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PERSPECTIVES OF COACHING STYLE MANAGERIAL PRACTICE FOR DEVELOPING HIGH PERFORMANCE CULTURE

Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis

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ABSTRACT

Coaching has gained popularity in organizations during recent years. Managerial coaching is a form of coaching where the manager uses coaching approach in the managerial practice in order to support and facilitate employees' development for better performance. Organizations that want to develop a high performance culture can utilize managerial coaching to enhance learning and development of skillsets of employees. However, the research literature concerning developing coaching cultures by utilizing managerial coaching is scarce.

As there was no research found on the aforementioned phenomenon in a specific organizational context, conducting a case study was seen as an appropriate choice. The literature review, the research findings and the conclusions are presented with Wilber's integral model to ensure that the phenomenon is examined holistically. The research data was collected using qualitative research methods. The data consists of seven (7) semi-structured interviews and written materials. The research data was analyzed using the Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) that is used to examine people's lived experiences.

The research findings suggest that coaching style managerial practice can be used to enable independent thinking, problem-solving and action-planning in employees. A manager that coaches invests in building relationships based on open communication, listening and empowering the independent ways of working. However, to develop a high performance culture by utilizing coaching style managerial practice, the HR professionals need to be equipped with coaching skills and willingness to promote coaching in their developmental activities.

KEY WORDS: Coaching, coaching style managerial practice, high performance culture

1. INTRODUCTION

The globalized economy, fast pace of change, a growing pressure to renew and the overall unstableness of the labor market have created a new set of developmental challenges for businesses. Aside from those factors, the nature of work, which is more and more project and team oriented have played a part in the development of new leaderships and management approaches. The main emphasis is no longer on control and authority. Instead leading skills and general relationship orientation as well as professional and personal growth and development and learning are held in high regard in terms of business success and retained competitive advantage. (Bennet & Wayne Bush 2009; Ellinger & Bostrom 1999; Gregory & Levy 2010.)

Since the nineties the popularity of coaching for the leaders and the workforce has grown. One of the primary purposes of coaching has been leadership development. With the help of coaching organizations get new tools for change management and for the enhancement and improvement of the organizational performance and overall functioning. Coaching can also act as a way of supporting innovating and organizational commitment. (Tompson, Vickers, London & Morrison 2008; Bennet & Wayne Bush 2009.) According to the 2013 International Coach Federation (ICF) study report coaching is generally not introduced to an organization for any certain event or occurrence but the decision to implement it is made over time. The report mentions development of talents, succession planning and prevention of executive level work exhaustion as some of the motives to start implementing coaching into an organization. (2013 ICF Organizational Coaching Study.) One of the central motives for implementing coaching into organizations is its potential to assist and advocate learning. Coaching can serve as means to transfer behaviors and coaching approaches as well as embedded collective learning processes that initially take place on individual level to all organizational levels. (Swart & Harcup 2013).

The early research on managerial coaching, that is managers utilizing coaching skills, focused on coaching as means of correcting deficiencies in employees' performance (Gilley, Gilley & Kouider 2010). Coaching style managerial practice can be utilized to "eliminate human, structural, and cultural barriers while leveraging individual and organizational resources and strengths" (Nyhan, 1999, cited in Gilley et al. 2010). This requires different set of skills for leaders and managers that have not been needed in the past. The nature of

interactions between employees and managers in managerial coaching is very different from that of more directive leadership style. Aside from all the benefits that managerial coaching offers, there has also been debate about some issues on practicalities. Conflicts of interest and confidentiality can arise when putting managerial coaching into practice and they can act as barriers to coaching effectiveness. (Wheeler 2011.)

In addition to upper management and line managers, coaching is seen as an essential competence for professionals in charge of human resource development (HRD). Talent management being at the top of the list for HRD professionals it is no wonder that The Association of Talent Development (ATD) has put coaching among the top ten special skills in their competency model. Developing coaching skills for the HRD professionals is also a way to increase their training and developmental skills and thus their credibility in the eyes of line managers. (ATD web page; Ellinger & Kim 2014; Cox, Bachkirova & Clutterbuck 2014.)

1.1 The focus of this research

More and more companies are realizing that to create sustainable change and consistent improvement in performance levels some changes in the leadership style used are required. The multifaceted operational environment where companies operate nowadays is no longer favorable to hierarchical and task-oriented management style. When the structures based on hierarchy and power are eliminated the central element of leadership will be supporting and enabling the growth and development of subordinates. Communication will be based on trust and openness and interaction can be more solution-based and open in all directions. Change is not feared but welcomed. As a tool for leadership development coaching prepares leaders and managers for those every-day encounters that require responsibility, awareness and self-belief. (Ellinger & Bostrom 1999; Whitmore 2009: 29, 176–177.)

For quite an extensive period coaching practice was based on methods and practices that "just worked". The empirical studies up until the year 2000 provided very little solid evidence for the coaching field. Kampa-Kokesch's literature research review in 2001 started a new wave of research and since then, a wider variety of evidence on the positive impact of coaching and its potential to help individuals and organizations has been introduced. Research that followed dealt with the effect of coaching on the return of investment, impact of coaching on

leadership behavior, performance and effectiveness of executive coaching, among others. (Passmore & Gibbes 2007.)

Organizations are prepared to make large investments to enhance organizational functions. In recent years, organizations have been changing the ways coaching is used. For a long time, coaching was the privilege of executives and key talents in an organization, or alternatively was utilized as a performance remedy for underperforming employees. (Bennet & Wayne Bush 2009.) It is still to this day quite common that coaching is introduced to an organization through executive coaching. Coaching is seen as one of the elemental tools to train management and strategic capabilities of executives. As for the individual benefits; coaching provides the essential channel for feedback. The executives need to become aware of how they and their performance are perceived in order to develop leadership effectiveness. (Feldman & Lankau 2005; Bozer, Sarros & Santora 2014.)

Many organizations are also making structural changes to enable new approaches in managerial practices to evolve. Such approaches put the emphasis on inclusion, involvement and participation of employees in all aspects of their work. Managers are increasingly expected to have an input in supporting their subordinates' skill and performance development; in essence, to act as facilitators and enabling figures for learning and development. To have the competence and confidence to coach the subordinates, the managers will benefit from receiving coaching first themselves. Without firsthand experience of being coached, creating a coaching style of culture within an organization may surely prove to be too challenging a task for a manager. (Ellinger & Bostrom 1999; Ellinger, Hamlin & Beattie 2008; Hamlin, Ellinger & Beattie 2006.)

Although there is clear evidence of the benefits of coaching on individual level, the coaching processes in different organizations vary greatly (Tompson et al. 2008; Bennet & Wayne Bush 2009). Benefits of coaching on other than individual level have not been researched extensively. Coaching success is dependent on all parties that are participating. It is of utmost importance that all people that are involved in coaching have a clear understanding of the purposes of coaching and what developmental areas it is supposed to have an effect on before any major effort is made to implement coaching practices. Studies have shown that a well-defined purpose for coaching correlated strongly with the observed coaching success. (Bennett & Wayne Bush 2009; Tompson et al. 2008.) McDermott, Levenson & Newton

(2007) state in their study that the outcomes of coaching are better in organizations where coaching practices are coordinated and the evaluation of its effectiveness is centralized. According to the study however, it is common that coaching processes are not planned and managed consistently nor are the outcomes measured systematically.

Existing literature emphasizes the role of the leaders for coaching success. In this study coaching is considered as a holistic phenomenon. Kets de Vries & Cheak (2010: xxxii) describe the holistic approach to be above all developing the organizational culture in such a way that all parties in the organization can build sincere and respecting coaching based communication with the objective of improving the existing state and performance of the entire organization. They emphasize that it is important that the coaching principles are embedded into the organizational culture and that the leaders have the necessary skills to live according to those principles.

However, coaching outcomes on personal level have been studied in the past. Research on managerial coaching as a culture shaping tool is scarce. (McDermott et al. 2007; Hawkins 2012; Gormley & van Nieuwerburgh 2014; Megginson & Clutterbuck 2006.) Moreover, studies are often not conducted in a specific organizational context. Until now, studies on managerial coaching have discussed mainly the skills and behaviors associated with effective and ineffective managerial coaching (e.g. Ellinger et al. 2008; Hamlin et al. 2006; Longenecker & Neubert 2005), managerial coaching for better results (e.g. Longenecker 2010) and managerial coaching for organizational development and learning (Ladyshewsky 2009; Ellinger & Bostrom 1999; Hagen & Gavrilova Aguilar 2012) to name a few. Although the number of papers focusing on managerial coaching have increased within the last decade there are still very few studies that examine managerial coaching in a specific organizational context and how managerial coaching contributes to the development of high performance culture.

In order to fill the research gap, the research question is:

How do top management and HR perceive coaching to impact leadership and operational culture development?

Coaching in this context refers to all and any elements of coaching that can be found in HR processes and programs as well as in managerial practice.

1.2 The central terms and the theoretical framework of the study

The central terms of the study are managerial coaching or coaching style managerial practice, coaching, executive coaching and coaching culture.

