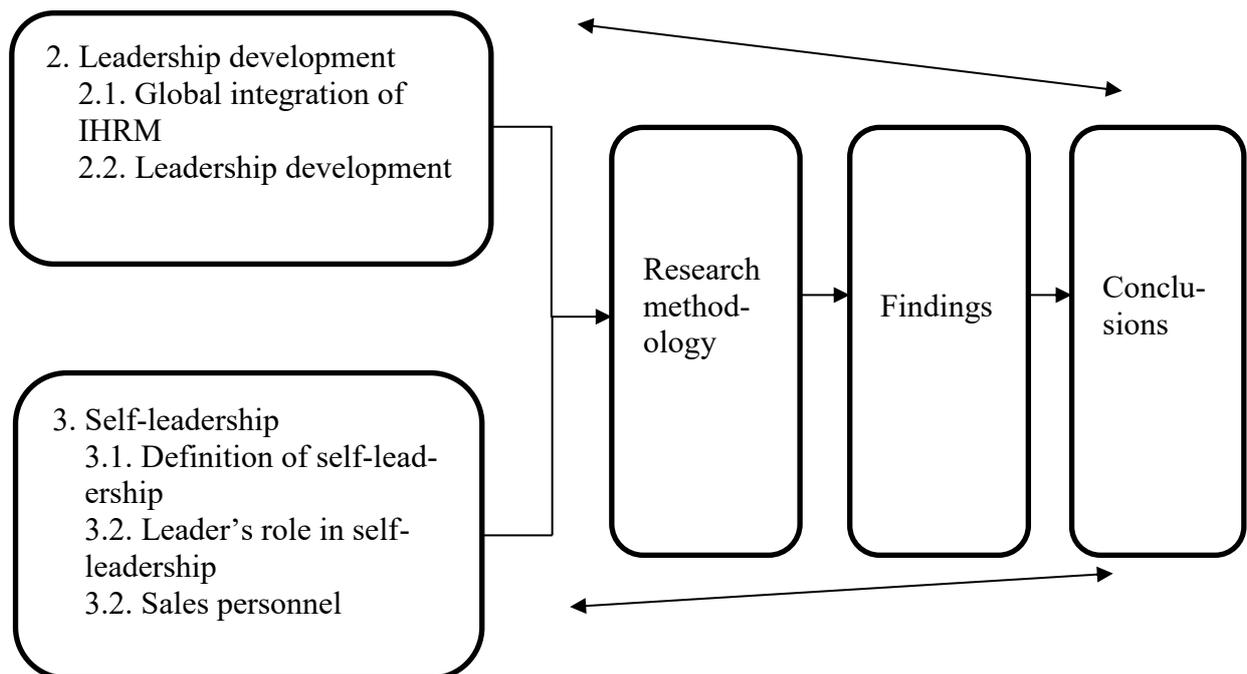
Figure 1 Structure of the study

2. LEADERSHIP DEVEOPMENT IN MCNs

MNCs have extended their businesses over domestic borders and to multiple countries. In comparison with domestic operations, international business ventures face different challenges such as different work ethics and behaviour, which derive from cultural differences. (Arnáez, Sanches, Arizkuren, Pérez & Muñiz 2016.) To overcome these challenges, the companies need to find an appropriate balance between global integration and local adaptation (Edwards, Marginson & Ferner 2013). Global integration refers to the extent to which the organizational activities are standardized across subsidiaries. On the other hand, locally adaptative organizations modify their organizational activities in each market they work in and may therefore, be more sensitive towards local culture. (Caligiuri & Stroh 1995.) Leadership development may also be a tool to overcome such challenges as it refers to developing individual leadership skills (Day 2001). As suggested in the introduction, leadership development is a significant focus point for MNCs to maintain their competitive strengths and the skills of their employees.

2.1.   Global integration of IHRM

This literature review begins with a definition of international human resource management practices and coordination of these practices between subsidiaries. Peltonen (2006: 523) defines international human resource management (IHRM) as "a branch of management studies that investigates the design and effects of organizational human resource practices in cross-cultural contexts". IHRM has been extended to strategic international human resource management, which Schuler, Dowling and De Cieri (1993: 422) define as "human resource management issues, functions, and policies and practices that result from the strategic activities of multinational enterprises and that impact the international concerns and goals of those enterprises". These practices include planning human resource activities, leadership development, recruiting, developing employees and monitoring performance. Strategic IHRM aims to actively adapt human resource management to support organizational strategies. International approach to human resource management is important, since human resource managers in global context are faced with different

challenges than when operating in domestic markets. For example, there are differences in work behaviour, national cultural differences and large geographical distances. (Arnáez et al. 2016.)

Human resource management practices have gained special attention, since scholars note the employees' impact in organizational activities such as sales, marketing, development and innovations. Therefore, human resource management is crucial to organizational success. (Caligiuri & Stroh 1995.) Human resource managers are faced with extra pressure to integrate the strategic goals of the organization with the local demands of economic, social and legal environments of the host countries (Milliman, Von Glinow & Nathan 1991).

Finding an appropriate balance between global integration and local adaptation may relieve the pressure, which Milliman et al. (1991) suggest is being placed on human resource managers. Global integration refers to the extent to which global business and human resource strategies are standardized between HQ and subsidiaries. Smale, Björkman and Sumelius (2013: 232) describe global integration as an attempt "to control the HRM policies and practices of their subsidiaries and to ensure coordination of the policies and practices across their subsidiaries". Management practices are faced with a dual pressure between global integration and local adaptation (Edwards et al. 2013). The approaches that MNCs have towards global management strategies vary as greatly as do practices, systems and processes used as tools to implement these strategies. MNCs face complex demands as they strive to maintain maximum amount of control over the subsidiaries and make the decisions related to company practices. Simultaneously, they will try to maximize local adaptation to answer to local demands. (Caligiuri & Stroh 1995.) Generally, the more foreign subsidiaries are free to act independently and adapt their practices to the local demands, the less integrated the MNC becomes. On the other hand, the less autonomy foreign subsidiaries are, the more integrated the MNC tends to become. (Tung & Punnett 1993.) As foreign subsidiaries mature, they generally become more independent in terms of strategic resources. Strategic resources include assets, technology, market position and management. Yet, the parent companies need to maintain control

over the increasingly independent subsidiaries to fulfil its general strategic goals and ensure organizational success. To remain in control, parent company may foster its organization culture among subsidiaries. In doing so, they can enhance ties to the subsidiaries, ensure goal and value oriented behaviour and foster the overall organizational culture. (Prahalad & Doz, 1981: 5.)

Belizón, Morley and Gunnigle (2016) claim that the level of global integration is decided based on the extent to which each practice is expected to influence the overall corporate performance and turnover. According to Lu (1997), compensations, performance evaluation and career prospects tend to be the most integrated functions in MNCs. Also pay and benefit systems are generally more integrated (Almond, Edwards, Colling, Ferner, Gunnigle, Müller-Camen, Quintanilla & Wächter 2005). Moreover, Ferner, Dear and Bateman (2011) claim that performance management and compensation systems are more likely to be integrated and thus, under HQ control. On the other hand, they claim that training, development and employee participation are issues, which MNC arrange locally and therefore, controlled by the subsidiaries. Databases, intranet and other information systems, which facilitate employees' knowledge and data sharing are information-based mechanisms in IHRM. These systems are crucial for the success on international integration, since these systems standardize knowledge sharing in information collection across subsidiaries. (Sparrow, Brewster & Harris 2004.) Next, different globalization and localization strategies are discussed, to understand how MNCs make human resource management decisions.

Global strategies can vary regarding the level of global integration or local adaptation. Companies can choose to apply HQ standardized strategies to all subsidiaries or allow divisional or regional HQs to form their own strategies and processes. (e.g. Caligiuri & Stroh 1995; Edwards et al. 2013.) Smale et al. (2013) suggest that there are three approaches to integration mechanisms of MNCs: centralization-based integration mechanisms, formalization-based integration mechanisms and people-based integration mechanisms. Centralization-based mechanisms foster integration in MNCs (Ferner, Quintanilla & Varul 2001), since the aim is to centralize decision making in the top-levels of the organization, mostly in headquarters or regional HQs (Smale et al. 2013), which reduces

local adaptation and enhances integration (Ferner et al. 2001). Formalization-based mechanisms suggests that working practices, guidelines and rules should be standardized across the MNC. While people-based strategies focus on facilitating communication within the organization through meetings, joined teams and exchange of employees across subsidiaries. (Kim, Park & Prescott 2003.) Smale et al. (2003) suggest that people-based mechanisms are more locally responsive than other mechanisms, because the exchange of employees facilitates coordination (Harzing 2001) and allows knowledge sharing between HR managers of the subsidiaries (Sparrow et al. 2004).

Integration strategies approaches vary based on the level of parent company control over local subsidiaries. Generally, integration strategies that emphasize parent company control over subsidiaries at the cost of local responsiveness are called ethnocentric strategies. Ethnocentric strategy is neither globally integrated nor locally responsive. Polycentric and regiocentric approaches allow a higher level of local responsiveness and diminished parent company control. Geocentric strategy is often perceived ideal, since it attempts to find balance between global integration and local responsiveness. Polycentric and regiocentric IHRM practices allow more local responsiveness to foreign subsidiaries. In polycentric MNCs subsidiaries are managed with some headquarters control over how the subsidiary should operate. Host country nationals manage foreign subsidiaries in polycentric MNCs and expatriates are rarely used in management positions. (Caligiuri & Stroh 1995.) Therefore, it is challenging to build a shared corporate culture in such organizations and local managers may feel less connected to their home country colleagues (Heenan & Perlmutter 1979). Regiocentric management strategy is like polycentric approach. In regiocentric approach employees consist of nationals from the host country and third-countries. The recruitment, training and development is arranged regionally. Regions follow some natural boundaries, for example North America. Regiocentric MNC's require highly sophisticated communication and integration systems, so headquarters have control over the regions. However, host nationals can manage their own subsidiaries and have better career prospects within their region. (Caligiuri & Stroh 1995.)

Geocentric IHRM practices is the most suitable approach when MNCs desire to integrate all their foreign subsidiaries and create an organizational culture that extends over all

subsidiaries (Heenan & Perlmutter 1979). The organizational culture is shared across subsidiaries and headquarters, but not necessarily dictated by the headquarters. The focus is to replace national cultures with an integrated shared organizational culture. Of these approaches, geocentric practices require most communication and integration between headquarters and local subsidiaries. (Edström & Galbraith 1977.) In geocentric MNCs recruitment and staffing is based on finding the best fitting people for each position regardless of their region or nationality (Heenan & Perlmutter 1979). Corporate values are socialized and used as a control strategy to accommodate the differences between foreign cultures (Edström & Galbraith 1977). Host country employees adopt the values, behaviours and norms of the global company. These practices are transferred in contact with the parent company, through company visits and training from both host and home country organizations. (Caligiuri & Stroh 1995.) Edström and Galbraith (1977: 251) believe that this approach allows the greatest extent of local discretion and decentralization simultaneously allowing overall integration. Socialization processes aim to increase the understanding of MNCs entire networks instead of only local networks (Bird & Mukuda 1989).

As Edwards et al. (2013) suggest managers face a complex situation when they need to balance between global and local demands. Furthermore, they need to understand cultural differences, diverse work behaviours and manage their subordinates, who may work at a geographically distant office (Arnáez et al. 2016). Next chapter discusses leadership development, which may help organizations to avoid these challenges through training and development of leadership traits and skills.

2.2. Leadership development

Leadership development is a part of international human resource management, which focuses on fostering leadership competences and skills of current employees (Day 2001.). It is part of training and development, which is generally perceived as a rather locally

adapted practice (Ferner et al. 2011). Leadership development efforts often refer to improvement of general knowledge and abilities of individual leaders (Day 2001). Couch and Citrin (2018: 276) claim that leadership development is currently a hot topic because USA and Europe are facing what they call a "silver tsunami". The pool of talented future leaders is too small in comparison to the amount of aging and retiring leaders. Reichard and Johnson (2011) claim that modern day business environment changes so fast that organizations, which rely on formal leadership development programs are at risk of falling behind in leadership development, no matter how well their programs are developed. Brass and Krackhardt (1999) claim that leadership development is important to understand, since the human capital of individual leaders is the predominant foundation of organizational leadership research.

Viitala, Kultalahti and Kangas (2017) studied leadership development in Finnish organizations. Their results show that managers' behaviour is a fundamental factor in ensuring employees' motivation, engagement and well-being as well as enhancing employees' skills so that organization performs better in the future. Furthermore, their informants emphasized that when trying to empower employees, the manager is the one who needs to take responsibility. Care and service were proposed as crucial leadership behaviours in the future.

Leadership development aims to improve the capacity of organizational members to solve problems they cannot predict (Dixon 1993). The centre of focus in leadership development is generally individual-based skills and knowledge related to formal leadership roles (Day 2001). Individual-centered leadership development approach focuses on the development of leaders' skills, which include skills, knowledge, values, emotions and self-image (Day 2001; Edwards & Turnbull 2013). Intrapersonal leadership development strategies aim to change specific individual competences such as self-awareness, self-regulation and self-motivation. Such capabilities allow people to avoid old thinking patterns and change their behaviour. (Coleman 1988.) Development strategies emphasize building intrapersonal competences to create an accurate model of oneself (Gardner 1993: 9), which help identity development (Hall & Seibert 1992) and that self-model can then be used to perform effectively in multiple organizational roles. Organizations need to

consider both individual leadership development and organizational leadership development to create such leadership capacity that they can continuously reinvent themselves. (Day 2001.)

In contrast to traditional view of leadership development as a specially designed program initiated by the company, leadership development is a continuous process that can take place anywhere (Fulmer 1997). Reichard and Johnson (2011) suggest that leader self-development is a new, cost effective, and adaptive strategy to improve individual leadership skills. Therefore, the next chapter discusses the organizational level influences, which affect leadership development

2.2.1. Organizational influence in leadership development

Reichard and Johnson (2011) name several organizational level influences, which have an impact in leader's self-development and may hinder or advance effective developmental activities. They perceive self-development to consist of self-management and self-leadership behaviours, but to focus more on developing leadership abilities. Overall, self-developmental activities should be in line with and supported by organizational strategy as organizational strategy influences directly the human resource processes and available resources, which allow self-development. Furthermore, organizational culture should allow and support self-development among leaders. (Reichard & Johnson 2011.) Delery and Doty (1999) claim that different strategic decisions require diverse human resource activities. Therefore, HR processes are bound to influence self-development as well.

Reichard and Johnson (2011) suggest that HR practices influence organizational norms, as human resources can signal desired behaviour through recruiting, developing and performance appraisal, which they claim to be the most influential HR practices. Also, Avolio (2004) notes the importance of performance appraisal systems, which evaluate, reinforce and rewards desired self-developmental or self-leading behaviour. Reichard and Johnson (2011) claim that the key norms, which lead to self-development, are learning, responsibility and openness. These norms combined create a learning culture, which reinforces self-development and gives the responsibility over own competence develop-

ment to the individuals. The norms can be visible throughout all HR functions from recruiting to mandatory training practices, which promote learning, self-leadership and competence development to be important attributes for employees in that company. So, the company can acquire employees with appropriate skills from the early on.

Organizations should arrange training programs to support self-development (Reichard & Johnson 2011). Avolio (2004) suggests a strategy called reflection in action, which refers to self-reflection and that leaders are trained to notice learning opportunities and reflect their behaviour when such situation occurs. Suar (2001) proposes competency mapping and staying updated on changes in technology and trends in their field, to support self-development. Reichard and Johnson (2011) found 360-degree feedback to be effective in performance appraisal evaluation. Avolio (2004) emphasizes the role of social networks in self-development activities, since supportive closest supervisor can motivate follower's personal network to join in the self-development process and move towards a more self-developing attitude. Networks can use 360-degree feedback or mentoring to enhance the self-developmental activities (Reichard & Johnson 2011).