Managerial coaching in essence is employee empowerment and offering support and tools for individual and group learning and development. A manager acting as a coach has the aim of developing the organization by developing talent; supporting subordinates' self-reflective learning in order to improve performance and grow professionally and personally. (Hunt & Weintraub 2011; Gregory & Levy 2010; Beattie, Kim, Hagen, Egan, Ellinger & Hamlin 2014; Hamlin et al. 2006.)

In this research managerial coaching is defined as **"a continuous conversation and collaboration between a manager and an individual employee or a work team in order to facilitate learning and development of skills and behaviors that enable solving one's challenges and problems as well as providing motivational feedback in order to support the attainment of high performance levels".**

Managerial coaching in general, according to the definitions above, contains the following elements: a coaching manager / business leader or direct manager that encourages, enables, facilitates, helps and empowers the employees or subordinates to improve, grow, develop and learn. This kind of managerial engagement emphasizes the manager-employee relationship; the manager is expected to have a real interest in the employees' improvement and development. The main focus such managerial practice is to ensure the employees' high performance and growing capability to solve one's job-related challenges. (Ellinger 2013; Hunt & Weintraub 2011; Hagen 2012; Gregory & Levy 2010.)

From now on managerial coaching and coaching style managerial practice are used as synonyms. The latter is a practical term and thus appears more in real life use.

This research examines coaching from two perspectives that are considerably pervasive presence in the coaching literature; executive and managerial coaching. In **executive coaching** the empirical evidence is scarce in comparison with the practical literature (Feldman & Lankau 2005). Douglas & McCauley (1999) define executive coaching as a short- to medium-term relationship between a coaching consultant and an executive with the intention of improving the executive's work effectiveness. The desired improvements are usually pre-defined and generally focus on self-awareness and learning in order to aid the executive or manager in question and the organization as a whole (Joo 2005).

Lastly, an essential term in this thesis is a **coaching friendly context or organizational culture**, to which the coaching literature commonly refers as "coaching culture". As a definition "coaching culture" has no scientific base nor is there shared understanding what it constitutes but it is largely used in the midst of the practitioners (Megginson & Clutterbuck 2006). It refers to coaching practices and skills embedded in the organizational culture. (Hunt & Weintraub 2011). Developing a coaching culture in organizations in essence is "integrating coaching into the deep processes of performance and renewal" (Megginson & Clutterbuck 2006: 233). Coaching friendly context in managerial coaching is the prerequisite for the application of coaching as facilitative practice for learning and development. The values and prevailing attitudes of the organizations need to support the use of coaching, since it requires a high level of open communication and confidentiality. (Hunt & Weintraub 2011.) In this thesis the coaching friendly context will be referred to as coaching culture.

Table 1. is intended to clarify the terminology to avoid confusion and to point out that different types of coaching are suitable for different purposes even if they are used in one organization simultaneously. Different types of coaching will be further discussed in chapter 2.

Table 1. Central terms used in this thesis.

	Executive coaching	**Coaching in HR**	**Managerial coaching**
Purpose	(Top) management development	Leadership Development Performance Management	**Employee / team development**
Actor	Coach / Coaching professional	(Internal coach) HR professional	Manager as coach / Coaching manager
Recipient	Client Coachee	Individuals or groups	Employee Subordinate Coachee

The word **coach** according to the Oxford dictionary has two significances: 1) Is an instructor or a trainer in sports or 2) a private tutor who gives extra teaching. Other significances vary from "authoritarian", "disciplinary figure" to "counselor", "mentor" and "guide". Generally, in research literature a coach is referred to be a person in relationship to another individual. Purpose of such a relationship is to provide feedback and accountability with improved performance and talent development. (Longenecker 2010: 33.) In managerial coaching the coach is called manager as coach or coaching manager.

Coachee in turns refers to the person on the receiving end of the coaching, even though a coaching relationship's success is largely dependent on its reciprocity. In executive coaching the coachee is often referred to as the client. (Peterson 2010.) In managerial coaching the coachee is often referred to as either the subordinate or the employee.

Lastly, Berg & Karlsen (2012) suggest that "leaders care about both their employees and the financial results. Managers are more impersonal and place greater emphasis on efficiency, for example by focusing on goals, procedures and systems without involving employees." In this thesis the terms leader and manager, or verbs lead and manage are used interchangeably. There is no intention to emphasize any differences in their connotations.

Next, the framework that guides the literature review in chapter 3 and analysis in chapter 5 is introduced. Further on, also the findings are discussed utilizing this framework in chapter 6.

1.2.1 The integral coaching framework

This research is built around a theoretical framework that is derived from Ken Wilber's integral model. Integral model refers to the systemic holistic philosophy and it deals with all aspects of humanity; body, mind, heart and soul. The model has been applied to various fields, such as art, education, spirituality and personal development to name a few. (Brock 2008; Salomaa 2015.) In this research the model is utilized to make sure that the phenomenon under study is approached from all the important perspectives and levels. The integral model "can be used to bring more clarity, care, and comprehensiveness to virtually any situation, making success much more likely" (Wilber 2005). The stripped down version of the model is comprised of four perspectives: "I" (subjective), "IT" (objective), "WE" (intersubjective) and "ITS" (interobjective). In short, the distinctions between the perspectives are between individual and collective as well as subjective and objective dimensions. All dimensions are inter-connected. (Wilber 2005; Brock 2008:110; Salomaa 2015.)

Now, to apply the integral model into coaching framework the quadrants represent the following: "I" refers to the coach and coachee as individuals and their subjective experiences, "WE" to coaching relationships; language and cultures; "IT" to behaviors, processes, models and techniques that can be observed and measured by a third party and "ITS" to systems, such as the organization, families and other social and professional groups that are at the background in a coaching process and influence it (Bachkirova, Cox & Clutterbuck 2014: 5; Salomaa 2015). (See figure 1.)
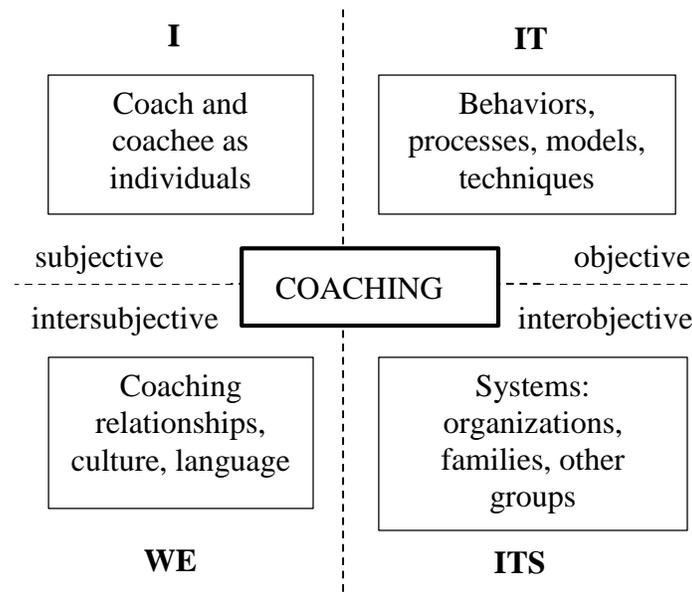
Figure 1. The integral coaching framework (Bachkirova, Cox & Clutterbuck 2010: 5).

Wilber's model's use in a coaching context is to make sure that any standpoint is not overly emphasized. That is the exact aim for this study as well. The model shapes both the literature review in chapter 3 and the presentation of the research findings in chapter 5 as well as conclusions in chapter 6.

1.3 Structure of the thesis

The research consists of six parts. The introduction presents coaching as a phenomenon and situates it in the organizational context. After the introduction the aim of the research and the research question follow. The first chapter introduces the basic terminology that is linked to coaching and clarifies the contexts in which different terms are used. Then Wilber's integral framework is presented that has been used to construct the literature review and present the research findings and conclusions.

Chapter 2 outlines the roots of coaching and depicts how it differs from other developmental practices such as mentoring, counselling and consulting. Next there is a review of coaching

research literature in general and a short introduction of evidence-based coaching. After a briefly going over the coaching practitioner in organization executive and managerial coaching are defined. The last part of the chapter presents other types of coaching besides those mentioned before.

Chapter 3 is the literature reviews is presented by using Wilber's integral model.

Chapter 4 presents the methodological aspects and choices relevant for this research; first the philosophical standpoint of the researcher, then the research approach followed by the qualitative research methods for collecting and analyzing the data. The trustworthiness aspects of conducting a research are discussed shortly. The latter part of the chapter consists of the description of the data collection and analysis process, contemplates some basic ethical aspects in research and introduces the case company that provided the research data.

In chapter 5 the research findings are presented also following the coaching framework as in chapter 3; fist the findings on coaching mindset and self of coach, the "I" perspective, are discussed; the second section is about the findings on coaching relationships and "coaching culture" development, the "WE" perspective; third section presents the coaching behaviors, skills and tool that arose from the data, the "IT" perspective, and the last section presents the finding from the stakeholder, "ITS", perspective.

Chapter 6 discusses the research findings in the light of the research question. The chapter also contains the discussion and the practical contributions of the research, limitations of the research and lastly makes suggestions for future studies.