The most effective organizational resources from the perspective of self-development, are technology, leadership styles and social networks (Reichard & Johnson 2011). Technology refers to the virtual learning opportunities, databases and intranet, which facilitate knowledge sharing and learning (Sparrow et al. 2004). Reichard and Johnson (2011) propose, that the leadership style of one's closest supervisor has a great impact in their self-developmental behaviour and motivation act on their own development. Transformational leadership is especially effective due to its high individual consideration towards the follower and ability to challenge and motivate the follower to perform beyond expectations (Avolio 2004). Other tools, which organizations can adopt to improve leadership development and leaders' self-development, are discussed in the following chapter.

2.2.2. Leadership development tools

Moxley and O'Connor Wilson (1998) claim that leadership development today means allowing people to learn from their work rather than taking them out of their work to learn. Leadership development can happen in formal and informal processes (Day 2001).

For example, formal mentoring programs are assigned, monitored and organized by the organization (Kram & Bragar 1992), while informal mentoring is encouraged by organization, but they take no part in organizing or initiating it. Day (2001) presents some tools for leadership development: 360-degree feedback, coaching, mentoring, networks, and action learning.

360-degree feedback refers to a method of systematically collecting and evaluating feedback from the entire circle of relevant viewpoints (Warech, Smither, Reilly, Millsap & Reilly 1998). Oh and Berry (2009) claim that 360-degree feedback is a recommendable tool for performance evaluation, since it provides a more comprehensive assessment than just supervisor's evaluation. In their study, they found that using 360-degree ratings led to a 50 to 74 percent increase in operational validities of personality traits in comparison to a single-source feedback. Miao, Humphrey, Qian and Oh (2018) suggest that 360-degree feedback may benefit the development of entrepreneurial orientation within companies, as it allows them to evaluate the status of entrepreneurial orientation from multiple points of view and gain a more comprehensive image about the company. The feedback can be collected from co-workers, supervisors and reports (Day 2001), also other stakeholders such as customers, contractors or investors could be used as a source of feedback (Bracken, Rose & Church 2016). Day (2001) claims that an important assumption of 360-degree feedback is that performance varies across contexts and people behave differently in different situations and company. Therefore, 360-degree feedback allows an individual to have a throughout overview over their own behaviour and performance. Multi-source feedback helps to build intrapersonal competences such as self-knowledge and self-awareness of one's influence on others. Though there are multiple benefits to gain from the 360-degree feedback, Miao et al. (2018) claim, it is costlier and more time consuming than single-source ratings, because it involves more sources of feedback. Yet, it effectively provides more comprehensive image of the overall performance and skills of the company (Miaot et al. 2018).

Coaching is collaborative, goal-oriented and reflective one-on-one learning and development (Smither 2011). The aim of coaching is to achieve the individual developmental goals of executives or employees, which further contribute to reaching organizational

goals (Jones, Woods & Guillaume 2016). Kilburg (1996) states that the objectives of coaching are improved individual performance and personal satisfaction, which lead to improved organizational effectiveness. Coaching may be used to enhance individual performance, career prospects or change management (Katz & Miller 1996). Coaching can be either short-term or long-term oriented process, which is focused on improving specific leadership skills or solving specific problems (Tobias 1996). Unlike in mentoring, the coach is not necessarily an expert (Jones et al. 2016), but coaching can take place in peer-to-peer relationships as well (Parker, Kram & Hall 2013). To fit the definition of coaching, it should happen between employees and independent coaches, rather than with manager or supervisor, since the lack of power relationships facilitates learning and development. Coaching is more effective when the company uses internal practitioner coaches and excludes multisource feedback. Furthermore, both face-to-face and e-coaching or a blend of those techniques are effective, and if the developmental goals are aligned with organizational objectives, coaching may influence performance. (Jones et al. 2016.)

Mentoring is generally a long-term relationship between mentor and a mentee. Commonly, the mentor is highly experienced in their field and advices the inexperienced mentee. (Jones et al. 2016.) Mentoring occurs in both formal and informal processes (eg. Kram & Bragar 1992; Sherman 1995; Day 2001). Formal processes are planned, initiated and administered by the organization (Kram & Bragar 1992). Informal mentoring is encouraged by the organization, but they take no part in organizing or administrating the process (Day 2001). Sherman (1995) claims that regardless of the formality of the relationship, the most effective mentoring relationships are a mix of opportunity and intent. Mentoring programs are heavily emphasizing support with some attention to challenge but little consideration for assessment. The opportunity to observe and discuss with a senior member of the organization is a critical part of mentoring, since it allows organizational members to form a more strategic perspective of the organization. (Day 2001.)

Networking aims to expand organizational boundaries, expose employees to other ways of working and to develop them to see beyond knowing what and how, to knowing who to contact in need for problem solving. Networking is investing in social capital and thus,

it emphasizes building support and fostering relationships. (Day 2001.) Ragins and Cotton (1999) claim that as with mentoring process, formal programs should not focus on minimizing informal programs, but rather mimic the development of informal relationships. This refers to making networking opportunities available, modeling successful developmental relationships and emphasizing the benefits of networking (Day 2001). Cullen-Lester, Maupin and Carter (2017) propose a conceptual model, which explains how efforts to individuals networked relationships can improve their effectiveness as a leader and their abilities to produce leadership. Their model consists of three approaches to network-enhancing leadership development, which include individuals' development of social competence, individuals' networks and collective's co-created networks.

Overall, successful leaders need to understand their own skills and develop their self-leadership competence. Next chapter takes a closer look at self-leadership, organizational structures and leadership styles, which foster or hinder self-leadership and unique characteristics of sales personnel's self-leadership.

3. SELF-LEADERSHIP

"Success is not the result of spontaneous combustion.
You must first set yourself on fire."
Fred Shero

Self-leadership has been gaining interest, because modern day business environment is highly volatile and requires flexible orientation towards work (Martela & Jarenko 2017: 18-22). To survive and manage this constant change, organizations adopt new organizational structures, which require more self-directed work behaviour (Renn, Allen & Huning 2010). The challenge is that changes happen so fast that organizations do not have enough time for rigid decision-making, planning and then adopting the plan within organization. Therefore, the focus should shift towards employees' individual skills and knowledge, which should be acknowledged as the most important resources for success. (Martela & Jarenko 2017: 22.) Hauschildt and Konradt (2012) suggest that self-management could be used as a tool to increase organizational flexibility and improve the capability to change. The second reason, why self-leadership gains interest, is technological improvements in artificial intelligence (AI). AI is predicted to replace many current positions and thus, employees are encouraged to improve their skills and plan their career prospects. Third, the modern information systems facilitate exchange of ideas and communication among employees both vertically and horizontally. (Martela & Jarenko 2017: 22-25.) This chapter discusses self-leadership from employee's point of view as well as leader's role in fostering self-leading behaviour and organizational support. In the end of this chapter, special consideration is placed on sales personnel's work and self-leadership.

3.1. Self-leadership

People who cannot lead themselves cannot lead others (Ross 2014). To create better leaders, individuals and organizations can develop their self-leadership abilities (Hambrick 2007). Ross (2014) claims that it is fundamental to understand functioning and properties of personal leadership development process, so that organizations and individuals can

answer to the demand for enhanced self-leadership development. Self-leadership is a process, which requires intrinsic motivation, which leads to increased trust in one's abilities. This motivation is based on the self-assessment of competence to achieve personally set standards of accomplishment. (Deci 1976.) This process fosters self-perceptions of personal competence, which allows people to choose higher personal standards and goals (Bandura 1978).

Ross (2014) claims that self-esteem and self-concept shape an individual's personal values, which form the basis of personal standards. The standards help individuals to choose their personal goals at work and outside of work. Self-leadership can be described as these personal standards, originated from goals, which the individual associates with self-motivating natural rewards (Bandura, 1978). Carmeli, Meitar and Weisberg (2006) suggest that self-motivation and behavior are affected by self-perceptions. Self-perceptions of personal competence and trust in those competences increase, when people overcome challenging tasks or situations (Manz 1986). Neck and Houghton (2006) claim that positive self-perception is related to increased self-confidence, which in turn affects individual self-assessment of one's capability to pursue more challenging goals successfully. Successful experiences are fundamental in self-leadership development, because successful experiences attract more successful experiences (Kuvaas & Dysuik 2009). According to Frayne and Gering (2000), self-leadership is a change technique which enhances self-regulation through three conscious practices: personal goal setting, evaluating behaviour in terms of personal goals, working on oneself and environment to achieve these goals. These practices should be systematically applied in one's life. Significant for self-leadership is that it has a future-oriented direction and thus, aim is to change the current situation (Manz 1968).

Literature suggests that there is a distinction between self-management and self-leadership. Self-management places more focus on self-observation, goal setting, self-rewards and punishments. (Manz 1986; Stewart, Courtright & Manz 2011.) Stewart et al. (2011) claim that self-management lies between external control and self-leadership and it considers how tasks should be done, but not what those tasks are and why those must be done. Whilst, self-leadership is more internally motivated, emphasizes natural rewards

and focuses on pleasant work tasks and characteristics. Self-leadership can be defined as "a comprehensive self-influence perspective that concerns leading oneself toward performance of naturally motivating tasks as well as managing oneself to do work that must be done but is not naturally motivating" (Manz 1986: 599). According to Manz (1986), self-leadership occurs when individuals note a situation, choose to adapt their behaviour to existing standards, monitor and encourage desired behaviour and assess the impact their actions have in the chosen situation.

Hauschildt and Konradt (2012) claim that self-leadership should be considered as a leadership style on its own, because self-leaders identify their own goals, monitor their own performance and decide their own rewards as managers would do. Self-leading employees can make autonomic decisions and plan their own schedules thus, they are more aware of and focused on their core competence. Therefore, they are more prepared to deal with work task related uncertainty. Self-leaders are generally more empowered and empowered employees help organization as whole to deal with uncertainty. (Cordery et al. 2010.) Hauschildt and Konradt (2012) agree and suggest that self-leading employees can more effectively cope with changes in their work environment.

Successful self-leadership can improve job satisfaction and self-efficacy (Neck & Manz 1996). Cordery et al. (2010) suggest that individual level autonomy has a primary contribution to performance. However, they claim that uncertainty related to work tasks influences the direct relationship between autonomy and team performance. Thus, if the team has difficulties in assessing the task and work in uncertain conditions, their effectiveness diminishes. Konradt, Andressen and Ellwart (2009) studied self-leadership and their results suggest that self-leadership has a positive relation with team members' individual task performance. Hauschildt and Konradt (2012) support this view and claim that self-leadership is positively related to individual task proficiency and team member proficiency. Additionally, the results indicate positive correlation between self-leadership, adaptiveness and proactivity. A study of 308 companies found that individual self-control can foster employee productivity improvements (Birdi, Clegg, Patterson, Robinson, Stride, Wall & Wood 2008). Saloranta (2017: 73) suggests that employees are more committed to organizational goals, when they have participated in strategy creation.

Järvinen (2014) highlights the responsibility over self-development and individual career prospects. She claims that it is impossible for supervisors to identify every developmental opportunity and goal, their employees have, and tie these to the organizational goals. Thus, proactive behaviour is required to achieve the developmental goals they have. Reichard and Johnson (2011) agree and suggest that in self-development the individual decides which developmental activities they require, if necessary. Next chapter discusses the organizational structures and leadership styles, which facilitate self-leadership.

3.2. Leader's role in self-leadership

Elloy (2008) claims that organizations are shifting from bureaucratic organizations towards self-leading organizations and self-managing work teams. Currently, there are three trends, which encourage organizations to change towards self-managing organizational structure in which hierarchy is lower and decentralized. Current business environment changes fast and so do customer needs, so organizations require flexible structures, innovation and agility. Furthermore, most businesses operate in knowledge-based industries, where supervisors may not possess enough work-related information to solve problems. (Lee & Edmondson 2017.) Lastly, the characteristics of employees and their expectations have changed as younger generations have entered the work life. Millennials are more likely to prefer lower hierarchy and question decisions based purely on hierarchical position. (Detert & Edmondson 2011.) The challenges, which arise from the business environment and knowledge-based work can be avoided through self-leadership. As it allows employees to handle uncertainty better (Cordery et al. 2010) and develop their skills (Reichard & Johnson 2011; Järvinen 2014).

Martela (2017: 145-147) suggests that certain attributes predict the success of change towards a self-leading organization. These attributes are: organizational attractiveness, the required amount of expertise and the change responsiveness of the organizational environment. Organizational attractiveness includes all the factors that make an organization appealing as an employer (Berthon, Ewing & Hah 2005) and increase internal moti-

vation (Martela 2017: 145). Verma and Ahmad (2016) claim that organizational attractiveness consists of the influence it has on employee's social value, possibilities for career development, compensation and salary, assessment of team members' support and working environment. Attractive organizations can acquire and retain talents (Verma & Ahmad 2016), which can create significant competitive advantage (Chapman, Uggerslev, Carroll, Piasentin & Jones 2005). The required amount of expertise refers to the content of the work tasks, which require creativity or expertise nowadays and are more complex than traditional factory work (Martela 2017: 147). To become empowered, the employees should have tasks, which are challenging enough, so they can get a feeling of success when these goals are met (Lerssi-Uskelin et al. 2011). Moreover, Järvinen (2014) claims that employees should have a say on their work tasks and they should be allowed to work independently, take control over their work and receive more responsibility. Considering decentralizing the decision-making, Aoki (1986) argues that decentralized decision-making is effective, when organizations need to react quickly on changing technologies or environment and if decisions are made from bottom to top. On the other hand, centralized management chains may hinder creativity (Martela 2017: 147) and lead to a less effective utilization of information in the organization (Zábojník 2002). Lee and Edmondson (2017) claim that traditional managerial hierarchy has been proved to be too rigid and resistant to change, and therefore, organizations need new organizational structures, where hierarchy is decentralized. According to Martela (2017: 147), self-leading organization provides more freedom and chances for innovation and creativity as the decision-making is decentralized. Organizational functions and management should support inspiration creativity, and employees should be given a possibility to freely share and create information and ideas to keep them inspired (Lerssi-Uskelin et al. 2011). Lastly, the speed and change responsiveness of the organizational environment affect the suitable management method. In times of slow change and stable business environment, there is time for traditional management, where planning and execution are different processes. Business in volatile environment requires fast changes, which can be made when employees' skills and knowledge are adopted as part of the organizational decision-making. When employees get to participate in decision-making, they are more committed and participate in the change. (Martela & Jarenko 2017: 22.)

The organization is expected to create a strategy, which supports self-leadership and encourages employees to take charge of their work tasks and personal development (Reichard & Johnson 2011; Järvinen 2014). Simultaneously, leaders play a crucial role in adopting this strategy to everyday work life (Järvinen 2014). Syrjänen and Tolonen (2017: 212-216) suggest that though the focus is on employees, the leaders have important roles in self-leading organizations. The leader's position is to be available, listen and encourage interaction between teams and team members. Viitala et al. (2017) agreed that manager's behaviour is crucial for followers' motivation and engagement. Because previous studies have emphasized leader's role in self-leadership, the leadership styles should be considered alongside organizational culture.