2. COACHING IN ORGANIZATIONS

To start off this chapter some basic differences between coaching and other developmental practices are discussed. Then the review of coaching research elaborates on the current state of coaching research and presents a brief background on how coaching as a field of study and practice has developed. Next there is a short description of coaching practitioners that engage in coaching activities and the role of HR professionals is discussed in relation to organizational development. Towards the end the chapter broader definitions of executive and managerial coaching are described followed by a short introduction of other types of workplace coaching; team coaching and peer coaching.

Before fully focusing on coaching it is good to have a look on the basic differences between coaching and other developmental practices. Coaching, counselling, mentoring and consulting and have all been utilized as helping and developmental practices in organizations. Sometimes these terms are used interchangeably. Although differentiating them has proven difficult, they do differ in certain aspects. The main difference between coaching and counselling is the initial motivation, which in coaching is to enhance life and improve performance and develop work-related outcomes whereas counselling deals with eliminating psychological problems and dysfunctions. Coaching, as opposed to some therapeutic forms of counselling, is also strongly focused on coachees's present and future goals, not on the individual's past experiences. (McLean 2012: 5; Ellinger & Kim 2014: 129.)

In mentoring, the scenario is created around the master-apprentice relationship where the senior, experienced individual helps the junior to become proficient in his/her given role in the organization. Mentoring relationship can last up to five years and after the formal phase of the relationship is over the participants can be colleagues. (Whitmore 2009: 13¸ Law 2013: 53; Feldman & Lankau 2005: 831.) Coaching as an intervention is more likely to have an end date, as in executive coaching, and is considered to be more performance-centered and not necessarily dependent on coach's dominant expertise (Law 2013; Feldman & Lankau 2005).

Lastly, coaching and consulting differ in their focus. The consultant is normally an expert on some specific area and has the function of solving a dilemma that is hindering an organization from achieving high performance. (McLean 2012: 5.)

Next, a review of coaching research is presented.

2.1 Review of coaching research

Coaching as a field of study has evolved within time deriving frameworks and influences from various disciplines such as sociology, psychology, human resource management, adult education and management consulting to name a few (Brock 2008). Due to the various contexts in which coaching is practiced, for several years now there has been an ongoing discussion about what defines coaching as a profession and what kind of credentials, academic background and skills one needs to be or become a professional in coaching. Reviewing the existing literature, psychology (humanistic and clinical) and business (organizational development, management, consulting) and adult learning and development currently have the most theoretical influence on coaching practice and research. (Brock 2008; Grant 2006; Ellinger & Kim 2014.)

ICF together with other professional bodies, such as Association of Coaching (AC) and European Mentoring and Coaching Association (EMCC) have influenced significantly the professionalization and development of coaching. Professional background and credibility of coaches has been a keen subject of interest in coaching literature. Grant & Cavanagh (2004) argue in their article that the coaching industry has reached a "mature" stage, to which three interrelated forces contribute: (1) accumulated coaching experience; (2) variety of fields, where coaching professionals come from, and (3) HR professionals' increasing awareness and critical caution in assessing the practicing coaches' professional credentials.

The coaching professionals recognize the need to base the practice on solid theoretical foundation and empirically tested models. On the other hand, because of the broad array of backgrounds that coaches come from it is not given that a coach has the capabilities and knowledge to facilitate a behavior change process with the coachee. Some practitioners and scholars suggest that psychologists have a clear advance as coaches because of their know-how of psychological dynamics and adult development as well as relationship-building skills and understanding of personality and performance evaluation. However, also other views have been presented in the literature. (Peterson 2010: 528; Feldman & Lankau 2005: 832; Grant & Cavanagh 2004; Passmore 2014.)

Coaching related research has become prolific during the past decade or so. As mentioned in the introduction, coaching literature was primarily practice based for quite a while, and only since the early 2000's the quest for more solid scientific base for the practice initiated the research boom. Even so, the critical reviews of executive and managerial coaching literature show that methodologies and measures used in the research field vary a lot and thus research results do not produce wide comparability. In coaching research, "good" research methods such as meta-analyses and randomized controlled trials are rarely found. On the other hand, such quantitative precision is often not sought and needed but rather the selection of research methods is dependent on situational factors, the audience that the research is conducted for and on the phenomena studied. (Bozer et al. 2014; Grant 2016.)

The coaching-based theory is scarce. In executive coaching field practice has been way ahead of theory in the existing literature. Peterson (2010) summarizes that coaching literature has most commonly borrowed models and theoretical foundations directly from other disciplines, such as different therapy models, positive psychology or from social psychology and learning theory, or even some philosophical schools. Stober & Parry (2005) state that the backgrounds of coaches and coaching researchers dictate the domains where the theory base is derived from and this can cause compartmentalization of research as well as contradictions on where coaching belongs and should come from. They also conclude that the coaching research will benefit from the infusion of different disciplines instead of comparing them to one another.

The rapid growth of the coaching industry has evoked the need to set the practice on solid empirical evidence and proven, tested models. Evidence-based coaching stands for coaching practice that evolves from scientifically proven methods and processes. Thus the research objectives do not arise purely from scientific needs but practice dictates relevant areas for research. Evidence-based coaching acknowledges the need to support the coaching practitioners with the best current knowledge. Only those two aspects together can assist in designing effective coaching processes to develop the individual or teams being coached. (Cavanagh & Grant 2005: introduction; Stober & Grant 2006: 6; Grant 2016.)

Aside from coaching models and approaches, the notion of coaching effectiveness is of utmost importance in theory development (Stober & Parry 2005). Bartlett II, Boylan & Hale (2014) conducted a research that reviewed the existing executive coaching literature and

found that the two critical tasks affecting coaching effectiveness are the ability to establish a strong collaborative relationship and the enhancement of the vision of the learner.

When it comes to managerial coaching literature, according to Anderson (2013) the literature relating to managerial coaching is based upon specialist and executive coaching models and approaches. Therefore, managerial coaching, even more than executive coaching, as a field of study suffers from lack of sound theoretical foundations. There is very little research that examines the applicability of the models and behaviors that have originally been designed with executive coaching in mind and then simply are considered to be applicable in the managerial coaching setting. Beattie et al. (2014) support this view and add that if coaching is presented to managers in an overly optimistic manner, and that the everyday learning experiences may cause unfavorable insights about coaching. Thus more studies are needed to address and demonstrate the impact that managerial coaching has on individual and/or organizational learning and performance. Hagen (2012) also points out, that there has been no attempt to integrate the results of the small research base that does exists.

In the literature review the researcher did not come across case studies that would have explored how coaching has been linked to leadership developmental activities and how it can be linked to positively impacting the overall operational culture. In this study the aim is to examine these unexamined aspects.

Next, there is a short elaboration of the coaching practitioners and the role of HR in coaching.

2.2 Coaching practitioners and role of HR

Organizations may use both external and internal coaches. **External coaches** are utilized mostly to develop and train the high potential individuals, or executive level leaders and leadership; thus affiliating the efficiency and functionality of the entire organization. The main reason an external coach is selected aside from the fact that the companies are rarely willing to sacrifice the senior executive resources for this purpose. There is also the need to get a fresh set of eyes to observe the functions of the organization. To be able to advance in development of the organization there are probably some issues that only an outside objective source can pinpoint. (McDermott et al. 2007.)

Internal coaching usually falls on the shoulders of HRD professionals and line-managers. Manager as coach is as such, utilizing coaching methods in leadership, whereas an authentic internal coach is a person that is not in command of those being coached. In essence, the only difference between external and internal coach is that the internal coach is an employee of the same organization as the coachees. The main function of the internal coach is to assist in professional growth and improve coachees' effectiveness. (St John-Brooks 2014.) Using managers as coaches and other internal coaches offers a more economical alternative for organizations. Instead of buying coaching services from professional coaches for long periods of time, organizations can train and develop internal coaches that have a better understanding of organizational goals, strategies and prevailing culture. Moreover, the coaching process can be better integrated to the context, when the development happens on site. (Beattie et al. 2014; Berg & Karlsen 2012: 189.)

Coaching and Human Resource Development (HRD) have often same objectives, but as it has been stated previously, coaching is most commonly brought and taught into an organization by coaching professionals that are considered to possess the necessary skills to facilitate learning and development. HR professionals also have an important role in coaching. Since coaching practice has a firm foundation as an organizational development and talent management tool; it has become one of the most utilized developmental components in organizations across the world. (Stober & Grant 2006; Hamlin et al. 2008.)

Hamlin et al. (2008; originally formulated by Hamlin 2004) present a definition of HRD: "HRD encompasses planned activities and processes designed to enhance organizational and individual learning, develop human potential, maximize organizational effectiveness and performance, and help bring about effective and beneficial change within and beyond the boundaries of organizations." In their study they cross-examined definitions of different coaching variants and HRD and came up with a conclusion that they depict predominantly similar purposes and processes. Plunkett & Egan (2004, cited in Hamlin et al. 2008: 15) state that executive coaching is fast growing HRD role that aims at putting skilled HRD professionals with knowledge, skills and techniques from psychology and HRD-related fields in charge of developing and implementing efforts to improve executives' effectiveness, learning and performance.