Sales personnel's role is of elevated importance in modern day organizations to ensure new customers and maintain relationships to existing customers (Ingram et al. 2005). According to Verbeke, Dietz & Verwaal (2011), leadership behaviours have a significant impact in sales performance. Traditionally, most leadership research among sales personnel has focused on transactional and transformational leadership styles (MacKenzie, Podsakoff & Rich 2001; Humphreys 2002; Shannahan, Bush & Shannahan 2013). Transformational leadership influences employees' attitudes with vision, joined group goals, individual support and intellectual simulation (MacKenzie et al. 2001). Employees are more likely to perform better under transformational leadership, as it shapes the work context through identifying, reinforcing and rewarding desired sales behaviours (Frieder, Wang & Oh 2018). Also, transformational leaders can help their followers reach higher levels of achievement, enable them to exceed their personal goals to organizational welfare, facilitate personal growth through training and encourage employees to overcome old thinking patterns (Bass 1985). Transformational leaders can understand the individual needs of their followers, provide information and resources they need to achieve their goals and give them freedom to work independently (Bass 1985). Tse and Chiu (2014) suggest that under transformational leadership the employees are free to use their individuality in problem solving and foster their individuality in teams, which further improves their self-esteem and self-worth. According to Andressen, Konradt and Neck (2012), self-leadership is autonomous work but does not ignore leaders external support. Yet, self-leader's actions are controlled by internal forces rather than leaders' support

(Manz 1986). Andressen et al. (2012) claim that transformational leadership may be suitable leadership style to foster self-leadership, as it encourages them to be innovative, create own solutions and have skills to question their results. Furthermore, they suggest that both transformational leadership and self-leadership influence motivation and performance. As mentioned before Reichard and Johnson (2011) also believe, that leadership styles affect the willingness to get involved in self-developmental activities. Avolio (2004) suggests that transformational leadership is effective because it motivates and challenges the follower to change.

Inspirational leadership is a sub factor of transformational leadership, which Bass (1985) claims to emphasize shared vision, confidence in team members and creating an energizing environment. Inspirational leadership focuses on increasing motivation, energizing employees and creating a compelling vision, which motivate the employees to want to accomplish extraordinary things (Joshi et al. 2009). Inspirational leaders appeal to values of their followers and can arouse their emotions (Feser & de Vries 2016: 16). Generally, excitement tends to be contagious and emotional contagion methods can be applied to inspirational leadership (Feser 2016: 74, 138). When leaders express genuine interest and enthusiasm towards change or ventures, the followers are likely to adopt these opinions (Cardon 2008). Emotional contagion is a "process in which a person or group influences the emotions or behavior of another person or group through the conscious or unconscious induction of emotion states and behavioral attitudes" (Schoenewolf 1990: 50). Emotional contagion can happen both unconsciously and consciously, when a leader aims to convince and motivate others by utilizing their own enthusiasm as a convincing tool or giving them a reward or a treat. Emotional contagion happens through expressing passion and enthusiasm, painting an exciting vision or telling inspirational stories. In such situation, the leader contaminates followers' emotions with their positive emotions. (Feser 2016: 73-74.) Feser and de Vries (2016: 157) claim that inspirational leadership is the most powerful approach to creating commitment, passion and innovation in organizations. According to them, inspirational leadership suits complex and dynamic situation best and can be effectively used in situations where employees experience stress and pressure. They claim that it may be the only practical leadership approach for large organizations in the complex market of today's business environment. Furthermore, its attributes are

well in line with transformational leadership and thus, it may be suitable to enhance self-leading behaviour as well.

Lerssi-Uskelin et al. (2011) suggest that excitement is also built on social support within the organization. Employees who are proud of their work and their organization are more likely to be enthusiastic and motivated in their work. If an employee has sense of pride and a matching value base with the company, it is often visible to customers as better customer service. So, the impact of inspirational leadership can also be seen from outside of the company. Symbols, rituals and stories are tools to get employees motivated in organizational goals, excited about the culture and committed to the vision of the organization (Shamir, Zakay, Breinin, & Popper, 1998; Kurki & Kurki-Suutarinen 2014). It is efficient in enhancing employees' collective identity through painting a picture of organizations future. If this vision appeals to the followers, they will feel proud and develop a sense of belonging to the group. (Podsakoff et al. 1990.) Employees should be encouraged to get to know their team and other employees of the organization (Lerssi-Uskelin et al. 2011). This fosters social relationships between employees, supports interaction, increases trust and improves commitment. Inspirational leadership works in teams that have such team spirit that employees see the team as "us" (Järvinen 2014).

Bartunek, Rousseau, Rudolph and DePalma (2006) suggest that employees' acceptance towards organizational change is one of the fundamental factors, which predict the success of organizational change. Organizations should consider using inspirational leadership, when they choose to change their organizational culture to self-leading organization, because inspirational leaders facilitate organizational change. They can create and communicate a convincing and exciting vision of the journey ahead, rather than focusing on the negative sides and emphasizing the errors in practices that led to the need to change (Feser 2016: 44-45). Conger and Kanungo (1987) claim that the compelling vision and leader's influence are seen so powerful that people are willing to set aside personal goals to fulfil this vision. Oreg and Berson (2011) highlight leader's influence in organizational change, since leaders' attitudes towards organizational change influence the type of attitudes, which other organizational members should have towards change. Feser and de Vries (2016: 139-140) suggest that employees are willing to change their behaviour when

they understand and identify with the reasons for change. When they see other employees or leaders to work as role models and make the required actions, they will act in the changed manner and see that they have developed their skills and abilities to master the required behaviour. During organizational change employees' may seek certainty from their leaders and thus, be more susceptible towards their leadership behaviour and guidance (Oreg & Berson 2011).

Joshi et al. (2009) conducted a study about inspirational leadership and performance, which involved 171 employees from a Fortune 500 multinational firm. The results show that inspirational leadership is considerably connected with increased team performance. According to Feser and de Vries (2016: 17), inspirational leadership is very goal-oriented and while it aims to energize the employees, it also fosters their commitment to goals and course of action. Bass (1985) agrees that inspirational leadership aims to steer employees to reach organizational goals and adopt them as part of their own work. Inspirational leadership is likely to enhance self-identification between organizations and individuals, which results in elevated trust and commitment (Joshi et al. 2009). Furthermore, inspirational leaders encourage employees to work together in a way that supports organizational culture and values (Järvinen 2014). Kark and Shamir (2002) suggest that team members are more appreciative towards colleagues' contribution and team accomplishments, when their supervisor is an inspirational leader.

Conger and Kanungo (1988) claim that to achieve a low hierarchy structure, managers should choose to empower employees to make decisions and use their task expertise to solve problems. Feser and de Vries (2016: 17-18) suggest that inspirational leadership empowers employees by setting goals, giving responsibility, delegating and focusing on giving and receiving feedback. Lee and Edmondson (2017) suggest that to more towards a less-hierarchical organization managers should give the responsibility over performance monitoring to the employees. Feser and de Vries (2016: 17-18) also emphasize making employees genuinely accountable for their performance, work and decisions, only then inspirational leaders can successfully empower the employees. Inspirational leader is comfortable with delegating tasks and trust the capabilities of their followers. They understand the strengths and weaknesses of their followers, and thus, can delegate the tasks

accordingly. This requires confidence and trust, which are the fundamental characteristics of inspirational leaders. (Feser & de Vries 2016: 75, 159.) Feser (2016: 159) claims that commitment, passion and enthusiasm are meaningless unless inspired employees can make a difference.

The employee is not only a target for management, rather they need to feel like they are in charge and they can influence their own working process, actively develop their work and share their knowledge and skills with other employees. (Lerssi-Uskelin et al. 2011.) Lee and Edmondson (2017) claim that in self-leading organizations all employees should have the right to make decisions, without the possibility that supervisor will overturn the decisions based on their managerial position. Therefore, managers should allow their followers to make decisions. Employees should be encouraged to actively evaluate and improve their skills and knowledge (Lerssi-Uskelin et al. 2011). To do so, the organization must be prepared to give the required courses or training (Reichard & Johnson 2011). Every team tends to form their own "experts", each team member has diverse set of skills and thus, some employees are more skilled in certain tasks than others. The employees, who possess special skills, could be asked to train other in this skill, so that the information and knowledge would be shared within the team, rather than from the supervisor. (Lerssi-Uskelin et al. 2011.)

Next chapter studies sales personnel as a significant employee group for organizational success (Panagopoulos & Ogilvie 2015). They work in an especially complex work environment and their work differs a lot from other organizational roles (Ingram et al. 2005). According to Panagopoulos and Ogilvie (2015), sales personnel are a significant employee group from self-leadership's point of view.

3.3. Sales personnel

This study focuses on sales personnel and their individual characteristics in comparison with other employees. Sales personnel are special since their work differs significantly from other employees of the organization, because they work as boundary spanners and

need to cooperate effectively with employees inside the company and customers and other stakeholders outside the company. The role is conflicting as they represent the company to customers and simultaneously the customers to the company. (Ingram et al. 2005.) Previous studies (Panagopoulos & Ogilvie 2015; Verbeke et al. 2011; Cascio 2000) have acknowledge sales personnel as a significant employee group for self-leadership. Commonly, salespeople are perceived as the most important employees for organizational success (Panagopoulos & Ogilvie 2015). They manage complex product and service portfolios and thus, they are required to have effectiveness and ethical behaviour, because they are held accountable for gaining new customers and securing business deals. Sales personnel need to balance the organizational goals to match the demands of the customers. To answer these needs, sales personnel, need to work effectively with other departments and teams, and thus, good team work skills are required. (Ingram et al. 2005.) Sales leadership has gained attention among scholars due to their diverse and challenging work environment, which is characterized with complex expectations, high volatility and competitiveness (Ingram et al. 2005; Spillecke & Brettel 2013).

3.3.1. Sales leadership

Ingram et al. (2005: 137) define sales leadership as "activities performed by those in a sales organization to influence others to achieve common goals for the collective good of the sales organization and company". They note a difference between sales leadership and sales management. Generally, sales leadership activities consist of creating a compelling vision, identifying values, establishing and inspiring sales personnel to achieve, grow and develop. Change management is also a key activity in sales leadership. On the other hand, sales management is more precise. Sales management follows a preset process in their daily sales management activities, which include recruiting, training, coaching and evaluating sales personnel. The activities are based on established guidelines, which are derived from organizational strategy. However, sales organizations should be shifting towards shared management and a situation, where these activities are performed in by individuals from different organizational levels (Ingram et al. 2005).

Sales managers set sales goals through direction and coaching, motivate sales personnel and align their objectives with the organizational goals (Panagopoulos & Ogilvie 2015).

Verbeke et al. (2011) claim that leadership behaviours are an important influence on sales performance. Sales teams tend to have rather short-term oriented financial goals, such as high sales volumes. Simultaneously, they need to consider customer satisfaction and retention. Their actions should answer to both needs. These complex performance measurements result in requirements for different leadership, in comparison with teams with more straightforward performance metrics. To add to the complex environment, sales organizations face more pressure than other organizational units, since their market is constantly changing. Furthermore, they work in highly competitive environment close to their competitors. Lastly, they are in direct relation with the clients and they are expected to create additional customer value in each interaction. (Ingram et al. 2005.)

As mentioned before, sales personnel's work is defined with high demands for efficient team work. Furthermore, they oversee customer value creation, which is crucial for sales organizations' success. Due to these complex roles knowledge sharing, and training are increasingly important among sales personnel. Because sales personnel have the possibility to gain unique market intelligence and knowledge, they are an important asset in enhancing training and learning within the organization. To utilize the market information, organizations should create a culture and appropriate processes, which facilitate information sharing. (Ingram et al. 2005.)

3.3.2. Self-leadership of sales personnel

Cascio (2000) claim that sales personnel often work remotely and in virtual offices, which keeps them physically distant from the supervisor. Remote location separates the employees from the leader and their team members, which may weaken their motivation, commitment and feeling of belonging. Panagopoulos & Ogilvie (2015) presume that remote work makes sales personnel less susceptible to leadership, coaching and motivation. Sales organization tend to work in complex and fast changing environments, where organizations are required flexibility and adaptation. Verbeke et al. (2011) suggest that self-leadership could be an alternative way to enhance the engagement to leadership behaviours and allow salespeople to strive and keep up with the changing and ambiguous environment. In regard of sales performance, self-management in general helps to manage uncertainty (Cordery et al. 2010; Hauschildt & Konradt 2012), improve efficiency and self-

efficacy (Fayne & Gering 2000), as well as individual and team performance (Hauschildt & Konradt 2012).

Panagopoulos and Ogilvie (2015) as well as Houghton and Jinkerson (2007) suggest that self-leadership can be effective tool for sales personnel self-management. Self-leadership consists of *positive self-talk*, *mental imagery* and *evaluation of dysfunctional beliefs and assumptions*. These constructive thought strategies help salespeople to create the self-influence they need for accomplishing task-related goals and improve individual sales performance. *Self-talk* refers to the way people talk to themselves. The attitude they choose to take in their inner discussions either helps them to enhance more optimistic and positive self-dialogue or increase negative and pessimistic thoughts. (Houghton & Jinkerson 2007). Panagopoulous and Ogilvie (2015) claim that people who engage in positive self-talk are more skilled in self-leadership and foster their positive thought patterns. Sales personnel, who apply *mental imagery* in their work imagine the goal they want to reach before they start the task. So, they are aware of the skills they need to obtain that goal and they have a clear plan to reach that goal. (Houghton, Neck & Manz 2003.) *Evaluation of dysfunctional beliefs and assumptions* refers to actively promoting positive thought processes and understanding the negative or dysfunctional beliefs (Neck & Manz 1992). Panagopoulous and Ogilvie (2015) give an example of a salesperson, who has an unsuccessful call with a difficult customer. If they start questioning their skills and decide that the call was unsuccessful because of their behaviour, they are more likely to foster negative thoughts and even give up.

Before the discussion moves to methodological choices, the main points of the previous research are summarized. Training and development tend to be very locally adapted practices in MNCs (Ferner et al. 2011). Thus, these activities are modified to match the local needs. The Case Company is going through an organizational change, where they shift towards a more self-leading and agile organization. As Lee and Edmondson (2017) suggest decentralizing hierarchy allows organizations to become more agile and respond quicker to changes in the market. Furthermore, it allows organizations to utilize their personnel's knowledge better. Reichard and Johnson (2011) agreed that individual compe-

tence is significant when organizations want to change towards a self-developing organization. They suggested that managers' roles will change during such process, and they should become a source of empowerment, while the freedom to make decisions and performance monitoring should be delegated to the employees. Inspirational leadership may answer to the need for decentralization and self-development, as it can enhance self-leading behaviour and facilitate the change towards a more self-leading organization, because it allows employees to solve problems, monitor their own performance (Cordery et al. 2010), and develop their skills (Reichard & Johnson 2011). Furthermore, it allows them to participate in decision making (Lee & Edmondson 2017), which fosters commitment to changes (Conger & Kanungo 1987) and organizational goals (Järvinen 2014). Lastly, it encourages employees to share knowledge, cooperate and create networks (Järvinen 2014), which can facilitate their self-leadership. Inspirational leaders can create a compelling vision and make employees enthusiastic about changes. According to Verbeke et al. (2011) leadership behaviours have a significant impact in sales performance. Their work is defined with high demands for flexibility, team work and performance monitoring. Thus, to enhance their performance, their supervisors need to apply suitable leadership behaviours on them. Inspirational leadership influences employee's motivation and commitment through inspiring vision and goal-setting. Furthermore, it encourages employees to take responsibility and work together as a team. (Feser 2016; Feser & de Vries 2016.) Next chapter discusses the methodological choices, which were used to study the issues. Furthermore, the situation at the Case Company and data sample are presented in detail in the next chapter.

4. METHODOLOGY

This chapter consists of the description of methodological choices of the study. The chapter will cover research approach, strategy and data collection. Furthermore, the case company and data sample are introduced in more detail. Last part of the chapter discusses reliability and validity of the study and the ethics of research.

4.1. Research purpose, approach and strategy

Selecting the research purpose and objectives is the initial stage of conducting the research. Research purpose and objectives guide the selection of the suitable research approach and methods. The purpose can be either exploratory, descriptive or explanatory. Exploratory study aims to describe what is happening. Descriptive research aims to portray and accurate profile of events or persons. Explanatory studies aim to establish causal relationships between studied phenomena. However, the purpose of the study can be a mix of these three types. (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill 2009: 139-140.) The purpose of this study is an exploratory study. It aims to explain the current situation and development requirements for organizational roles and leadership development methods. Also, what is the result of these actions – why such actions should be taken.

Next step is to choose appropriate research approach to the studied phenomena. Research approach refers to the utilization of existing literature in academic research. The most commonly used methods are deductive and inductive research approach. Deductive research approach refers to an approach, where hypotheses are derived from existing literature and then tested. In the contrary, in inductive approach the theory is derived from the data, which is collected and analysed before theory formulation. (Saunders et al. 2009: 124-127.) However, research process is rarely so straightforward. (Tuomi & Sarajärvi 2017). The mix of these two approaches is called abductive approach. There the researcher utilizes chooses the research approach to match the current state of the research and may shift between theory driven and data driven approaches. The approach of this study is abductive, but at some points of the analysis and abductive research approach was also used.

The research data is qualitative, since the aim is to describe and explain the current phenomenon. Qualitative data is non-numeric and results from non-standardized collection methods, like non-structured interviews and narratives. (Saunders et al. 2009: 480-482.) The choice of using qualitative data is based on the nature of the researched phenomenon. The study aims to increase understanding of the subject and understand the meanings. Qualitative research focuses on researching one or maximum two cases. Koskinen, Alasuutari and Peltonen (2005: 46) claim that it is not a weakness of the study but allows researcher to focus on that case and gain a deeper understanding of the phenomenon. They emphasize that the description needs to be closely linked to scientific research and thus, a solution to a single case can be well justified and meaningful. Furthermore, researcher can choose to use multiple research methods simultaneously to gain a more versatile understanding about the studied community or workplace.

4.2. Data collection

Interviews were chosen to be the main data collection method. There are three types of interviews, which differ in terms of formality and structure. The interviews can be conducted as structured interviews, semi-structured interviews or unstructured interviews (Sauders et al. 2009: 320-321). Semi-structured interviews were chosen for this study, as it is likely that semi-structural interviews allow the interviewer to obtain more information and more detailed answers as interviewees can build their answer and explain the answer better. They may even come up with their own questions. (Koskinen et al. 2005: 104.) Furthermore, semi-structured interviews allow explanation and description of the phenomena and situation, more so than defined answers (Sauders et al. 2009: 320-321).

Due to the research topic semi-structured thematic interviews appeared to be the most suitable research method. In such interviews the interviewees are asked to discuss themes related to the research topic. Semi-structured theme interviews are based on pre-selected themes and follow up questions (Tuomi & Sarajärvi 2017). Methodologically semi-structured interviews highlight people's interpretations of certain events, given meanings and

how these meanings are created in interactions (Hirsjärvi & Hurme 2001: 48). As the interview is semi-structured, the interviewer has a chance to change the order and wording of the questions to suit discussion. Furthermore, they can choose to ask extra questions if necessary. (Tuomi & Sarajärvi 2017; Koskinen et al. 2005: 104.)

The selection criteria for interviewees was based on their position within the company. The research was conducted on the lower organizational hierarchy level, which are the customer service and sales. They represented employees with long and shorter-term tenures and were of different age. The participants were selected from a local office, which is part of the Finnish organization. Finnish organization is a part of the global brand of the Case Company. Convenience sampling was the primary sampling technique. So, the choice was based on accessibility of interviewees and interviewer's personal judgement. (Saunders et al. 2009: 241). Interviewer's personal judgement was based on elite sampling, which refers to a selection method, where the interviewer chooses to interview employees, who are expected to give most valid information about the studied phenomena (Tuomi & Sarajärvi 2017). The selection was based on their openness, their self-expression abilities and orientation towards their work. Supervisors were informed about the interviews, but they did not influence the selection process or were not aware of who the informants were. All informants were first contacted in Skype and asked for preliminary interest towards participating in the interviews. If they showed interest towards the interviews, they received the interview questions and further information about the study and interviews via email.

The research purpose, questions and theoretical background of the study were composed in during autumn 2018 and spring 2019. The interviews were prepared in June 2019 and then conducted in September 2019. The interviews were conducted during two weeks at the Case Company's premises.

4.2.1. Data sample and overview of the case company

The study is focused on a multinational company, which works in multiple countries, mostly focusing on European and Nordic markets. The analysis will be considering the level of global integration or local adaptation between local subsidary and global HQ.

The subsidiary is in Finland and the HQ is located in Sweden. To conduct the study and examine the approaches to integration, there will be a comparison between the two departments. The company and its employees are introduced anonymously by the request of the managers.

Subsidiary A was founded in Finland in the 1910s and merged as a part of its Swedish parent company in the early '00s. In the beginning of 2017 the companies joined their brands and Subsidiary A moved under the brand portfolio of the parent company. Despite the global pressure and being a part of a multinational company, it works locally and aims to answer to the local demand. In terms of management, the strategic decisions of the parent company are affecting their decisions, but they have the freedom to adopt the strategic plans to suit local markets. The MNC has launched an integrated organizational culture, which aims to unify the employees from all the subsidiaries and to consider themselves firstly be employees of the company.

Subsidiary A has recently focused a lot on decentralizing management and encouraging their employees' self-leadership behaviour. Self-leadership has gained increasingly more interest during the past few years and thus, the current organizational strategy highlights the importance of self-management and customer mind-set combined with understanding of business. The aim of self-leadership is to improve information flow, prevent information bottle necks, develop individual skill sets and maintain their value for the organization. Furthermore, self-leadership helps employees to deal with uncertainty related to the changing business environment and increase of AI and robotics.

Self-leadership is fostered through training. Each team has their training and development days, which have focused a widely on self-leadership during the past few years. Training days consist of short introduction to the topic and workshops, where teams have discussed about self-leadership and how it can be applied to their current work position and everyday life. Furthermore, self-leadership is adopted as a part of each employee's developmental plans. The employees have both long and short-term development goals, which are monitored several times a year and altered if necessary. Long-term development consists of career plans, core competences and developmental need. The tools for long-term

self-development are training, coaching and work circulation. Short-term goals consist of more concrete actions, such as sales and the number of customer interactions. However, self-leadership related themes are increasingly added to short-term goals. For example, position and responsibility taking in teams or active participation in pilot experiments or training

4.2.2. Structure of the interviews

The data gathering is based on semi-structured interviews. The interviews were conducted with eight informants from the Case Company's domestic subsidiary. Informants represents sales personnel within the company and share similar job descriptions. Due to the anonymity considerations, they are not introduced in detail. The interviews were conducted in September 2019 face to face. All interviews were conducted in one to one discussion between the informant and interviewer, within the company premises and during the informants work day. All interviews were planned with the interviewee and their supervisor was not involved in the process. This was to ensure confidential and trusting atmosphere at the interviews. The interviews were 41 to 55 minutes long, thus the mean length was 49 minutes. The interviews were recorded, and some notes were taken during interviews.

Each interview began with an introduction to the research purpose and the researcher had a chance to introduce herself. Interviewees were asked a permission to record the interview and they were explained that all data is confidential, and answers are anonymous. Furthermore, a single informant cannot be identified from the final work. They were explained that the data will be used only in this research and data will be destroyed afterwards. Tuomi and Sarajärvi (2017) recommend giving the interviewees the questions or themes of the interview beforehand to gain as much information as possible. So, the participants had received the interview questions beforehand. Tuomi and Sarajärvi (2017) also note that interviewees may understand the themes differently than the interviewer meant. Thus, interviewees were asked to indicate if there were some clarity issues with the questions or if the questions needed to be explained to avoid possible misunderstandings. Furthermore, they were given the opportunity to interrupt and ask, if some questions

needed to be further explained. The interviewees were asked to introduce themselves and tell about their education and career in the company.

All initial interview questions are presented in Appendix 1. The questions were the main core of the semi-structured interviews. The wording and order of the questions may have varied depending on the discussion in each interview. Furthermore, some additional questions were asked depending on the direction to which the interview was heading. The core questions regarded management and self-leadership. The questions were first tested in two test interviews to examine the answers they result in and to ensure that those questions are understandable and accurate. The test informants suggested that the questions are easy to comprehend and to answer. However, some wordings were changed to improve comprehensiveness.

The interviews were conducted in Finnish, which is the native language of the interviewees and the researcher. Native language helps to overcome barriers related to understanding questions and answers. Furthermore, it may create richer answers than non-native language. Lastly, it may facilitate communication and is not influenced by confidence to speak foreign language. Furthermore, it allows the researcher to use terminology, which is applied in everyday discussion within the company. Answers quoted in this study are translated to English.

4.3. Data analysis

Verbatim transcripts were written right after each interview. The transcripts produced 85 pages of data with an average amount of 10,62 pages per interview (font Times New Roman, Line spacing 1.0). To begin the analysis, all verbatim transcripts were read through multiple times to gain better understanding and overall impression about the data. Some notes were taken during the preparation process to create a preliminary form for the data. Some common themes were discovered from the data.

Saunders et al. (2009: 490-491) propose three techniques for organization of the research data. The researcher can choose to use just one or combine the techniques. Qualitative research generally produces extensive data, which can be summarized, categorized or structured to reconstruct into a comprehensive form. Tuomi and Sarajärvi (2017) suggest that the data analysis should begin with an initial categorization of the data. For example, based on sex or age of the interviewees. After such preliminary categorization the data should be searched for common themes and perceptions, which describe these themes (Tuomi & Sarajärvi 2017). Abductive analysis approach allows new issues to be found from empirical findings and then, theoretical background and empirical findings can be combined (Tuomi & Sarajärvi 2013: 117). Saunders et al. (2009: 516) call for objective approach to data analysis, since the researcher interprets all data in qualitative studies. After categorization and dissection, the analysis moves on to reassembling phase, where all data forms a model, which answers to the research objective and questions and shows the contribution to the literature about the studied phenomenon (Boeijie 2010: 76).

In this study the analysis process was as follows. The preliminary categorization of the data was based on the length of tenure of informants. The categories were tenure of 5 years or less and longer tenures. The preliminary categorization did not influence the results of the study but helped the researcher to get a comprehensive image of the collected data. Next, the data was read through and similar interview quotes were colour coded to the transcripts. The interview quotes related to themes were collected together into preliminary categories and translated to English. To reconstruct the data into an understandable form, the data was categorized as Saunders et al. (2009: 490) suggest. To categorize the data, each translated quote was written on separate notepad and reorganized again to identify themes related to organizational roles and its development. So, the data was split on notepads and spread across table. Next, notes carrying similar themes were gathered next to each other. Thus, the distance between groups marks their difference. Koskinen et al. (2005: 243) suggest this method is a visual version of grounded theory. The relevant themes for this study were found by reviewing the existing literature and chosen research framework. The themes, which were discovered followed the proposals from literature review, but also some new issues were discovered.

4.4. Reliability and validity

Tuomi and Sarajärvi (2017) describe qualitative research as a two-way street. On the one hand, the researcher needs to understand their informants and on the other hand, the reader must understand the report. They claim that reliability and validity considerations improve the quality of the research and allow the reader to better understand the research process. Furthermore, when reliability and validity concerns are thought beforehand, it may improve the understanding between interviewees and the researcher. Validity and reliability concerns form the base of research project quality (Saunders et al. 2007). Generally, these terms are associated with quantitative research but are applicable to evaluation of qualitative research as well (Hirsjärvi, Remes & Sajavaara 2004: 216). Reliability and validity are tools to enhance the credibility of the study and to avoid mistakes, which is the aim of most research (Koskinen et al. 2005: 253).

Tuomi and Sarajärvi (2017) claim that researchers should consider the objectivity of the study. Objectivity refers to a situation where researcher's gender, age, citizenship, occupation or similar attribute influences the way the researcher listens and understands the interviewees. They note that in qualitative research this is inevitable to some extent, since the researcher is both creator of the research frame and analysist. In this study, it is important to understand that the researcher has also been an employee within the case company. This may cause some biases towards the analysis.

Validity means that the results answer to the initial research question proposed (Tuomi & Saarijärvi 2013: 136). Furthermore, it refers to whether the research question, sub-questions and chosen research methodology are suitable to describe the phenomena under investigation. Validity is generally examined from two perspectives, internally and externally. Internal validity refers to the consistency and internal logic of the study. External validity investigates whether the interpretations can be generalized and applied to other cases as well outside the study. (Koskinen et al. 2005, 254.) According to Eskola and Suoranta (1998: 214), the results are considered valid, if internal and external interpretations are not conflictive. Basically, the research needs to show that their findings are not

based on untrustworthy or mistaken interpretations of the interviews, which are made under unordinary circumstances (Koskinen et al. 2005: 254). During the interviews the informants were asked to clarify, if they said something the interviewer could not quite understand or connect to the asked question. In the analysis stage the answers were compared with other answers, to see if they were coherent regarding organizational procedures.

Transparency is crucial in interpretation phase, as readers should receive a clear explanation, how given interpretations were excluded from the data. All in all, transparency should be a key consideration in all research. Validity of the transparency can be strengthened by linking interpretations and theoretical background as well as describing the process of interpretation as clear as possible. (Tuomi & Sarajärvi 2017.) To improve the transparency of this study, the research process and data analysis were described in detail. Furthermore, the finding and results are explained in a manner that allows the reader to understand how the conclusions were drawn from the data. For example, using tables, which linked the empirical findings to the existing literature.

Tuomi and Saarijärvi (2013: 136) describe reliability in terms of repetitiveness of the results. Reliability describes the extent to which the results are consistent and can be re-utilized for similar purpose (Malhotra & Birks 2007: 313). Furthermore, it helps to evaluate trustworthiness and transferability of the results (Hirsjärvi et al. 2005: 216-217). According to Hirsjärvi et al. (2005: 216-217), 58 consistent results indicate that the study is reliable. It includes the consistency of collection techniques, research methods and analysis. If other researchers replicate the study by using similar methods and measurements and gain similar results as the original study, the study has a high degree of reliability. In qualitative research, reliability refers to transparency of the theory and research process, data analysis and how the conclusions are drawn (Saunders et al. 2009). Koskinen et al. (2005: 258-259) claims, that the demand for repeatability of the observations means that the researcher needs to give enough information to the readers so, they can evaluate the observation process and how the observations have been interpreted. To answer to this demand, there needs to be a systematic description about the research process. The de-

scription should include a detailed report about interviews, since that allows other research to at least partially regenerate the research. Furthermore, there should be an explanation on how the material has been verified and which methods were used. Lastly, there should be a description about factors related to the researcher or the organization, which may influence the outcomes of the research. This study was conducted under rather uncommon circumstances, since the company started a major structural transformation within the division at hand. This was not known beforehand, so the study was not prepared to it. The changes were not likely to influence directly to the outcomes of the study. However, they may have affected the attitudes and answers of the interviewees. To overcome possible issues, it was stated clearly that the study or researcher did not have any say in the organizational changes and that the study was not involved in this change.