Since the main HRD role is commonly regarded to be training, Lawton Smith & Cox (2007: 5–8) offered a helpful distinction between training and coaching. They stressed that even if both training and coaching are both intended to create development and learning and may use similar techniques the main difference is that training usually involves predetermined and objective areas of knowledge whereas in coaching the individual is at the center and the aim is to help find subjective answers to open questions. Training contains persuasion and leading towards building commitment and responsibility. In coaching the coach cannot predict the coachee's answers and thus is not engaged in determining or leading towards a certain outcome.

Coaching has also been widely used as a leadership development intervention. Coaching can bring new vantage points into leadership development in terms of changing leadership paradigms; the type of beliefs, attitudes and behaviors that are at the core of the management practice. HRD professionals with coaching expertize can design management training and implement models that aim at developing the management culture away from directive management style towards a style that facilitates growth (Bond & Seneque 2012). A shift in the management style requires new capabilities, behaviors and tools. HRD professionals have a critical role in assessing whether the organizational context is favorable to implementing coaching principles into the management processes and training. It has been shown that a premature entry in coaching can ruin its potential success. (Beattie et al. 2014.) Leadership development is further discussed in chapter 3, more from the management's point of view.

The last part of this chapter deals with coaching types and definitions. Coaching interventions in literature have a wide array of different terms, dependent on the context in which it is practiced. Executive and managerial coaching are central in this thesis and therefore they are defined for the purposes of the thesis. Lastly, team coaching and peer coaching are shortly explained.

2.3 Coaching types and definitions

Aside from the differentiation from nearby constructs coaching in itself has been subject to a wide array of definition that have intended to capture its core constructs. Thus the exact nature of coaching and what it is supposed to achieve is far from being unambiguous. There

are various types of coaching presented both in practical and scientific field and different coaching types have many different definitions depending on their purpose, process and definitional descriptions. Common to all types of coaching is the aspect of coaching being a process with the purpose of "providing help to individuals and organizations through some form of facilitation activity or intervention". Hamlin et al. (2008) identified four broad categories of coaching: coaching, executive coaching, business coaching and life coaching. The main differences between different types of coaching are related to their differences in focus and emphasis. **Business coaching** is considered a "collaborative process with the intention of holistically helping businesses, its owners, managers and employees to reach their personal and business-related goals". The focus and emphasis of **coaching** in general is to "improve existing skills, competence and performance, and to enhance personal effectiveness or personal development or personal growth". (Hamlin et al. 2008: 291–295; Ives 2008; Beattie et al. 2014.)

Broader definitions of executive and managerial coaching are presented next. Executive coaching is not the main focus in this thesis. Since it is an important aspect in developing a coaching culture, it will be reviewed briefly.

2.3.1 Executive coaching

"Executive coaching can be defined as the helping relationship which is formed between a client who has managerial authority and responsibility in an organization and a professional coach. Typically, the coach uses a wide variety of behavioral science techniques and methods to help clients achieve a mutually identified job-related set of goals to improve his or her professional and personal performance." (Dai & De Meuse 2007, cited in Bennet & Wayne Bush 2009.)

While the definition mentioned above includes central elements of executive coaching that practitioners and researcher agree on, in the field of executive coaching research an all-encompassing definition has not been formulated. Tobias (1996) claimed that executive coaching is really just deriving activities and techniques from other disciplines (cited in Passmore & Fillery-Travis 2011: 74).

Peterson (2010: 528) cites Kampa & White's (2002) broad definition of executive coaching that includes following elements: There is a consultant acting as a coach with knowledge of

behavior change and organizational functions. At the receiving end of coaching is an individual or a team of people in a managerial position. The purpose of this relationship is to create measurable behavior change through feedback and opportunities for change. Aside from being a formal relationship between an external coach and an executive with the intention of enhancing leadership efficacy, executive coaching is from time to time also used to those with high potential or professional value. (Peterson 2010; Feldman & Lankau 2005.)

Executive coaching is mainly applied on one-one-one coaching situations. The relationship aspect; confidentiality, trust and rapport are essential for coaching success. Executive coaching is commonly a process consisting of several sessions, provided by a professional coach, usually an outsider, that uses fairly structured methodology with the objective of serving both individual and organizational goals. Coaching process is designed to suit the coached person in question so that the individual's abilities to develop and learn independently are supported and catered to. The objectives of the coaching are generally agreed upon in advance. (Peterson 2010: 528–529: Hagen & Peterson 2014.)

Peterson (2010: 529–530) identifies four types of executive coaches. **Feedback coaches** engage normally only in short-term relationships with the focus of the providing third-party feedback or assessments in order to construct a development plan. **Insight+Accountability coaches** engage in a longer process to help the client clarify values and goals. A clear action-plan is executed to realize a goal. The coaching process has also the motive of increasing client's awareness and responsibility**. Content coaches** typically possess expert skill in some area and the relationship with the client is more of that of an advisor offering feedback and problem-solving consultation. **Development-process coaches** in this category normally are psychologists and/or other behavioral science experts that can offer assistance in any area of the "development pipeline", such as building motivation and insight, in problem-solving, real-world practice and follow-up procedures.

Next, the definitions and basic principles of managerial coaching will be presented.

2.3.2 Managerial coaching

For the purposes of this thesis managerial coaching is defined as **"a continuous conversation and collaboration between a manager and an individual employee or a work team in**

order to facilitate learning and development of skills and behaviors that enable solving one's challenges and problems as well as providing motivational feedback in order to support the attainment of high performance levels".

The current research posits the focus of managerial coaching on helping to improve the employees' performance and enhancing learning through facilitation. Such form of coaching happens between the manager and his or her subordinates, either as a dyadic, one-on-one relationship or in a team context. (Hagen & Peterson 2014.) In research literature managerial coaching has been defined by numerous authors. The table below presents some definitions that are commonly cited in managerial coaching literature.

Table 2. Managerial coaching definitions.

"A manager or supervisor serving as a coach or facilitator of learning in the workplace setting, in which he or she enacts specific behaviors that enable his/her employee (coachee) to learn and develop" (Ellinger et al. 2010: 258, cited in Ellinger 2013).
"A business leader and manager who helps his or her employees learn and develop through coaching, who creates a workplace that makes learning, growth, and adaptation possible, and who combines leadership with a genuine interest in helping those around him or her" (Hunt & Weintraub 2011).
"A coaching manager is one who encourages the development of a high performance work environment through management practices that value and support the facilitation of learning" (Ellinger, Ellinger & Keller 2003, cited in Hagen 2012).
"A developmental activity in which an employee works one-on-one with his/her direct manager to improve current job performance and enhance his/her capabilities for future roles and/or challenges, the success of which is based on an effective relationship between the employee and manager, as well as the use of objective information, such as feedback, performance data, or assessments" (Gregory & Levy 2010).

According to the definitions above, the manager or business leader acts as a coach, utilizing a coaching approach in the managerial practice. Coaching between a manager and an employee involves the manager engaging in behaviors and using skills that are meant to enable and empower; create conditions and provide resources with which the employees can excel. Other feature of managerial coaching is encouraging; providing feedback and support. Facilitative behaviors refer to the manager engaging the employee in proactive and independent problem-solving and action-planning. Overall, the focus in managerial coaching is to enable learning and developing skills and aptitudes that will enhance employees'

performance. Lastly, an essential feature of managerial coaching is the relationship-orientation; the manager expected to have a real interest in the employees' improvement and development. (Ellinger 2013; Hunt & Weintraub 2011; Hagen 2012; Gregory & Levy 2010.)

To broaden the previously presented elements of managerial coaching it can be seen to contain long-term developmental aspects as well being an engagement that takes place either in one-on-one situations or work teams. (Berg & Karlsen 2016; Ellinger & Kim 2014). Due to the organizational setting where managerial coaching takes place it has a lot more unstructured elements than executive coaching. Managerial coaching is more of a continuous conversation and collaboration between the manager and the employee. The underlying intention is to help the employee reach his/her full potential. Coaching is the tool to resolve the tasks at hand and to develop skills needed to progress. Coaching can also be seen as a process of providing motivational feedback. Because of the multiple roles the managerial practice requires from the managers, by coaching they become more actively involved with their employees. (Gilley, Gilley & Kouider 2010.)

In conclusion; the definition of managerial coaching for this study presented above implies that coaching practices in everyday work life consist of not only formal situations but also of informal one-on-one or group conversations. In addition, the definition puts an emphasis on the manager's role as a facilitative and empowering figure. The intention is to provide concrete support and encouragement for the development of good problem-solving skills and goal-oriented ways of working. Providing informal and encouraging feedback is meant to support in the attainment of goals and continuous development of the people in the team.

Next, team coaching and peer coaching are introduced briefly.

2.3.3 Other types of workplace coaching

Besides executive and managerial coaching other forms of coaching that are popular include team and group coaching and peer coaching. Both team and peer coaching are integral parts of developing a coaching culture, and for that reason they will be presented here briefly.

Group and team work has become a common way to organize work. High performing teams are an asset in the maintenance of competitive advantage. It has been proven that the

leadership style of a high performing team has a lot to do with the long-term high-performance levels and attainment of complex goals. (Hagen & Gavrilova Aguilar 2012.) **Group** and **team coaching** is defined by Clutterbuck (2010) as **"**a learning intervention designed to increase collective capability and performance of a group or team, through application of the coaching principles of assisted reflection, analysis and motivation for change." Zeus & Skiffington (2000, cited in Berg & Karlsen 2012) and Clutterbuck (2010) present a more hands-on approach to team coaching. They consider a team coach to be someone that acts as a facilitator for problem solving and conflict management. The coach's responsibility is also to keep a close eye on the team performance and be the coordinator between the team and the management sponsor.

Team coaching context is very different from one-to-one coaching. The team coach needs to be aware, for example, of confidentiality issues, differing paces of thinking, decision making and trust building. In teams the participants' personal differences become apparent and the coach needs to coordinate these differences so that the team can become efficient. That is why team coaching is often used in the team formation process. In other instances, the team coach can be a part of the team, participating in the tasks. It has been noticed, however, that a coach that is not taking part in the team's output, but instead is there to provide feed-back, help with reflection, facilitate strategic thinking or team learning is more likely to be successful. (Clutterbuck 2010.)

Peer coaching stands for a dyadic relationship between peers, be it managers or employees. The aim of peer coaching is usually performance improvement of either both or one member of the coaching dyad (Hagen & Peterson 2014). Ladyshewsky's (2010) definition of peer coaching states it as a "development process involving a coach and a coachee, with relatively equal status, focusing on expanding, refining and/or building new skills, leadership tools and knowledge in training and workplace situations". Peer coaching can occur spontaneously, or it can be a formal process. The latter is preferable since without the formality it is possible that important aspects, such as rapport building, development of trust and confidentiality may suffer. Peer coaching is usually initiated when the coachee recognizes developmental needs. Alternatively, peer coaching can be used as a reciprocal learning method for managers that have skills and professional backgrounds that complement each other. Important aspect of a peer coaching relationship is the absence of power distance. The participants can disclose

personal experiences and doubts to an equal partner more easily than in a leader-follower relationship. (Beattie et al. 2014; Ladyshewsky 2010.)

Next chapter explains the relevant aspects of coaching literature that are written out in accordance with the coaching framework derived from Wilber's integral model. The purpose for the use of this model is to make sure that coaching as a developmental approach is examined holistically and that none of the quadrant is overly emphasized.

3. COACHING FOR LEADERSHIP AND CULTURE DEVELOPMENT

This chapter is a brief literature review that looks at the aspects of coaching relevant for this study. The chapter is structured according to the coaching framework that is derived from Wilber's integral model (see chapter 1). The main focus of this chapter is coaching style managerial practice and how coaching principles are utilized in developing organizational and operational cultures. As mentioned before, a lot of the approaches and models presented in coaching literature have not been designed for just one particular form of coaching (Anderson 2013). In this chapter both executive and managerial coaching literatures relevant for this study are reviewed. Furthermore, it is worth pointing out that the following literature review is by no means exhaustive and thus not fully representative of the whole body of research in coaching. The elements that are taken under scrutiny here are solely been selected to fit the purposes of this study.

In this chapter the perspectives of the coaching framework are presented in the following order: First, the "I" perspective that consists of the coaching mindset and the concept of self of coach. Second, the "WE" perspective is represented which entails the culture, relationships and language; in this context the coaching relationship and developing a coaching friendly organizational context. Third comes the "IT" perspective t that looks at the outer behaviors of a coaching manager and describes the skills and capabilities that are connected to coaching style managerial practice. The last perspective "ITS" is the systemic level and for the purposes of this thesis in this section coaching for development will be viewed from the point of view of different stakeholders that are in key roles in defining the extent of use of coaching in organizations.

First, the different roles that managerial work entails are discussed shortly followed by contemplating the attitudes, thoughts and beliefs that affect the development of coaching mindset and working with the self.

3.1 Developing the coaching mindset and self-of-coach – I perspective

When examining the coaching as a phenomenon in the organizational context it is good to stop and consider the multi-faceted nature of managerial work as it is very complex in today's

organizations. Effective managerial work requires flexible use of different leadership methods from the manager. It goes without saying that the manager faces numerous situations in daily work life, where the ability to change roles to deal with issues at hand skillfully is very important. To avoid role conflicts the different roles of the manager need to be transparent and known to all throughout the organization. This is where an understanding and capacity to utilize different approaches comes in handy. To help managers succeed in this multi-dimensional post, the organization will benefit from engaging in leadership development activities. Coaching as an approach to leadership development has received large support in the literature for its benefits for learning, development and performance management. (Ladyshewsky 2009; Harper 2012; McCarthy & Milner 2013; Sims 2002.)

Throughout the years there have been studies conducted examining the impact of different leadership styles to the organizational success. Equally there is some evidence that the use of multiple leadership styles is a very effective way to create an influential relationship between a leader and a subordinate. That is why coaching style managerial practice may prove to be effective, since it equips the leader with large variety of tools as well as activates to develop the emotional and relational aspects of leadership competences. (Harper 2012.)

Barner (2011) identifies 5 "hidden" roles of managerial coaches as an agent of leadership development and a medium between the subordinate and the higher lever leaders. Skills of an organizational translator refer to the manager's ability to communicate the work requirements of the subordinates to the higher level leaders and ensure that the leaders understand and identify the "demand features" that create the greatest developmental challenges in the organization. Manager acting as a performance consultant means that the manager strives to create understanding of how to connect the performance development and personal development so that the outcome is not only visible in the bottom-line but in the overall development critical leadership behaviors. The third role of a manager is that of a development assessor: the manager's ability to assess the most relevant target of development in order to further develop and challenge the leaders' abilities. The last two of the five roles are cognitive mentor and brand advisor. The former refers to the ability to voice the cognitive process of, for example, a modeling session that intends to form a clear action pattern how to get from A to B. The latter, role of a brand advisor means that the manager gives targeted feedback to help the subordinates develop their "brand"; what they want to become and how

they want to be perceived. (Barner 2012: 40–44.) Next, the aspects of coaching mindset and self of coach are examined.

Stokes & Jolly (2010: 248–249) suggest that the type of people that generally aspire to be in leadership positions have a strong inclination to high achievement and desire for success as well as for power. Sometimes this can lead to putting excessive emphasis on control, focusing on action instead of thinking, the need to be right, feel powerful and overcommitting to work, to name a few. Ellinger et al. (2008) point out that it is quite possible that some managers may find it challenging to make a shift in their approach of leading their employees in situations where there is a problem to be solved. Empowering and facilitating people to think through their issues and come up with solutions is a very distinct approach to those managers that are used to prescribing and ordering. So, in addition to being willing to approach leadership differently, certain skills and knowledge to equip the managers to become coaching style managers is required. (Hicks & McCracken 2009; Ellinger et al. 2008.)

Adopting coaching principles in the management practice can be dependent on the managers' willingness to develop and learn (Beattie et al. 2014). If there is willingness, then it is a matter of acquiring knowledge and skills as well as applying them in practice. It has been shown that managers that receive coaching are more goal-oriented and relationship oriented than those that have not been coached. Overall managers that have received coaching are more interested in learning and developing themselves and their self-awareness. (Berg & Karlsen 2016.)

Ellinger, Beattie & Hamlin (2014: 259, originally developed by Hunt & Weintraub 2002) present the characteristics of managers are considered to be the attitudes and beliefs that constitute the **coaching mindset**: an attitude of helpfulness, less need for control, empathy, openness to personal learning and receiving feedback, a desire to help and assist in development of others and a belief that most people want to learn. Ellinger et al. (2014) also refer to earlier work by Ellinger & Bostrom (2002) in which they identified three categories of beliefs that effective managerial coaches had. The first category had to do with roles and capabilities; the managers believed that it was indeed their role to facilitate people's development and they also believed that they possessed the necessary skills to do it. The second category was about learning and learning processes. These managers believed that learning was important, and a continuous and shared process. The last category measured the

managers' beliefs about learners. The common belief was that their employees were capable of learning and wanted to learn. The need for the learners to have enough information in order to learn, and the need for them to understand reasons for why things are done a certain way, was also acknowledged.

Next, there is a short overview of **self of coach** that implies to the inner processes that precede any outer behavioral change. Two concepts of working with the self are presented. The self can be considered to consist of the head and the body. The head consists of the sensory receptors and the brain where thoughts and emotions are processed. The body in turn is where the physical actions and reactions are initiated. Working on one's thoughts and beliefs is basically learning to recognize one's feelings and psychological responses as well as behavioral influences, and work on them. (Law 2013: 120–121.) The self has a unique capacity that has been termed "reflexivity". It refers to the ability of a human to take an objective view of the self (Carver 2003). McLean's (2012) introduces a concept of **self as coach** that entails self-perceptions and needs of the coach that is discussed later on.