Lincoln and Guba (1985) claim that reliability and validity in qualitative research can be assessed through four perspectives: credibility, transferability, dependability and auditability. These are alternative terms for internal validity, external validity, reliability and neutrality (Koskinen et al. 2005: 257). Credibility refers to use of multiple data collection methods, utilizing peer review throughout the research process and actively identifying deviant cases. Transferability is related to clear description of the research methods and results, which allow the reader to transfer the description to match other similar cases. Dependability is related to auditability refers to clear documentation of the research so that other researchers can assess it. (Koskinen et al. 2005: 257.)

The chosen data collection method was semi structured interviews, since the sample consisted of different people and the research aim was to study their opinions and attitudes. Therefore, semi structured interviews seemed like the most suitable method, as it allows some changes in the structure of the interviews depending on the ongoing discussion. The sample included people from different teams with a various length of employment at the case company, so the sample would represent the division better and increase the transferability. The researcher was familiar with all the informants beforehand, which may have led the informants to try please the interviewer. However, Koskinen et al. (2005: 54-56) claim that if the interviewer knows the interviewees from beforehand, it is likely they will trust the interviewer more than a stranger. Especially in studying difficult situations

this may prove useful, since people tend to side with alike people in conflict situations. Thus, it is more likely that the outcome of acquaintance was rather positive and led to a more trusting and open discussion in the interviews.

4.5. Ethics of research

There are always some ethical considerations related to conducting research, the more unstructured the data collection is the more research ethics should be considered. The study may harm its target in psychological or social way and it may place the company and interviewees at a disadvantage. (Tuomi & Sarajärvi 2017.) These ethical questions should be kept in mind throughout the research process. The researcher has a moral responsibility to conduct the study and present the results to the research questions in an honest and accurate manner (Reynolds 1987). Saunders et al. (2009) suggest that the strengths and weaknesses of chosen research methods and results need to be clearly explained to avoid misleading the reader.

The informants have a right to hide their thoughts from the researcher and choose which opinion they want published. Thus, they should be informed who the researcher is, and which quotes will be used in the final work. (Koskinen et al. 2005: 280.) The informants of this study were fully aware that the interviewer was conducting a research and no personal or overheard discussions between employees were utilized in this study. Furthermore, they had a chance to see the report before publishing, if they want to make any corrections or suggestions. Also, they were told that they have the right to withdraw their answers from the study at any point. The interviewees should not experience any harm, embarrassment or any other material disadvantage (Saunders et al. 2009: 160). The researcher has an institutional position in interviews and thus, harming or mistreating the informant has an even severe impact than in everyday life (Tuomi & Sarajärvi 2017). The power that researcher has in the interview situation can also be shown through wording and positioning of the questions and so, the researcher has the possibility to influence and guide the answers through positioning and wording of the questions. This may lead to the reliability of the study to be questioned, as the researcher is able to influence the answers.

(Saunders et al. 2009: 194-195.) Such challenges are considered in preparation for the interviews. To avoid such issues, the questions were carefully composed and tested in test interviews before the actual interviews.

The privacy and confidentiality of the participants was highly valued in this study and thus, they were ensured that all answers and data are handled with care and confidentially. The researcher contacted potential informants with a private message and introduced the research topic and asked for their willingness to participate. Their team leaders were not informed about the employees, who decided to participate in the interviews. All answers were recorded anonymously, and the participants cannot be identified from the answers. Furthermore, the data was organized so, that no participant could not be identified from the data. Their answers were not given to other interviewees even though they would have asked for them. The participants have a right to expect responsibility from the researcher. The researcher needs to keep their promises and make sure that the integrity of the study is not compromised at any point. (Reynolds 1987; TENK 2012.) All data was carefully maintained so that no outsider could not see or hear it, after the data was analysed, all collected data was destroyed. Furthermore, all discussions and opinions were private and not discussed with other people. Lastly, the informants had a chance to see the report as promised. All collected data was destroyed after the analysis.

The participants of the study should not be misled, and they should receive full information about the purpose of the study (Reynolds 1987; TENK 2012; Tuomi & Sarajärvi 2017). Thus, they were given the topics and interview questions prior to the interview. The purpose of the study was introduced before the interview along with the researcher. Furthermore, they were given the opportunity to withdraw from the study at any time and decline to answer any questions they feel uncomfortable about. Lastly, they were given the opportunity to decline the use of their answers also after the interviews in case they would change their mind.

Saunders et al. (2009: 188) and Koskinen et al. (2005: 284) note that the employees and case companies can ask to stay anonymous in the research. This issue was discussed with the case company and they requested to stay anonymous in this study. Thus, the case

company description is purposefully rather undetailed. Yet, the characteristics of the Case Company and facts related to their current situation, which are important for the validity and results of this study are stated in the description.

5. FINDINGS

This chapter includes detailed description and analysis of the collected interview data. The structure of this chapter is aligned with the research questions so that the first part of this chapter analyzes the information data from the perspective of sales personnel' and team leaders' perceived roles and how those roles are changing when the organization decides to become self-leading. Latter part of the chapter focuses on the organizational factors, which facilitate self-leadership. The analysis is based on the themes, which arise from the reviewed literature. Some new issues are also introduced.

5.1. Changing roles of sales personnel towards self-leadership

According to the finding of the interviews, sales personnel's role consists of three features, which describe every employee's role, but the extent to which these features are present depends on the employee's skills and personality traits. These features are confidant, expert and team player. As the organization becomes more self-leading the organizational roles are bound to change, so the informants gave suggestions for self-leadership related success factors for these features. When employees can effectively perform in these features and their role, it leads to an enhanced self-leadership. The features and success factors are presented in Figure 2 below.

Features of sales personnel's role	How to succeed in this role?
Confidant	Understanding towards other people's skills and limits Willingness to take responsibility and understanding over own activities which influence trust Responsibility over own skills and performance Handling the pressure related to responsibility and expectations Responsibility over performance monitoring
Expert	Understanding of one's skills and their limits Ability to manage knowledge Unofficial expert position Shared leadership

Team player	Ability to understand how own actions and personality can influence the atmosphere Active approach to peer-to-peer sparring Committed to the team Celebrate success

Figure 2 Features of sales personnel's role

Figure 2 describes the features, which construct the sales personnel's role in their daily work. The features of their role are derived from the interview data and literature review. The informants described their role, work tasks and demands with multiple success factors, which were reconstructed to features, which are confidant, team player and expert.

Confidant

The first feature in their role is a *confidant*. That involves taking responsibility over their work, the ability to make decisions, willingness to show their team leader can trust them and understanding towards decision-making. The informants claimed that there is trust towards them, they just need to show willingness to receive it and prove that they can be trusted to manage their own performance and knowledge.

> *"In my opinion, self-leadership requires a certain amount of trust you have to gain before you are can carry out self-leadership. - - Team leader should trust the employee. I think there exists trust and I just have to show that I'm worthy of that trust."* Employee 1

They also noted that these days they have more freedom to make decisions. Being self-leading means taking responsibility over one's actions. Thus, self-leading employees should be trusted to make their own decisions at work and to perform as good as they can without leader's input. The informants claimed that earlier their decision-making was restricted and always had to ask their team leader's permission to make the decisions.

> *"I bet we have more responsibility than before, because we need many more skills and have more tasks. Before everything was so strict. Now we can use*

common sense and adapt to the situation. Of course, some do not dare to use it, because they are stuck to the old rules. I also dare to make decisions in customer's situation without asking permissions. Before we had to have permissions to do everything, so in that matter we have improved a lot." Employee 5

However, these days employees have more freedom in their decision-making and are encouraged to come up with their own solutions. Simultaneously, as they gained more freedom they needed to take more responsibility over their work and targets.

"We have more responsibility than before, since our goals are set so high. It is what is expected from us. On the other hand, we have more power over our decisions and we need no permissions. We have more responsibilities but also liberties." Employee 6

"You have the responsibility to know the products, and to know how you make the orders. You have the responsibility to know, where to find information, when you do not know something. - - Self-leadership is taking responsibility over your skills." Employee 7

Some employees felt like the responsibility is handed down on the employees, who work in the first line among customers. Obviously, when the company decides to focus on self-leadership, they place more responsibility and freedom on their employees. However, to the employee it may seem like they are responsible for everything. The teams are increasingly in charge of their performance and information flow, additionally, to their current job, they need to maintain knowledge, seek for information and take care of their skills.

"It seems like the team leaders, supervisors and their managers take less responsibility. More and more responsibility is placed on our shoulders. I know it is our responsibility to bring money in the business and make sure we do not lose any customers. But, I think they do not realise how much we have on our plate. No one need to know so many things in this company as the first

line does. We have to close sales, make orders, deliver services and fix all
problems related to them." Employee 7

Moreover, the informants claimed, they would be willing to take a more self-leading approach to goal-setting and performance monitoring. They suggested that self-leadership is responsibility over completing work tasks and noticing if the goals are too low from an individual's point of view. Then they can individually set higher standards for their performance. However, the basis of goal-setting needs to come from the supervisors to team leaders and then from them to employees, as team leaders are likely to have more understanding about organizational goals and more tools and data to set appropriate goals.

"Sometimes the targets seem too low for me, so of course I can independently
decide a higher goal for me. - - So basically, it is making your own decisions."
Employee 3

Also, the informants proposed that the team leaders would not need to monitor their performance as closely and they could trust the employees to do that themselves. They agreed that the leaders need to stay updated on their performance, but the employees could do most of the monitoring themselves, since they have the tools to do it.

"We have the tools to follow our own and team's results. I use it, I follow my
own. It works for me and my team leader would not need to send the results,
they could trust that we check them ourselves." Employee 6

In general, the interviewees suggested that the team leaders should trust the employees even better to enhance self-leading behaviour. On the other hand, they understood their own role in the trust building process and suggested that to develop and improve there should be trust among sales personnel and team leaders.

"I call for the atmosphere of trust and openness in teams and the department
so, we can develop and work together." Employee 8

In the current situation, the existing strengths of this feature are the freedom and willingness to take responsibility, and the understanding related to the limitations of others' skills, capabilities and resources. The developmental areas related to their role are managing knowledge, and the amount of responsibilities they face.

Expert

The second feature, of which the sales personnel's role consists, is to be an *expert* in their job. To succeed, improve and stay up to date with information related to their work, they need to be experts in their position. The informants agreed that knowledge management is crucial to their role, since they oversee a variety of tasks and they need to stay updated on any change in the services, sales systems or the business environment. They even suggested that managing information is one of the greatest challenges to self-leadership in their role.

> *"No one need to know so many things in this company as the first line does. We have to close sales, make orders, deliver services and fix all problems related to them."* Employee 7

Sales personnel are at a special position in the company, and the informants claimed that to succeed in their work, they need a massive amount of information about the company, its products and market. Furthermore, their work is directly affected by the actions of competing companies, and thus, they need to stay updated also about competitors' actions on the market. Therefore, knowledge sharing is a significant success factor and they need to act proactively and have a self-leading attitude to stay updated about changes in the market.

> *"It is a challenge if you do not know where to find information and guidelines and especially, if you do not know how to search for it yourself. I think that is the greatest challenge in this job."* Employee 5

As their role is rather complex and has a great impact in the organizational goals, they suggested that it is significant to recognize when they need to ask for help. They agreed that understanding one's skills and limits is a part of being self-leading.

> *"You always find someone who can help you and if they cannot, they will point you towards the right person."* Employee 7

They acknowledged, that generally their first source of information is their closest colleagues, when they needed information regarding changes in their daily work or product portfolio. Also, they explained that they got help from their colleagues in a mutual chat room, if they face a challenge they cannot overcome by themselves.

> *"I have to say, the chat room between colleagues is the place where we discuss most the changes in products and such."* Employee 6

The informants appeared to rely on their team and colleagues in several of the challenges they face, and when they needed to acquire new information or solve problems. In general, the informants encouraged people to ask for advice if it is needed, but they also pointed out that sales personnel are under a lot of time pressure in their work, and the time they used to help other is taken out of their own working time.

> *"We have many employees in our department who cannot solve system or product related problems on their own. So, it demands a lot from other sales personnel and takes their time. Of course, no one minds helping and we do it with pleasure, but it takes time. Then customers wait longer, get slower service and we have less sales opportunities, because we have less time for customers."* Employee 7

One solution the interviewed employees proposed to keep the department up to date with information was sparring. Furthermore, they agreed that effective knowledge sharing could be facilitated if team leaders could spend their time focusing on the employees, who have difficulties with managing information themselves and who are less skilled in self-

leadership. Thus, the more self-leading sales personnel could focus on their work and spend less time advising others.

> *"Team leaders could spar and advice those, who have difficulties in searching and finding information. Because most of us know and find and want (information). Or would give guidance on where you could find the information, rather than giving the straight answers."* Employee 5

The informants recognized that the team leader have limited resources as well and therefore, they may not have the time to constantly help the employees either. Considering the limited resources, they suggested that there could be a person in the department, who devotes their time to help others. Then the one, who needs help, gets help, but without taking time from other workers.

> *"I think there should be one person in our department, whose work time is devoted to helping others. I think it is great, if the new improvement comes, that we have the sensei, then one person is available to help you."* Employee 7

Another suggestion they made was using their team's unofficial experts to tutor others and share their knowledge. The informants had been working in the company for several years and thus, they had formed their own informal networks, where they can get help and gain information. Many informants agreed, that there are unofficial expert roles in each team, which form around individual skills and interests. Some experts are familiar with the sales systems, some master campaigns and others the details of product and service portfolios.

> *"We have experts in our team, which is great, since I do not know so much about many things. Like sports, I know who to ask about it. We have accidentally divided the responsibilities, so some know more about this and other about that. Then you always know with whom to spar if you get a case like that"* Employee 3

"Our team's strength was that we had experts of different fields. It was a great advantage and you could always find help." Employee 5

To improve the basic knowledge and competence, the informants stated that they would be willing to take more responsibility over team meetings. The employees suggested that they may benefit from peer-to-peer sparring and development more than official training sessions, which are led by the team leaders. They claimed that they could take a greater part in planning the meetings so, that they could make that time to better match their individual needs.

"I would prefer if we held all the meetings and decided the content of those meetings. Of course, some topics are mandatory to go through. Sure, let us do that. But so, we would be able to develop them more." Employee 1

As there are unofficial experts in each team and the interviewees found peer-to-peer learning to be more effective, the informants were asked how they would perceive team meetings, where team's experts would share their information and have small training sessions. Overall the answers suggest that such arrangement could benefit the workers, increase basic knowledge and diminish knowledge and skills related obstacles to self-leadership.

"Of course, especially if one person can help ten people, when same questions are asked over and over again, then it is worth it to spend time to it and utilize their skills." Employee 7

"I suppose it could, since most of us have been here for a long time and turnover in fixed contract workers is very low. So of course, because they have the silent knowledge." Employee 5

The informants noted, that employees are more familiar with the actual work tasks than team leaders and thus, able to give more accurate and concrete solutions. All in all, the

informants appreciated the knowledge their colleagues possess and were willing to learn from each other.

> *"I think it could benefit us to a certain level and we have tried it. I think it would help, because employees know always better and more accurately and maybe even give a concrete example. Contrary to team leader, who maybe know things from listening to our phone calls. Employees know better the concrete cases we meet in our daily work and when they explain how they do it, we benefit more than from power point slides."* Employee 2

To successfully execute the role of an expert, they need to keep developing their skills and knowledge, they need to know when their skills are not enough, and they need guidance and they need to manage information and knowledge. Currently, the informants were aware of their skills and were not afraid to ask help if necessary. There is room for improvement in knowledge management, since they felt overwhelmed by the amount of information they receive. This could be improved by clarifying the channels where to find information, through sparring and developmental support roles.