Bachkirova (2013) presents a consistent theory that contains a set of ideas about the self. The theory has been developed in a setting that posits the manager or executive in developmental coaching situations which intends to create deeper understanding to elemental question about identity, how they engage with the world and change and how change can be influenced.

Bachkirova's (2013: 144) suggests based on earlier studies that understanding the self consists of three elements: Sense of I as a pre-reflective self-consciousness; ego as an executive center and self-models constructed by a narrator which refers to the reflective and conscious linguistic function of the mind, the so called identity center. The **pre-reflexive I** is the center of awareness and its functioning is immediate and dynamic; there is no premeditation. The **ego as an executive center** refers to the numerous mini-selves that are activated when the person as a whole is involved in an act. There can be many mini-selves activated simultaneously in different situations. The ego functions mainly subconsciously and is responsible for satisfying the needs of a person. If the needs become ambiguous or more complex, some conscious elements come in and delay a final evaluation by "spending time in assessing nuance and subtle layers of significance". This creates more consciousness. The **narrated self-models** refer to all the conscious stories or theories that people may have of the self. They can be formed through the use of language.

In order to create real change that entails the human being as a whole; head and body; Bachkirova (2013: 145–147) suggests that the main mechanisms needed are improving the quality of perception, working with the all the self-models that a person has and also tapping into the unconscious and automated parts of the brain. **Improving the self-perception** puts focus on developing different skills such as active listening skill and observation skills. Improving quality of perception can have two obstacles. The first one is conditioning which refers to our cultural conditioning and absorbing beliefs and attitudes that have not been ever questioned. The second obstacle is self-deception that is voluntary and usually a product of cognitive incompetence, faulty thinking, irrational beliefs and unconscious psychological mechanisms. **Working with the self-models** refers to the narrator that has developed with the ability to use language and is essence is a story-teller that puts together theories of self that one thinks one is. These theories then define how a person responds to change and being aware of the numerous self-models that one has can actually help in trying different roles. Lastly, in order to **tap into the unconscious** which might be necessary when there seems to be missing mini-selves that would be needed to create a change.

Bachkirova's (2013) theory is more concerned with the coach becoming aware of and working with the different aspects of self. McLean's (2012) introduces a concept of **self as coach** that entails self-perceptions and needs. The "inner landscape: habits, behaviors and our ways of making meaning and living in the world" is under development for a self as coach. It is supremely important that a coach be aware of personal inner structures, as well as his or her own weaknesses, strengths and tendencies. Being a coach asks for a strong inclination and willingness to develop both supporting and preventing personality traits that come into use in coaching. A continuously develop, coach also needs people that are reliable 'mirrors' to reflect on demeanor that may require self-corrective action. (McLean 2012.)

The six self-as-coach domains developed by Hudson Institute of Santa Barbara consist of presence, empathetic stance, range of feelings, boundary awareness, somatic awareness and courage to challenge (McLean 2012). The model is originally set in a setting where the coach is the external professional coach. The practical implications of these six domains are different in the manager-employer dyad since the coaching does not take in a formal setting. Nevertheless, they are aspects of the self that the manager will benefit from developing. The first domain **presence** requires ability to be in the moment and be engaged with the employee.

Empathetic stance as the ability to experience and convey empathy is crucial for a coach. **Range of feelings** stands for the coach's readiness to experience and explore a full range of feelings in order for the coachee's, in this case the employee's emotions to surface. **Boundary awareness** requires a clear limits and self-management for the coach, so that he or she can maintain the necessary boundaries to avoid being drawn too deep into the employee's world. **Somatic awareness** refers to the awareness of the manager of his/her mannerisms and way of being and how they are perceived by others. **Courage to challenge** refers to the vital ability to challenge the employee at the right time and be able to voice observations accurately even if they cause discomfort. (McLean 2012.)

To conclude this section of self as coach, a simple and practical strategy that Stokes and Jolly (2010: 250) presented wraps up in four basic steps the process that a manager being coached and inclined to then coach his or her subordinates can embark on:

1. Know yourself – refers to self-awareness overall;
2. Own yourself – becoming accountable to the effect a manager has on other people;
3. Be yourself – value-based action that reflects having congruence between words and action and
4. Help others do the same – supporting others in their aspirations to become better leaders (and employees).

The next section is constructed in two parts. The first one deals with the coaching relationship and the second one with development of coaching-friendly organizational context.

3.2 Developing coaching relationships and a coaching culture – WE perspective

The lower left quadrant of the coaching framework contains the language that enables communication and thus aspects of relationships and culture (see chapter 1). For the purposes of this research the coaching relationships that are formed between the coach and an individual and the development of coaching friendly organizational context are examined.

Coaching relationship can be considered to be a developmental relationship (initially introduced by McCauley & Young 1993), that is a relationship with the objective of

motivating individuals to "learn and grow, expose them to learning opportunities, and provide needed support" (Douglas & McCauley 1999: 203). The idea of coaching as a helping relationship consists of two goals: helping people manage their problems in a more efficient manner and helping people improve at helping themselves (O'Broin & Palmer 2010).

According to Grant (2003: 255) coaching on an individual level is a self-regulatory process, where the coachee sets a goal and through self-reflection carries out a series of processes, namely action planning, action and performance monitoring. Evaluation of personal performance involves comparing it to a standard. In the meantime, important insight is gained. With the evaluation then the coachee can further change the actions to achieve even better results. The role of the coach is to facilitate this this self-regulatory cycle.

The important elements in a coaching relationship are mutual trust, mutual respect, and mutual freedom of expression, which is important for a supportive, open and accepting relationship. The formation of such coaching alliance is attributed to several factors, and is the base for the transformational process that is the intention of the coaching relationship. The coach's aptitude to provide just enough comfort and tolerate tension to enable processing of difficult topics and accomplish real development is an integral part of a coaching. So is also mutual learning; the coach has to have the humility to be responsive to two-way learning that takes place in a successful relationship, not to mention the coach's capacity to assess whether what she/he is doing is assisting or at times possibly even hindering the coaching's success (Gyllensten & Palmer 2007:169; O'Broin & Palmer 2010: 35; McLean 2012: 17, 88.)

Beattie et al. (2014: 195) name four key variables central to the efficiency of managerial coaching relationship: complementary learning style profiles, shared values, exhibition of appropriate coaching and learning behaviors and complementary personality traits. The coach's experience level is seen to be of more importance than more superficial factors such as age, gender and culture, or personality. Also face-to-face contact and frequency of coaching sessions distributes to successful coaching. Naturally, the key to a successful coaching intervention is a coachee that can and wants to be coached. A manager as coach has an essential role in motivating the subordinates to consider different and new behaviors that result in better outcomes. The most important quality in a coachee in turn, is the willingness

to learn and improve when the opportunity is presented (O'Broin & Palmer 2010; Hunt & Weintraub 2011; Gyllensten & Palmer 2007: 168; Ladyshewsky 2009.)

The relationship between a manager and a subordinate is very distinct from the relationship between an executive and the coach or between an internal coach and an employee. The coach for the subordinate is automatically the direct manager, whereas the executive commonly can choose the coach. It is important that people are coached keeping their personal needs in mind. The shared history of the manager and the subordinate bring a certain edge to building and maintaining a coaching relationship. The coaching relationship is vitally important since it is the vehicle for change. The perceived coaching efficiency is also largely dependent on the quality of the relationship. (Gregory & Levy 2010.)

The employee as coachee is responsible for the learning and is an active participant in the coaching process. A lot of the learning comes through the ability to receive feedback from multiple sources in the organizations and allowing other people's feedback influence the made adjustments in thought process and behavior. The manager's role in the coaching relationship is to observe and empower. Naturally, in many occasions the main purpose the manager is coaching the employees is to ensure that the organizational goals are reached. The manager needs the employee's output and is invested in developing it. (Welman & Bachkirova 2010 & Hunt & Weintraub 2011; Fillery-Travis & Lane 2006: 27.) Next, the concept of coaching friendly organizational context is discussed.

Hawkins' (2012: 21) definition of a **coaching culture** is that it "exists in an organization when a coaching approach is a key aspect of how the leaders, managers, and staff engage and develop all their people and engage their stakeholders, in ways that create increased individual, team, and organizational performance and shared value for all stakeholders."

It is suggested that a coaching friendly environment in an organization enhances leadership quality, encourages innovation and adds resources. Introducing a culture of coaching is making a dual commitment to develop the organization in parallel with the individuals in the organization. The foundation to a coaching culture is a solid coaching strategy that is developed together within the organization and is connected to the business strategy and in line with the wider organizational culture. If coaching is not implemented through processes and into the strategy, in the face of everyday urgencies it may be abandoned as it is easier to

adopt a transactional leadership style to get things done. Thus culture of coaching needs especially the support and dedication from the managers, since it takes time, commitment and consistent work to create. Integrating coaching style managerial practice does not happen overnight and by no means can be done in a copy-paste manner from a model. (Megginson & Clutterbuck 2006; O'Broin & McDowall 2014; Gormley & van Nieuwerburgh 2014.)

Coaching culture is not something that can just added on top of the prevailing organizational culture. The existing intertwined cultures of the organizations influence how a coaching process might be successfully introduced and impact the existing constructs. Coaching integrated in an organization appears in willingness and commitment to develop individuals and unlock their potential for the good of the individuals themselves, the organization as well as other stakeholders. (Gormley & van Nieuwerburgh 2014.)

The crucial starting point to implement coaching is an open ambience for learning where all parties feel like problems and challenges can be expressed safely. The creation of coaching friendly context according Hunt & Weintraub (2011: 65) has a lot to do with creating time to reflect on the work and the surroundings, and co-operation between managers and employees. Also, the values; such as trust and openness, tolerance of mistakes and learning for the long term (see table below); and beliefs of an organization are a foundation on which the coaching-friendly environment is built. (Megginson & Clutterbuck 2006; Hunt & Weintraub 2011; O'Broin & McDowall 2014; Gormley & van Nieuwerburgh 2014.)

Table 3. Organizational values and a coaching-friendly context (modified), Hunt & Weintraub (2011).

Supporting values	Inhibiting values
Trust and openness	Mistrust and fear
Tolerance of mistakes, learning from them	Intolerance of mistakes, blaming
Careful attention to hiring the right people	Lack of careful attention to hiring that supports competence
Learning for the long term is important	Focus single-mindedly on evaluating today's performance
Reward systems support time spent developing people	Reward systems focus only on short-term results
People valued as individuals	People's output is relevant

Here two frameworks for developing the coaching culture are presented. First one is by Hawkins (2012) and the second one by Megginson & Clutterbuck (2006). Hawkins (2012) presents a framework for developing coaching culture that consists of seven steps and is built of three pillars of which two were already mentioned in the previous paragraph. Firstly, the development of coaching culture need to be aligned to a coaching strategy that is in turn is aligned to the business strategy. Secondly, the development of coaching culture is part of the overall organizational culture change. The third pillar is coaching infrastructure that refers to the wide training and development of coaching skills throughout the organization. Going through the seven steps is not a linear process and developing a coaching culture requires continuous development of coaching skills and coaching relationships. The seven steps are:

1. Developing external coaching provision, which usually means getting some external coaching professionals involved;
2. Developing internal coaching capacity, which refers to making efforts is training managers to have the skills to coach;
3. Leaders activity supporting coaching endeavors, coaching style managerial practice shaping the overall leadership culture in the organization;
4. Developing team coaching and organizational learning, when coaching is used beyond formal one-on-one sessions and becomes a way to lead the teams and facilitate learning;
5. Embedded in HR and performance management processes, coaching becomes the way to manage performance starting from HR processes;

6. Coaching becomes the dominant style of managing and
7. Coaching becomes how we do business with our stakeholders.

Hawkins (2012: 28) also points out that one of the biggest challenge in creating a coaching culture is that the cost of investing in the development is created in the early stages of the process but the benefits can be reaped not right away, but further down the road.

Megginson & Clutterbuck (2006) suggest that integration of coaching culture takes place in four stages: nascent, tactical, strategic and embedded stages. On **nascent** stage coaching is inconsistent and there is practically no commitment to creating a coaching culture. The coaching behaviors take a back seat in urgent situations that require fast action from the manager. The **tactical** stage description fits an organization that has recognized the value coaching can offer, but the management sees it mainly as HR's business and commitment to coaching behaviors is low. At the **strategic stage** there is already noticeable effort made to increase the managers' and employees' knowledge about the value coaching brings, and also some support provided so that coaching can be applied to variety of situations. Coaching at this stage is still mainly formal. At the final, **embedded stage** people at all levels, between and across functions are engaged in coaching. Junior managers can coach their seniors, and 360-degree feedback system is used to gain insight where the members of the organization can get the most benefits. The skill level of coaching is so high throughout the organization that most of the coaching is completely informal. (Megginson & Clutterbuck 2006: 232–233.)

Next, development of behaviors, skills and tools are examined that have been connected to effective coaching practice. Also, some aspects that may cause managerial coaching ineffectiveness are presented.

3.3 Developing coaching behaviors and skills – IT perspective

The coaching competence is an elaborate mix of skill-based and knowledge-based competencies. The mindset that was previously addressed, and behaviors and skills of a coach among other factors determine the outcomes of a coaching intervention. In this section the focus is on determining what are considered to be the central coaching behaviors and skills the coaching that takes place in the organizational context. Towards the end of this section a

validation model to measure managerial coaching skills developed by McLean et al. (2005) is presented and transferring coaching skills into practice is discussed briefly.

One source of motivation for a manager to start developing coaching skills is also the improved capacity to resolve the issues and problems in his or her own work. Berg & Karlsen (2016) state that coaching style managerial practice has been shown to improve self-confidence and self-control. Self-leadership is not just time management, but covers personal performance management, goal setting and work-life balance issues, aligning values that underlie all managerial practice among other aspects (Marmenout 2010).

A coach's primary task is to facilitate; create favorable conditions, ask the right questions, not to provide ready-made solutions. The important characteristics of a coach are the desire to help, aptitude to empathize, openness to personal learning and capacity to receive feedback. Especially a manager acting as coach will benefit from susceptibility to upward learning, in other words, learning from subordinates. Coaching involves active and reflective listening, asking open questions and affirming to build rapport and influence open exploration for solutions. (Hunt & Weintraub 2011; Beattie et al. 2014; Rettinger 2011; McLean 2012.)

Ellinger & Bostrom (1999) set out to define managerial micro-level behaviors that facilitate learning in organizations. The behaviors consist of empowering and facilitating behavior sets and they are presented in the left column of the table below. The right column presents the behavioral taxonomy developed by Beattie (2002; cited in Ellinger et al. 2010: 261). Hamlin et al. (2006) conducted a research comparing their respective taxonomies they had developed from researches that had been all conducted in different countries and found noticeable congruence. As a result of this comparative study the researchers' considered that the evidence was strong enough to argue that these behaviors would be characteristic of effective leaders. (Ellinger & Bostrom 1999; Ellinger et al. 2010; Hamlin et al. 2006)

Table 4. Coaching behaviors (modified), (Ellinger et al. 2010: 261).

Ellinger's (1997) and Ellinger & Bostrom's (1999) Behavioral Taxonomy	Beattie's (2002) Behavioral Taxonomy
Empowering cluster	Thinking – reflective or prospective
Question framing to encourage thinking	Informing – sharing knowledge
Being a resource – moving obstacles	Empowering – delegation, trust
Transferring ownership to employees	Assessing – feedback and recognition, identifying developmental needs
Holding back – not providing answers	Advising – instruction, coaching, guidance
Facilitating cluster	Being professional – role model, standard setting, planning and preparation
Providing and soliciting feedback	Caring – support, encouragement, approachable, empathy
Working it out together – talking it through	Developing others
Creating and promoting learning environment	Challenging employees to stretch themselves
Setting and communicating expectations	
Shifting perspectives – stepping into other	
Broadening perspectives	
Using analogies, scenarios and examples	
Engaging others to facilitate learning	

Berg & Karlsen (2012) presented tools for leadership development in their study. The old tools partly coincide with the behaviors presented above. In addition, they mentioned emotional intelligence, conflict management, identifying talents and strengths and self-leadership. They introduced new tools that included two sets of skills; signature and character strengths and positive emotions. Examples of signature and character strengths are holistic thinking, wisdom, self-discipline and courage. Positive emotions in turn are gratitude, joy, optimism and self-efficacy. Berg & Karlsen (2012: 194) suggest that coaching as a training process and using these before-mentioned tools as the content has a lot of potential in developing skilled managers and effective teams.

Coaching literature contains a lot of different frameworks that offer different kinds of tools for developing coaching skills and behaviors. Still, as Fillery-Travis & Cox (2014, cited in Wallis 2016) point out, the coaching techniques such as listening, questioning, clarifying, challenging and thinking have not been researched.