Team player

The third feature in their role is to act as *team players*. The informants agreed that overall atmosphere at work influences their performance and motivation. They claimed that the atmosphere has improved during the past few years. Looking back, they found the atmosphere unfriendly and almost toxic. They suggested, that new employees were not always welcome and sometimes there were conflicts between old and new employees.

> *"I remember my first time at the coffee table during the break, I was chatting with another employee that work is a bit sticky, only certain type of customers and I have not had any sales opportunities. Then suddenly someone next to me snapped angrily "It is like that every day for us!" I was like who are you, you could have at least introduced yourself first."* Employee 2

As the company becomes more self-leading and sales personnel are expected to take more responsibility, the informants claimed they need to utilize their personal relationships and informal networks to gain information, enhance skills and strengthen cooperation. The informants reflected, what kind of changes there had been in the overall atmosphere and team spirit lately. Several of them agreed that the atmosphere has improved during the past few years and cooperation between teams with similar tasks has improved.

> *"Especially now it is very good, though we have had our problems during the years. Overall everyone in the department work well together. Especially within teams the relationships are very close, but also across teams."* Employee 7

All employees suggested that their team spirit is rather good, and they feel committed to their team. The informants claimed that the support from their colleagues encourages them to try and succeed with sales and difficult situations with the customers. Moreover, it allows them to learn from the sales pitches the colleagues use and have proven useful. Also, they note that the colleagues can motivate you better than team leaders. The commitment and feeling of belonging allow them to work together and thus, become more self-leading as teams and individuals.

> *"Especially now it is very good, though we have had our problems during the years. Overall everyone in the department work well together. Especially within teams the relationships are very close, but also across teams."* Employee 7

> *"After all, we are all in the same boat."* Employee 1

They proposed, that to keep them up to date with information related to sales and to utilize the competence of their colleagues, they could take a more self-leading approach to sparring with colleagues. They perceived sparring to be especially applicable to effectively close sales. The informants claimed, that sparring is useful as it gives them concrete tools to close sales, which the other employees have successfully used.

"There could be more self-initiated sparring. Like, I want to discuss about how I succeed. For example, I noticed that you have successfully closed this much sales, what have you done and how did you do it. We should do more of that." Employee 2

The informants identified attributes, which may influence the atmosphere in general and team spirit within the smaller units. They claimed that the personality traits of other people and their team leaders are significant factors. Yet, the informants also highlighted the personality traits they own, and how everyone can influence the team spirit with their own actions and attitudes.

"I think we have always had a great group in every team. It is probably due to my own personality. I get along with everyone. I am quite an infiltrator, so I talk with everyone." Employee 4

Furthermore, employees claimed that they can celebrate each other's success. The informants suggested that they are committed to meet their goals and get encouragement from other team members. They found it positive that team members take joy and pride over each other's success that encourages them to keep going.

"When someone hears someone else succeeding, we always give a thumbs-up." Employee 5

As team players they need to cooperate with their colleagues and take responsibility over the overall atmosphere at work. Cooperation is significant in their work and it facilitates self-leadership. From the informants' point of view these activities are well embedded in their work. They were able to understand their own role in building good team spirit, furthermore they utilize peer-to-peer sparring to some extent. However, they agreed that there could be even more self-initiated sparring. Next, the scope moves from employees to the features of team leaders' role, which support the self-leadership of the sales personnel.

5.2. Roles of team leaders to support self-leadership of sales personnel

Next figure describes the features in team leader's role in sales organizations and gives suggestions for success factors in those roles. The roles are derived from the interviews as the informants discussed significantly about their leader's role in their work. Furthermore, they gave credit for some sales leadership activities and gave suggestions, how the sales leadership could be improved. Team leader's role consists of three features, which are facilitator, coach and guide. The features allow leaders to successfully support their sales personnel's self-leadership.

Features in team leader's role	How to succeed in this role?
Facilitator	Filter between employees and other organizational levels Act to actively improve atmosphere and resolve conflicts Adopt organizational values to every activity
Coach	Challenge employees to improve their skills and allow them to solve problems Give positive reinforcement and pay attention to positive feedback as well Consider individual motivators
Guide	Allow employees to make their decisions but guide them towards the correct path Keep employees updated about organizational changes and its reasons Maintain connection to the followers' basic work tasks Give employees possibilities and tools to monitor their own performance Delegate tasks to the follower

Figure 3 Features of team leader's role

Facilitator

The first feature of their role is to be a *facilitator*. This role is related to concrete actions, which facilitate the sales personnel's work and remove obstacles from the development of their self-leadership and self-leading attitude. A facilitator works between the employees and organization, makes concrete actions to improve atmosphere and supports the employees' development and performance.

The informants claimed that team leaders should act as filters between the employees and organization, because knowledge management is one of the greatest challenges to their self-leadership and performance. Several informants noted that the constant flow of information coming through email sometimes feel exhausting. The general perception was, that it is desirable that the team leader filters the information so, that only significant information related to the daily life reaches the employees directly. They suggested that all the changes and information can be found in the intranet of the company so, they do not need to receive it all to their email.

> *"My team leader works as a great filter between employees and higher organizational levels, so all information is not poured on the sales personnel. I think that is good."* Employee 8

Furthermore, they claimed that their self-leadership could improve if their team leader would help them with the amount of information they need to handle. As the employees need to remember so many things, the team leaders could give them sales tips and reminds about campaigns. Thus, they would share the information load and responsibility, which could lead to more sales opportunities.

> *"If the team leader could take some time to make us information sheets about products. Though it is not their role. But it could facilitate sales. If a certain issue would come up constantly, they could search information and take notes for us. Since we really do not have time." Employee 4*

> *"Reminds us sometimes that hey, we have this product as well, you could try to sell that. Remember these and this is a good customer benefit. Small reminders here and there, because they see more of the sales reports and see where we should focus more." Employee 2*

As mentioned before the facilitator also takes concrete steps to improve atmosphere. The informants agreed that it is important that team leaders can improve cooperation in teams and foresee any conflicts. Effective cooperation and good atmosphere may facilitate self-leadership as people are more open towards each other, want to share information and learn from others. It seemed, that most common way to affect the atmosphere and cooperation within the teams was to change them, if any issues arise.

> *"At some point everyone made the Disc-profile test. And if I understood correctly, the results were used to divide teams and assign team leaders for each team, so their personality traits would match. Of course, there are diverse personalities in teams, and teams are changed if necessary." Employee 2*

Different personalities may cause differences between people, which can even lead to conflicts. Though the atmosphere and cooperation in the department have improved over the years there may still sometimes be conflicts. According to the informants, the team leaders and managers appeared to take conflicts, bullying and any unfriendly behaviour seriously.

> *"Last year we had this big – I did not even know there were conflicts in this department, people were fighting and there was some bullying. But our department manager intervened and had discussions with each team about the situations. They stated that I know something like this had been going on and it needs to stop. In my opinion, the case could have been explained better. However, it was good that the department manager intervened, that is the most important thing. – One should not have a bad feeling here because of your colleagues." Employee 7*

To avoid such situations, the informants suggested that the company has started to emphasize their organizational values in every activity. The values are incorporated in organizational processes, customer service and sales, marketing materials and, in human resource management. The values are taken seriously and any actions contrary to the values will be addressed.

> *"One concrete step is bringing company values to our daily work. If someone acts against our values, it will be noticed and intervened."* Employee 8

The sales personnel agreed that their team leaders were great filters between them and the organization and gave them credit for taking conflicts seriously. They proposed that team leaders could help them more with sales tips and knowledge management, so their self-leadership could improve.

Coach

Next, team leader's role consists of being a *coach*. When being a coach, team leaders challenge sales personnel to develop their skills, encourage feedback and give positive reinforcement. The informants appreciated their team leaders' ability to challenge them and thus, helping them to come up with solutions of their own. The informants suggested, that the most efficient way to spar people is to challenge them. According to the interviews, challenging allows them to make better decisions and solve problems on their own. The team leader can guide them towards a certain direction or brainstorm possible solutions with the employees. However, it seemed to be significant that team leader does not give the answers out, but rather gives guidance, so the worker resolves the issue on their own. Thus, they can learn better and next time they can independently resolve similar issues or find the solution by themselves.

> *"Sometimes you must challenge them, when people come to ask for advice. Do not give them a straight answer, but rather suggest if you could find the*

information here or there. A bit like through trigger points. Of course, people
get frustrated when you do not spoon feed the answers to them." Employee 2

Generally, a coach is someone who empowers and motivates people. During the interviews informants pointed out that the team leaders should focus also on positive feedback and positive reinforcement. Such psychological boost was perceived to be effective in motivating and creating enthusiasm. All in all, they suggested that positive reinforcement could help them to reach their goals and presenting the current situation from a positive perspective would motivate them and create a more positive attitude towards performance.

"What comes to the sales goals we have, we have data from all the previous
years about how we did. What happened last year and how we are doing this
year. For once, it could be like: look we have stayed at the same level as last
year, at least we are not doing worse. Rather than saying that we are still not
reaching our goals. They could say that yes, we are not at our goal yet, but
at least we are not doing worse than before. A little positive psychological
boost." Employee 4

Furthermore, they suggested that they would appreciate credit over other tasks than sales as positive acknowledgement could increase their motivation. Such acknowledgements could be related to positive feedback from customers or improved customer experience.

"Our team leaders could organize us breakfasts or some recognition, which
is not a competition or related to sales. Some small things. For example, an
acknowledgement, which is not always related to sales." Employee 5

In term of motivation, the informants craved for more individual considerations in motivators and thus, small circle competitions with the nearest team members were seen motivating. There are also department level contests, but those usually take more time and thus, the inspirational impact of it may diminish over time.

> *"I enjoyed light-hearted contest. I do not mean contests for the whole depart-*
> *ment, but between team members like who closes three sales first."* Employee
> 2

From the employees' perspective the team leaders are good at challenging employees to come up with their own solutions, which supports their self-leadership. They claimed they would appreciate more acknowledgement over other work-related tasks than sales, more positive reinforcement and feedback, which would create enthusiasm and improve atmosphere.

Guide

The last feature in team leader's role is a *guide*, which refers to team leader's role as the person who gives the facts. In this role they guide direction, reason changes and monitor performance. The informants agreed that their team leaders act as their guides, who let them individually take the decisions but oversee that those decisions lead to the correct destination from organizational point of view.

> *"Our team leader is like an anchor or a steering wheel in our car, who gives*
> *us directions and keeps us on the right line."* Employee 8

According to the informants, as the team leader works on the background to ensure correct route and decisions, they are also in charge of explaining the reasoning behind organizational changes. The team leader has a crucial role in adapting the change and getting their followers excited and enthusiastic about the change. The informants perceived accurate and truthful communication about organizational changes very crucial. Furthermore, they agreed that it is important to have enough information about the reasoning behind organizational change. If they are given an insight in the changes and given a chance to understand the reasoning, it is easier for them to adapt to changes and accept them.

"If you just blunt the changes to employees without explaining them in detail, it only creates rumors and frustration. There we have made significant improvement over the years." Employee 8

"Sometimes I wish – this is still not too visible around here, or sometimes it is, the reasons behind the changes. Even if it is a small change, like a goal or sales goals change, I would like to know more about the reasons behind the change. Anyway, it has already improved." Employee 3

The informants evaluated that the organization has changed towards a more self-leading culture. As mentioned before, they felt that they have received more freedom but also responsibility over their work tasks. Overall, their perception was that though they have been given more responsibility about the decisions they make regarding sales and customer experience, the team leaders have started to monitor their sales performance and sales volume more closely than before.

"We are constantly watched – our worktime, sales, entries, everything is watched. When we are being watched this much, our self-leadership is not quite at the level it could be." Employee 6

"Closed sales are very closely monitored among sales personnel and how much profit they create. Which is completely understandable, but when they do it all the time, every day, individually and in teams, it hinders the development of self-leadership skills." Employee 6

They felt their performance is monitored too closely, which reduces motivation and diminishes their chances to be self-leading. Furthermore, their self-leadership exist in rather tight range, since the preferred way to work is so apparent as sales and efficiency are reported. Moreover, they claimed that their self-leadership could improve if their performance was monitored less.

"My self-leadership could improve if my team leader would stop looking over my shoulder." Employee 4

On the other hand, the informants believed that the organizational goals may affect the performance monitoring. Most targets and goals of the department are numeric and as the team leaders are perceived quite goal-oriented, the informants claimed that they may lead with numbers. They suggested that the leaders are sometimes too focused on the numeric side of management, rather than leadership.

"They are somewhat enthusiastic about emails and numbers. Sometimes I feel like they manage us with the numbers. - - I would say they are quite goal-oriented, and our goals are numbers, so that is what they focus on." Employee 2

The interviewees suggested that to effectively lead their work, the team leader's role should not be too distant from their daily work. On the other hand, many claimed that they do not really need leaders to manage their work and their impact on sales personnel's work has diminished over the years. However, though they argued that as they are self-leading and do not need team leaders to help them daily, they still wished the team leaders could give them more concrete sparring about their work.

"They are more working on the background, which is a bit bad. They role has diminished over the years. In my opinion, they should be able to help in systems and services related issues as well. They should have the know-how to help and develop you. These days their role is to do the background stuff and accept the work times." Employee 7

The employees suggested that it is important that their team leaders can advise them in their work tasks. Furthermore, they craved for sparring, which focuses on their concrete work tasks. For example, issues with the customers or closing sales. They believed that sparring could help them to develop their skills and improve their performance.

"They know their stuff and capable in their roles. They are good facilitators and we can have good discussions and sparring sessions. One thing I would appreciate and prefer if I could get more sparring on the concrete work-related things if necessary and how you can improve your work." Employee 3

Also, the employees discussed whether the team leaders are completely ready to give them the power to lead their own work. They felt, the leader might be reluctant to let them take decisions, hold meetings and monitor their performance, as it may diminish their role even more.

"Sometimes I think the team leaders are not ready to give up these things. So, they get involved in things, though they do not need to. I think they worry about losing their title and becoming regular employees, if they give us too much responsibility." Employee 1

Lastly, many informants claimed that they are not sure what is expected from them in terms of self-leadership. They claimed that it is not clear, how do they need to act and perform in their work to be self-leading from the organization's point of view. They claimed that the issue with self-leadership was that it is a large concept, which includes several factors to consider. Thus, it may be difficult to evaluate one's level of self-leadership and compare it to the organizational expectations. Furthermore, the self-leadership requirements and possibilities vary across organizational roles, which may affect the clarity of the concept. The informants suggested that the team leader is in charge of summarizing the self-leadership into an understandable form. The interviewees suggested that the concept of self-leadership would be easier to understand and handle, if it would be clearly indicated, what do they have to do to become self-leading in their current role. Also, they could benefit from standards, which indicate what they need to do to be self-leading in their current role.

"If I could get a summary about what is enough in my role to be self-leading enough. It is difficult to get the bigger picture." Employee 3

Currently, the strengths of their role are guiding direction and reasoning changes. The developmental areas in their role are involved with the role being too distant from their followers' roles, and thus, they are less able to give concrete advices or sparring about the followers work tasks. Furthermore, the amount of monitoring may diminish the opportunities their followers have to practice self-leadership.

Next, the discussion moves from sales personnel and team leaders to organizational attributes, which are crucial facilitators for the development of a self-leading culture. Some organizational methods, which support the change towards a self-leading organization are presented in the following chapter.

5.3. Organizational methods used to support change towards self-leadership

The informants suggested that the organization has multiple methods, which have been used to introduce and enhance self-leading behavior. Some methods were proposed in the theoretical background of this study and some were discovered from the findings of the study. The following figure pictures these methods, which are further discussed below the figure.
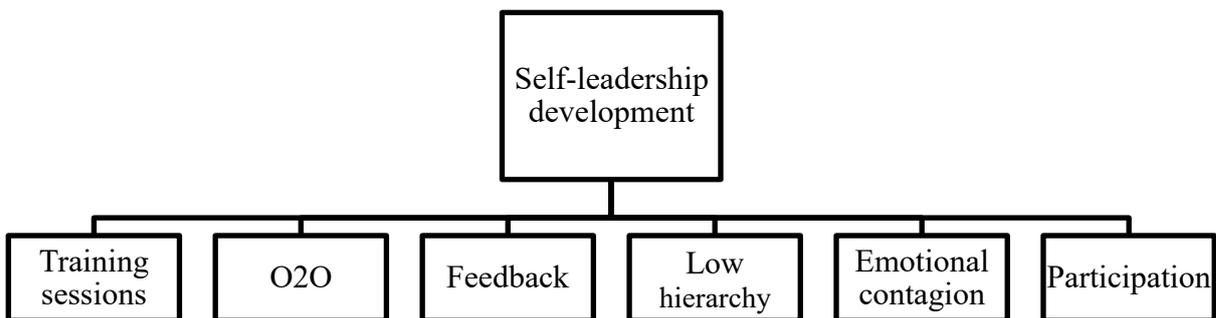
Figure 4 Methods to enhance self-leadership

Figure 4 explains the methods the company chose to use to improve their self-leadership and leadership development according to the interviews. First step towards a more self-leading approach was that the team leaders held a joined training session, where they explained the concept of self-leadership. Furthermore, they held workshops for the sales personnel, where they trained self-leadership related skills. According to the interviews, some employees had considered these training sessions very ineffective and did not take self-leadership too seriously. Yet, others felt like it was the perfect timing to introduce self-leadership to their work. There were more training sessions later, where teams and individual discussed the aspects of self-leadership in relation to their work.

> *"First, we had a self-leadership related function. By that time many thought it was complete nonsense, that is a shame. For me it was the perfect timing, I had just started to think that I may not need my supervisor that much, I can do more on my own."* Employee 6

The informants suggested that most of the discussion about self-leadership happens in one on one -discussions with the team leader, though self-leadership was originally introduced to the whole team at once. There, salesperson and their leader can better concentrate on job or personality related factors, which may affect the self-leadership of the employee.

> *"Self-leadership is a continuous discussion theme in all O2O meetings and developmental discussions. So, we can discuss it from individual perspective between employee and team leader."* Employee 8

The informants suggested that they benefit from the individual discussion with the team leader, because it focuses on their individual skills and needs. They claimed that self-leadership is continuously discussed in their developmental discussions and there, they discuss all aspects of self-leadership. The themes are related to development of one's

skills, identifying core competence and planning future career development for the individuals. They claimed that during those discussions they also think how the whole department could benefit from the competence of the individual.

> *"The employees can get more individual support from the team leaders regarding the self-leadership."* Employee 8

The informants suggested that feedback could be used to improve their self-leadership. According to the interviewees, the employees in the case company are at different levels in their self-leadership development process. Thus, they need various amounts of developmental support. Though many highlighted the importance of individual responsibility over the development process, they suggested that team leaders could use feedback as a tool to improve leadership development and self-leadership. The informants agreed that the department has had its challenges with giving and receiving feedback, though it has improved over the latest years.

> *"In my opinion, feedback has been one of our major challenges, but we have trained it for a long time, so that giving and receiving feedback would be at a better level. We handle a lot of feedback and request it to team and leaders from others. We have focused on it and that is very good."* Employee 8

The informants evaluated, that the feedback they give is sometimes considered in decision making. Furthermore, they claimed that feedback can sometimes make a change and help colleagues to perform better. According to the answers, it seems that the impact of the feedback is related to the issue it considers. If the feedback addresses a larger issue or process, then it may take time to resolve it or may not evoke change. They stated that some employees may feel resistant to give feedback, since they doubt whether it can make a change. Especially, if the feedback considers a process or product, which is managed from a higher organizational level, the feedback process seems so stiff and ineffective that some employees consider it as a waste of time. Also, some employees suggested that people may not take feedback seriously if they think that they perform better than the

colleague, who gave the feedback. They suggested that new employees are more open to feedback and more willing to change their behaviour based on the feedback they get.

> *"The impact of the feedback... I think that at the department level, there is a doubt, whether the feedback makes a change and if it has been noted. That still exists, but that has improved a lot over the years."* Employee 8

Despite these challenges, they perceived the atmosphere open for feedback and they were familiar with the channels, where they can give feedback. They claimed that there are multiple sources for feedback and they have the possibility to gain from many organizational groups. They received feedback from colleagues, employees from other departments, team leaders and customers. Many informants expected feedback from team-leaders and colleagues and suggested that there could be even more feedback, so they could improve their performance and self-leadership.

> *"I would appreciate more feedback, for example, about my way to communicate with the customers. Now we have not received so much it, maybe last time was during the spring. So, feedback to give me developmental direction and to know, if the team leaders would have done something differently."* Employee 2

Another organizational culture related factor, which facilitates self-leadership is to create a low hierarchy organizational culture. Low hierarchy allows people to cooperate over team limits, learn from others and facilitates knowledge sharing. The informants claimed that overall the cooperation between teams has improved over the years, which has led to an improved atmosphere. They suggested that better cooperation may be the results of common discussion forums, where sales personnel can discuss more openly with everyone from the department. Furthermore, such channels have allowed them to unite across team limits.

> *"In my opinion, it is so great that we have united across team limits."* Employee 4

"We are more open towards each other, there we have improved a lot during the past few years." Employee 8

Another result of the collaboration, derived from low hierarchy, is that the informants can increase their knowledge from peer-to-peer learning and informal networks they have created. Furthermore, better collaboration and communication lead to better knowledge sharing. The informants claimed that these days there are less situations, where only one team knows something, and the others do not. They claimed that even distribution on information is also a result of the common chat rooms. Furthermore, the role of team leaders in information sharing has diminished as the informants perceived that they did not require team leaders to share all information anymore, and that has improved their possibilities to be self-leading.

"There are less facts and information, which only one team knows, and others do not." Employee 3

Though common chat rooms and other channels facilitate the knowledge sharing, the informants suggested that there should only be a few channels. Otherwise, it is too time consuming and difficult to surf through the channels searching for information.

"We have a lot of communications in various channels, some use one channel and some another channel. It is a bit confusing. Maybe there should be one channel, where everyone could be present, which everyone would use and all information would be there. Then you would not spend time to check emails, intranet and other channels." Employee 3

Another organizational attribute, which is closely linked to low hierarchy is emotional contagion. The informants evaluated that the overall atmosphere at work and their team spirit influences crucially their motivation and performance. Several employees agreed that the atmosphere has improved during the past few years and cooperation between teams with similar tasks has improved.

> *"Of course, it affects your performance, since we have always had a good group of people. You are free to be on a good mood or bad mood or whatever you want."* Employee 5

Several informants noted that there are less communications and information available when everything is going fine. Then, if something goes wrong or the department is not reaching its goals, the communication starts. Thus, they wished for communication and encouragement also when things are going fine.

> *"My perception is that we have this culture in our company that when things are going alright, you receive no comments. Then when something is wrong there is a flow of comments coming in. I have sometimes tried to suggest that maybe leaders could sometimes tell that you have been doing fine, keep up the good work. And not only comment, when you are doing worse for some reason. We always approach things from the negative side. It would not need to be anything else than you are doing well, keep going!"* Employee 4

The last organizational factor, which facilitates leadership development and self-leadership is participation. Throughout the interviews it was apparent that the employees highlighted their possibilities to influence decision-making related to various organizational activities. They craved for participation in decision-making, meetings, training and development and customer communications. They agreed that they are already encouraged to give feedback, but they would like to participate in decision-making about teams, sales bonuses and campaigns. Furthermore, they would like to participate in product launch and customer communication.

> *"I wish our opinion would sometimes be asked in setting sales bonuses, campaign testing and customer communication."* Employee 1

However, they agreed that they would appreciate it, if their opinions were heard in times of organizational change. Currently their abilities to give feedback are more related to

their work tasks or to improve their skills. The interviews occurred simultaneously with rather large organizational changes, which affected the work environment and teams of the informants. Some changes were made to their basic work tasks and therefore, organizational changes were a natural discussion topic in the interviews. They claimed that they would adapt to changes better, if they had a say in the decision-making process.

> *"They should understand that we just want our opinion to be asked. They need to ask what we want. Even though, we would not like the final decision – we understand, we cannot make the final decision. Anyway, our opinion would have been asked"* Employee 1

Organizations can choose to use multiple methods to support self-leadership. The informants suggested that the company has applied training sessions, one to one discussion and sparring to enhance self-leadership. Also, feedback could be used to promote self-leadership. According to the finding, the organizational culture should transform to a lower hierarchy, utilize emotional contagion and allow employees to participate in decision making to enhance self-leadership

The findings of this study suggest that when an organization decides to shift towards a more self-leading organization, there are several changes required in organizational roles. As the roles are changing, it is important to understand the features of those roles, which either enhance or support sales personnel's self-leadership and thus, change the whole organization. Sales personnel and their supervisors have a significant role in that change, but to succeed the organization needs to support this change. Next chapter discusses the findings and compares them to the existing literature.

6. DISCUSSION

By researching sales personnel, this study aimed to describe how organizational roles need to change, so the company can become more self-leading and successfully execute effective and profit-oriented self-leadership in multi-national environment. Also, the research aims to identify how inspirational leadership can be used to support the change towards self-leadership. This discussion chapter is divided as follows: first it aims to answer the research objective *"How sales personnel's role should change to enhance self-leadership?"*. And second *How team leader's role should change to support sales personnel's self-leadership?"*. Lastly, it aims to answer the objective *"Which methods MNCs use to improve their leadership development?"* This chapter includes a throughout discussion about the findings and answers the research questions. The figure below summarizes the results of this study and describes which factors enhance and support profit oriented and effective self-leadership among sales personnel.

Features of sales personnel's role	Factors to enhance effective and profit-oriented self-leadership	Methods to enhance self-leadership
Confidant	Understanding towards other people's skills and limits Willingness to take responsibility and understanding over own activities which influence trust Responsibility over own skills and performance Handling the pressure related to responsibility and expectations (Ingram et al. 2005) Responsibility over performance monitoring Ability to make a change (Feser 2016)	O2O discussions Low hierarchy
Expert	Understanding of one's skills and their limits (Järvinen 2014) Ability to manage knowledge Unofficial expert position (Lerssi-Uskelin et al. 2011)	Training sessions Feedback Low hierarchy

	Shared leadership (Ingram et al. 2005) Better conditions for creativity and learning (Feser 2016)	
Team player	Ability to understand how own actions and personality can influence the atmosphere Active approach to peer-to-peer sparring Committed to the team (Järvinen 2014) Celebrate success Good teamwork skills (Ingram et al. 2005)	O2O discussions Emotional contagion Low hierarchy
Features of team leaders' role	**Factors to support effective and profit-oriented self-leadership**	
Facilitator	Filter between employees and other organizational levels Act to actively improve atmosphere and resolve conflicts Adopt organizational values to every activity	Feedback O2O discussions Emotional contagion
Coach	Challenge employees to improve their skills and allow them to solve problems Give positive reinforcement and pay attention to positive feedback as well (Viitala et al. 2017) Consider individual motivators Emotional contagion to get the employees excited and enthusiastic (Feser 2016)	O2O discussions Feedback Emotional contagion Participation
Guide	Allow employees to make their decisions but guide them towards the correct path (Feser 2016) Keep employees updated about organizational changes and its reasons (Hauschildt & Konradt 2012) Maintain connection to the followers' basic work tasks Give employees possibilities and tools to monitor their own performance (Cordery et al. 2010) Delegate tasks to the follower (Humphrey et al. 2007)	Training sessions O2O discussions Emotional contagion Participation

Figure 5 Summary about self-leadership among sales personnel

6.1. Changing organizational roles towards self-leadership

Self-leadership requires action from both sales personnel and their leaders. The leadership culture is at a crucial role in facilitating the change towards a more self-leading workplace and to give enough room for all employees to accept the change and grow into their new role. Simultaneously, the team leaders need to have courage to let go, delegate tasks and direct responsibility towards their employees. According to the study of Viitala et al. (2017), manager's behaviour has a significant impact in employees' motivation and engagement towards leadership development. The findings of this study propose, that inspirational leadership could answer to these requirements.

Trust was emphasized several times throughout the findings and it facilitates self-leadership across organization in all organizational roles. Lee and Edmondson (2017) suggested that trust is one of the key facilitators of change towards a self-leading organization. According to the findings of this study, overall atmosphere and relationships between sales personnel and their team leaders should become more trusting. To increase trust, the sales personnel and team leaders need to communicate openly and truthfully. The team leaders need to give trust to the employees, who are willing to have it. On the other hand, the sales personnel need to prove they are worthy of that trust. Trust does not only facilitate self-leadership and self-development but also is the basis of inspirational leadership (Feser & de Vries 2016). Feser (2016) claims that inspirational leaders are comfortable with delegating tasks, because they trust their employees' skills. Trust allows people to become more self-leading, facilitates individual decision-making and improves atmosphere.

According to the findings of this study and previous literature, as companies become more self-leading, the employees should be given more over their performance and its monitoring. Lee and Edmondson (2017) claim that changes in performance monitoring are one of the fundamental considerations, when moving towards a self-leading organization. Ac-

cording to the findings of this study, self-leading sales personnel are willing to take responsibility over their own performance monitoring and trust their capabilities to monitor their own performance. Cordery et al. (2010) suggests similar findings and claim that self-leading employees can identify their own goals and monitor their own performance. Furthermore, the results suggested that sales personnel can use their own set of goals to motivate themselves and alter the given goals, if they seem unfit to support their performance. So, the employees should be allowed and willing to take the responsibility over their performance monitoring and have some influence in goal-setting.

Such change in performance monitoring requires actions from leaders as well. According to Ferner et al. (2011), performance management and compensation systems are generally integrated functions under HQ control. Thus, it may be difficult for the team leaders to share the responsibility related to performance management, because they receive pressure from the HQ to maintain high-level of performance. So, team leaders face dual pressure from the HQ in reporting performance and sales personnel who wish to monitor their own performance. However, to support self-leadership, the leaders should share the responsibility over performance monitoring with their employees and give them tools and possibilities to do that. According to the findings of the study and literature review, inspirational leadership may facilitate employees' participation in individual performance monitoring and goal-setting. Feser and de Vries (2016) suggest that inspirational leaders can make their employees authentically accountable for their performance and its monitoring, which makes them more empowered. The impact that inspirational leadership and self-leadership are significant for performance. The results of this study suggest that sales personnel believe their performance would improve if they could be more self-leading. This claim is supported by the previous literature about self-leadership and its impact in sales performance (eg. Fayne & Gering 2000; Konradt et al. 2009: Hauschildt & Konradt 2012; Cordery et al. 2010). As Lee and Edmondson (2017) suggest, self-leading organization needs structural changes.

Overall inspirational leadership may facilitate this change towards a self-leading organization as inspirational leaders can create a compelling vision about the destination, which is the result of the change. Furthermore, Feser and de Vries (2016) claim that employees

are more committed to organizational change, when they understand the reasoning behind the change. The results of this study suggest similar outcomes as the employees hope their leaders would explain the reasons of changes and thus, facilitate their commitment and understanding. Also, the results emphasize the meaning of open discussion and positive communication, which are crucial for motivation. Cardon (2008) claims that leaders need to show genuine interest towards the change to convince and empower their employees to the change. Furthermore, Feser and de Vries (2016) claim that leaders need to be role models and change their behaviour, so their followers are more willing to change. Joshi et al. (2009) and Conger and Kanungo (1987) agree and claim that inspirational leaders are so skilled at creating a compelling vision, that it motivates employees to accomplish extraordinary things and they are ready to set aside personal goals to meet their leaders' vision.

Another significant factor, which is the basis of all self-leadership, is to clarify the concept of self-leadership. According to the finding of this study, sales personnel should have a standardized set of goals, which indicates, when they are self-leading enough in their role. If the employees cannot grasp what their team leaders are expecting of them, they cannot evaluate their behaviour. Then they cannot identify developmental areas in their self-leadership, which hinders the organizational change towards a self-leading organization. And the development to an effective and profit-oriented self-leader is slower.

The next chapter discusses the organizational level methods, which should be applied to support self-leadership and thus, enhance the change towards a self-leading organization.

6.2. Organizational methods to enhance leadership development in MNCs

Leadership development focuses on fostering leadership skills of current employees (Day 2001), which are generally conducted as locally adapted practices (Ferner et al. 2011). As mentioned earlier, the Case Company has created a joined culture, which extends over all their subsidiaries and aims to diminish the impact of local culture and replace it with the joined organizational culture. Thus, they should follow a geocentric approach, which aims

to replace the national cultures with a joined organizational culture (Heenan & Pearlmutter 1979; Edström & Galbraith, 1977), this approach requires solid communication and integration across the MNC (Edström & Galbraith, 1977). Inspirational leadership and self-leadership can improve open discussion and information flow, as both encourage individual responsibility and use of informal networks. Lee and Edmondson (2017) claim that self-leading organization is more open and communicates better, as people have better and wider networks in such organizations.

The findings of this study suggest that training sessions are perceived useful, in the contrary to previous research, which did not acknowledge training sessions as influential and claimed it to be rather rigid way to develop the personnel (eg. Day 2001; Lee & Edmondson 2017). Yet, it is significant, who organizes such training sessions, because the findings suggest that sessions are especially effective, if they are held by other sales personnel, because they can give more influential training on everyday job-related issues. In the contrary, management held training sessions did not seem to be as effective, since the managers are not as familiar with the concrete work tasks as peers are. However, one-to-one sessions and sparring are perceived more effective than any official training sessions, both between peers and team leader and salesperson. Jones et al. (2016) share similar thoughts and claim that lack of power relationships in one-to-one sessions facilitates learning and development.

The findings of this study emphasized the meaning of feedback. Sales personnel should receive feedback from multiple sources so, they can evaluate their own performance, develop their skills and get guidance towards correct direction. Furthermore, the feedback should be received continuously, so the employees know how others perceive their performance and can modify their behaviour if necessary. Also, the previous research suggests that multi-source feedback is an effective tool to gain a comprehensive image of skills and performance of individual employees and organization as whole (Oh & Berry 2009; Miao et al. 2018).

To succeed in the change towards a more self-leading organization, the organizational structure should become less hierarchic and leaders should modify their roles (Reichard

& Johnson 2011). Low hierarchy facilitates knowledge sharing, since lower hierarchy unifies the department and diminishes the barriers of communication. The findings suggested that sales personnel effectively utilize their personal networks to gain information and solve problems, and people dare to approach others even on other organizational levels, when the hierarchy is low. According to Day (2001), networking helps to build support and foster relationships within the workplace. Ingram et al. (2005) claim that to successfully perform in their complex role, the sales personnel need to utilize their networks to cooperate with other teams and departments. The findings of this study suggested that sales personnel use their networks to consult the experts regarding products or services and perceive networks as a faster way to gain information than official routes. Successfully self-leading sales personnel can effectively utilize formal and informal networks. Leaders have a significant role in fostering networks and Lerssi-Uskelin et al. (2011) claim that inspirational leaders encourage employees to get to know their team members also in informal situation, which may foster the networks and improve the atmosphere. Järvinen (2014) claims that inspirational leadership is especially suitable for teams with close ties and good team spirit.

Feser (2016: 74) states that the methods of emotional contagion are suitable for inspirational leadership. According to Cardon (2008), the followers are likely to catch their leader's enthusiasm and interest, if they evaluate it to be authentic. The finding suggested that sales personnel would appreciate positive feedback and a more positive attitude towards their work, which would increase their motivation and commitment. Furthermore, they can celebrate each other's success, which boosts positive atmosphere and motivation. This can further improve, if they receive acknowledgement also from other work tasks than sales and more positive communication about overall performance, also when they are doing excellent work.

Feser (2016: 159) highlights the importance of participation. He claims that unless inspired employees can make a change, commitment or enthusiasm are meaningless. Thus, the team leader needs to empower the followers to make changes. Also, Conger and Kanungo (1988) and Lee and Edmondson (2017) claim that empowerment and participation are significant organizational level influences, which affect self-development. The

findings of this study indicated that employees feel more committed and respected, if they are given the possibility to influence decision-making. Martela (2017) claims that in self-leading organizations employees have more chances to make decisions, which lead to improved innovation and creativity. Also, inspirational leadership increases chances to freely share ideas and enhances creativity (Lerssi-Uskelin et al. 2011) and allows employees to participate in decision making (Feser & de Vries 2016). Creativity leads to innovation and better problem solving. The results of this study suggest that sales personnel utilize their informal networks to create sales pitches and solve problems. According to Humphrey et al. (2007), self-leading employees choose their working methods, schedules and take charge in decision-making. The findings implied that sales personnel perceive decisions about teams, campaigns and sales bonuses the most significant and desirable to influence. Furthermore, they perceived it beneficial if they can participate in new product launch, since they can utilize their expertise from the first line to avoid problems in the launch process. Also, they would like to choose the content of their team meetings, so it would benefit their work the best. Lerssi-Uskelin et al. (2011) claim that employees should be encouraged to utilize the unofficial experts to share their knowledge in team meetings, since they possess special skills, which derive from their personal skills and interests. According to them, such knowledge sharing is more effective and increases the use of tacit knowledge. The findings of this study show similar results, as the sales personnel perceived it to be effective is an unofficial expert shares their expertise among colleagues. Next chapter summarizes the outcomes of leadership development in MNCs.

6.3. Outcomes of leadership development in MNCs

The results of this study state that MNCs should focus on leadership development to create circumstances where the features of sales personnel's and team leaders' roles can effectively be utilized and developed. The features either enhance or support the development of a more self-leading organization.

Low hierarchy and emotional contagion appear to lead to improved atmosphere, as the employees collaborate with others over team boundaries. Increased cooperation and

knowledge sharing lead to a more open discussion, which in part also improves the atmosphere. Inspirational leadership encourages employees to take more responsibility and be more self-leading. Through self-leadership and inspirational leadership, the company can increase trust.

Lastly, investments in leadership development lead to concept clarification. When team leaders and employees discuss self-leadership and evaluate performance, they create a description of self-leadership requirements in employee's current position. Without understanding about what self-leadership in their current role is, the sales personnel cannot become self-leading. Because self-leadership improves employee's performance, it is crucial that they understand the concept of self-leadership, so the organization can benefit from the shift in organizational culture.

7. CONCLUSIONS

The final chapter of this study presents the conclusions of this study. Furthermore, it suggests theoretical contributions and managerial implications. The latter part of this chapter discusses the limitations of this study and makes suggestions for future research.

7.1. Theoretical contribution

Most past research on sales personnel has focused on the impact of transformational or transactional leadership. This study contributes to the existing literature by presenting inspirational leadership as an effective tool to improve sales personnel's self-leadership abilities and performance. Inspiring leadership has been claimed to be the only suitable leadership approach to modern day business environment, since it allows organizations to be more agile. Previous research emphasizes the agility requirements for organizations to survive the current business environment. Since sales personnel are especially susceptible to this environment, inspirational leadership can be a crucial success factor in enhancing their leadership development towards self-leading attitude. The attributes of inspirational leaders are well aligned with the requirements and expectations of sales personnel regarding leaders' support and guidance. The results of this study regarding the effectiveness of inspirational leadership are in line with previous research, since the results suggest that in order to improve employees' performance, motivation and to facilitate their self-leadership, they require leadership, which consists of the attributes of inspirational leadership.

This study contributes to the existing literature by suggesting the sales personnel's and team leaders' roles consist of several features, and the characteristics of those features enhance or support self-leadership from the perspective of sales personnel. Some new characteristics, which derived from the finding of this study, were not mentioned in previous literature regarding self-leadership and its development.

7.2. Managerial implications

From managerial point of view this study gives guidelines to improve the employees' competence. Figure 5 gives suggestions about what is expected from managers and employees to succeed in their organizational roles and to become more self-leading. Furthermore, the results of this study give suggestions about which features their roles consist of and how the skills related to those features can be developed. Training and development are the most locally adapted activities of leadership development. Thus, it is important for managers to evaluate these features in relation with the culture they work in. If MNC's sales personnel work in cultures, which are described with high level of hierarchy, it may seem difficult to take charge and become self-leading. Likewise, it may be difficult for managers to trust their employees and delegate tasks, if they feel they may lose their position in more hierarchical cultures.

The results of this study emphasized mutual understanding and open discussion between employees and leaders. The results suggested that the basis of employee's self-leadership is that they understand what the organization is expecting from them in terms of self-leadership. Self-leadership is a large concept, which consists of several factors, and the requirements vary across organization, because different roles require different kinds of self-leadership. Thus, another suggestion for managerial implications is that there needs to be a standard, which indicates if one performs well in self-leadership. So, the organization should create a guide, which has concrete steps to become self-leading and appropriate values for them, so employees' can evaluate their level of self-leadership. Furthermore, such guidelines could facilitate planning self-developmental training activities in one to one discussions. Moreover, the results of such guidelines could be applied in evaluating the level of self-leadership in teams or whole department. Next there is a suggestion for such guidelines, which is based on the success factors discovered in the results:

1) I understand my skills and developmental areas
2) I know where to find information
3) I know where to ask help if needed
4) I understand how my actions influence others and the atmosphere
5) I find ways to develop my skills actively

6) I spar with my colleagues to learn from their skills

7) I have understanding about the skills of my team members

8) I take responsibility over my work, performance and performance monitoring

As this study takes place in an international context in MNCs, these standards could be altered to match the local culture of each host country. If there is a large power distance between employees in supervisors in a subsidiary, it may be challenging to promote a self-leading attitude. Thus, the guidelines should also be adopted to match the local needs.

7.3. Limitations

This chapter notes some limitations related to the study, which should be considered in interpretation of the results. The results cannot be adopted accurately to describe the entire population as the limited number of interviewees is a weakness. Thus, the generalization to sales personnel in general should be interpreted cautiously. However, this study does not aim to represent the entire population, rather to obtain new information about the situation. Furthermore, this study focuses on only one industry, where sales personnel promote technology solutions to their customers. A larger sample or comparison of companies in different industries would increase the generalization of the results.

Moreover, this study focused on the global integration versus local adaptation between Finnish subsidiary and Swedish HQ. To broaden the scope and increase generalisation there could have been more informants from several foreign subsidiaries to increase understanding about the extent of global integration and local adaptation. Furthermore, this would give more possibilities to evaluate the differences, which are derived from local cultures and how those differences may affect the attitudes towards leadership development and inspirational leadership.

Another limitation, which may cause bias to the analysis and initial interview answers is that the researcher knows the informants from beforehand. As mentioned before, that may cause them to try please the researcher and answer in a manner they expected the researcher wants them to. However, comparison of the answers produced similar results,

so, familiarity may have turned out to be an advantage. During the interviews, the situation was difficult and unusual in the company. Thus, familiarity may have improved their willingness to speak openly and tell their true feelings.

However, the researcher was not experienced in qualitative research and thus, some methodological choices could be reflected. A more experienced interviewer may have been capable to posit the question in a manner that unravels deeper information about the employees' thoughts. Another consideration is, whether it would have been wise to use multiple methods in data gathering.

7.4. Suggestions for future research

During the preparation of this study, many suggestions for future research raised. Next research could extent this study to a broader scope by introducing cultural differences into the analysis process. This would give more concrete tools for international human resource management and leadership development in MNCs, as the influence of these leadership development activities could be tested in different cultures.

Supervisor's role as facilitator of self-leadership should be further examined. There are multiple research approaches to the employee-employer relationship in MNCs regarding self-leadership. It would be interesting to study; which issues arise if employees are self-leading, but the manager believes in high hierarchy. And if the situation changes in case employees are not self-leading while the supervisors are.

Inspirational leadership appears to be significant facilitator in enhancing self-leading behavior and thus, more future research could focus on inspirational leadership in a larger sample. Furthermore, the effectiveness of inspirational leadership in MNCs should also receive attention from multi-cultural perspective, since it is possible that different cultures may vary in susceptibility towards inspirational leadership.

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APPENDIX 1. Interview questions in Finnish

Haastattelukysymykset:

Rakenne:
1. Kysymys
   - =Jatko-/apukysymys

1. Koulutus
2. Työsuhteen pituus
3. Työtehtävä
4. Kuvaile omia vahvuuksiasi työntekijänä?
   - Minkälaisia kanavia ja apuvälineitä voit hyödyntää kehittääksesi taitojasi?

5. Mihin osa-alueisiin työssäsi voit vaikuttaa? (esim. työaika, tavoitteet, myynti)
   - Mitä itseohjautuvuus tarkoittaa sinulle?
   - Mitä työtehtävässäsi pitää erityisesti ottaa huomioon itseohjautuvuuden kannalta?
   - Millä tavoin itseohjautuvuus näkyy työpaikallasi?
   - Mitä haasteita työpaikalla on itseohjautuvuudelle? (työtehtävät, järjestelmät, esimies)
   - Millä keinoin itseohjautuvuuttasi voisi parantaa?
   - Mitä esimiehesi voisi tehdä tukeakseen oman toiminnan ohjaamistasi?

6. Mitä esimies voisi tehdä että suoriudut paremmin työtehtävistäsi?

7. Miten teidän tiimiä nykyisin johdetaan?
   - Miten kuvailisit osaston esimiehiä/johtamista?
   - Miten johtaminen on muuttunut?
   - Miten saat tietoa muutoksista työskentelytavoissa, järjestelmissä tai tuotteissa?

Mitä erityispiirteitä myyntityön itseohjautumisessa pitää ottaa huomioon?
Miten myyntityö vaikuttaa itseohjautuvuuteen?
Mitä haasteita myyntityö tuo itseohjautuvuudelle?
Miten myyntityötä tulisi johtaa?

APPENDIX 2. Interview questions in English

Interview questions:

Structure:
1. Question
   - Follow up question

1. Education
2. Length of tenure
3. Position
4. Describe your strengths as an employee?
   - Which channels or tools you can utilize to improve your skills?

5. Which areas of your work you can influence in? (e.g. working time, goals, sales)
   - How would you describe what self-leadership means to you?
   - Which attributes of your work need to be considered from self-leadership perspective?
   - How self-leadership shows on your workplace?
   - Which challenges difficult self-leadership at work? (e.g. tasks, systems, supervisor)
   - How could you improve your self-leadership?
   - How your team leader could enhance your self-leadership?

6. How could you team leader help you to improve your performance?

7. How would you describe the current leadership in your team?

   - How would you describe the leaders in your department?
   - How has leadership changed over the years?
   - How do you gain information about changes in working methods, systems or products?

Which characteristics need especial consideration in self-leadership in sales work?
How sales work influences self-leadership?
Which challenges are in sales work regarding self-leadership?
How sales work should be led?