McLean, Yang, Kuo, Tolbert & Larkin (2005) developed a four-dimension coaching model that is intended to assist in determining the developmental needs of managers. Coaching as a set of managerial skills include open communication, team approach to tasks, valuing people over task and accepting ambiguity in the work environment in order to develop employees and improve performance. (See figure 4.)
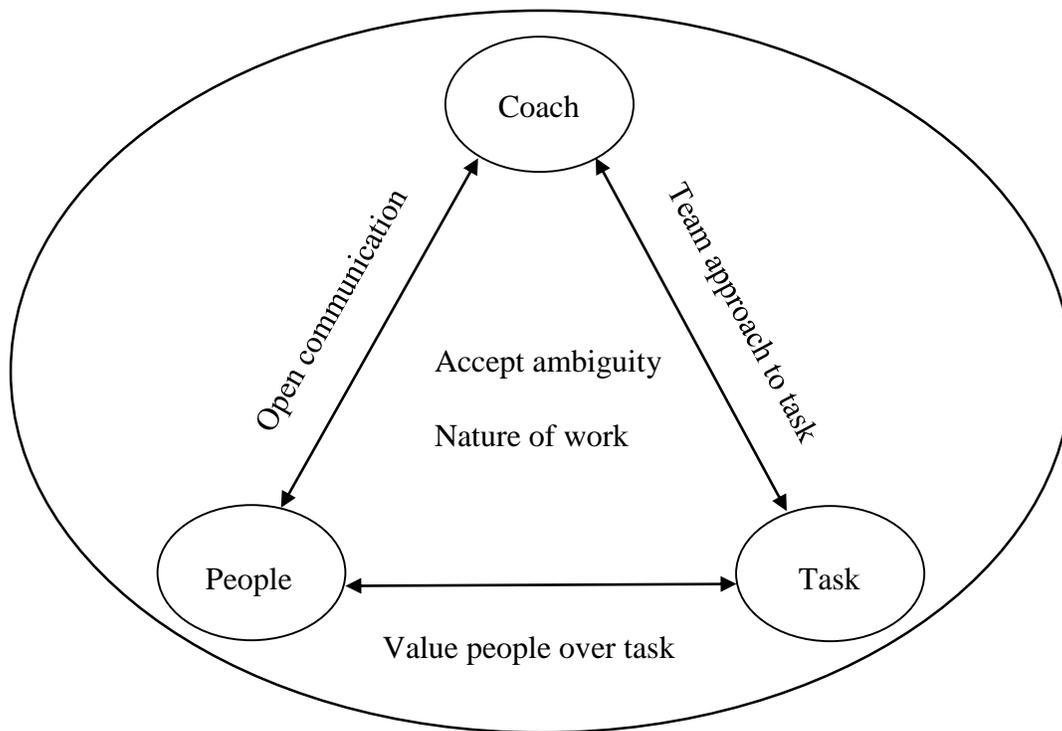
Figure 2. Theoretical framework of manager as coach (McLean et al. 2005: 164).

The components of the four-dimension model are the manager as coach, the employees working with the manager, the task that are completed and the working environment. Since this framework was presented, Peterson & Little (2005) critiqued it by pointing out that a lot of the coaching activities take place in one-on-one setting and also the model lacks some

aspects that are considered important in managerial coaching context; such as developing partnership, effective listening and providing feedback. The authors have since completed the model by adding a component of facilitative development. (Peterson & Little 2005; Ellinger et al. 2010.)

In an organizational setting the use of goal-directed coaching is recurrent since it is the one of the core managerial activities to ensure the achievement of set goals. It may help to construct the coaching processes keeping in mind the limited time resources and the ultimate intention of striving towards the organizational goals. Coaching managers do need to recognize and be aware that the coaching process is never a rigid, static sequence of events, but a dynamic process. For sure there are unexpected and unplanned themes and issues that arise on the way. The development of the coaching "toolbox" requires a conscious decision whether the organization chooses a problem-focused or a solution-focused approach to coaching. Solution-focused coaching aims to emphasize the strengths and positive self-directive abilities of a coachee to create a favorable starting point for goal-reaching, and to assist in making positive change in the long run. The use of solution seeking questions and questions that appeal to already existing resources have gained some positive evidence of the efficacy of solution-based coaching. It seems to enhance the action planning and goal-focus of coaches. For coaches it seems to strengthen feelings of self-confidence and positive effect. (Grant 2012 a, 2012 b.)

When training managers to coach and equipping them with tools to assist in changing behaviors, the final step is to transfer the learned coaching skills into the workplace. The struggle of implementing learned skill comes down to the difficulty of changing ingrained behavior. Organizational support in the form of allowing sufficient amount of time and resources is important. One way of supporting the beginner coaches is organizing workshops and peer coaching in the form of coaching sessions with another line-manager who is learning coaching style managerial practice as well, so that they can get comfortable using the learned skills outside the classroom. Of utmost importance is naturally that the organizational goals and values support the use of coaching leadership style. In absence of a supportive environment the probability of slipping back to the old command-and-control leadership style is high. (Grant & Hartley 2013: 103–104.)

Organizations that are battling with the leadership development challenges and embedding coaching style of leadership may benefit from a conceptualization of change in stages. The stages of change are on a continuum of pre-contemplation stage (1), contemplation stage (2), preparation stage (3), action stage (4) and maintenance stage (5) that measure the level of intention to improve coaching and communication skills in the organization (Prochaska 2000, cited in Grant 2012). Manager's belief in achievement of development goals and improved coaching skills rise in parallel to the stages of change. In other words, for the manager that is already engaged in developing personal coaching and communication skills, the levels of self-belief and coaching skills were higher than of those managers that were only contemplating of embarking on the developmental journey. The organizational support and creating a transitional space in the form of peer coaching and workshops is elemental in development and implementation of coaching skills. Also, the behavioral changes require a generous amount of time. (Grant 2012; Grant & Hartley 2013.)

Empirical evidence of managerial coaching effectiveness on individual and organizational levels is still weak. Ineffective coaching behaviors, in other words behaviors of a manager that affect negatively to the coaching process is another issue that has not received a lot of attention in academic circles. Ellinger et al. (2008) sum up ineffective behaviors from several previous researches. Among those are authoritarian and controlling leadership, being too intense or too emotional and an ineffective communicator. Other lacks are for example task-orientation, withholding information, being unassertive and failing to listen. Beattie et al. (2014) mention that one big obstacle for the success of managerial coaching may also be overconfidence. (Beattie et al 2014; Ellinger et al. 2008.)

The last section of this chapter examines the "ITS" quadrant, the systems level.

3.4 Stakeholder perspectives on coaching for leadership and organizational development – ITS perspective

The systems quadrant is looking objectively at different social systems that are part of a phenomenon under examination (Wilber 2000). Literature regarding to the systems perspective is scarce. Implications of coaching for management and culture development on

outside stakeholders such as families or other groups and societies that the coaching manager might be a member of were not found.

Within the organization the stakeholders for management and culture development from the perspective of the coaching manager are the employees, upper management, HR professionals, colleagues and other peers. Coaching literature is often conducted from the management's perspective; studying the employee as the coachee's experience in the organizational context is rare.

Before contemplating on the significance of top management support and the HR role for developing coaching style management practice and coaching culture, a few words on the importance of building a coaching strategy that is a central pillar in the development of coaching culture. Hawkins (2012) emphasizes the importance of building the coaching culture in alignment with the organization's mission, business strategy and development plans. Whenever an organization is embarking in big changes, it is vital to stop and assess whether the cultural context will enable the desired changes. A coaching culture cannot be developed by itself, rather in needs to be a part of the overall culture change.

Hawkins (2012: 79) states that investing in building a pool of external and internal coaches is not enough to create a coaching culture. The organization needs the written and oral support of the executive officer to promote the importance and benefits of coaching. Grant & Hartley (2013: 107) also recommend using important figures such as the CEO and other senior managers to show with their actions that the organization is serious about the leadership and culture development.

HR professionals have a big role in developing, implementing and sustaining the coaching culture and coaching strategy. This poses a risk of identifying the coaching activities with the HR. Sometimes line managers may even feel like coaching is just about individual and personal development, the 'softer' aspects of business. (Hawkins 2012.) Hamlin et al. (2008) also mention that often HR professionals lack credibility in the eyes or the managers which in turn means that they often do not have roles that contain strategic influence, or act as organizational change and development specialists. Hawkins (2012: 141) highlights the importance of linking the coaching culture development to business success and performance

improvement. He adds that to have this link between the culture development and business orientation the support of the CEO and line managers is important.

Unfortunately, many organizations that train their managers to coach or provide them with external coaching then abandon them just to get on with coaching without providing a clear framework of what they are really supposed to do and without any support (St. John-Brooks 2014). After receiving formal coaching training, the managers can form dyads with their fellow managers. This kind of peer coaching can offer the much needed forum for the managers to practice their coaching skills and get new perspectives from people that are essentially their colleagues. The equal setting can create neutral surroundings where concerns about people management issues can be discussed that the managers prefer not to talk about with their own line managers. (Beattie et al. 2014.)

Another option, besides offering peer coaching, is utilizing internal coaches to solve the problem of missing support in transferring coaching into manager's own practice. Organizations selecting internal coaching trainees can look for such desired attributes as good interpersonal skills, a learning focus, developed self-awareness and astute listening skills. The selection process can, for example, test the applicants' "aptitude for coaching" or "coaching readiness" in the form of both a questionnaire and an interview. Organizations may benefit from careful assessment of whether utilizing HR personnel for coaching activities will serve to strengthen the strategy. Aside from suitable attributes, it is essential that the coaches-to-be are in a position with enough time resources to be able to engage in coaching activities. (St. John-Brooks 2014: 180–183.)

To successfully train managers to coach the HR professionals needs to be appropriately trained and have the knowledge of coaching methodologies in order for them to really grasp the value of coaching processes and programs. A personal passion for coaching and leadership development are also needed. (Hawkins 2012). Grant & Hartley (2013) suggest that organizations making big efforts in developing coaching style managerial practices will benefit from having a key person in charge of managing all the stakeholder relations that are needed to carry out extensive efforts in increasing management's coaching capabilities.

In conclusion of this chapter a few words on coaching evaluation and effectiveness. Essentially, evaluation of coaching concentrates on the preconditions, costs, processes and

outcomes of the coaching interventions. Without evaluation it may be difficult for the organization to make investment decision since the minimum cost of a failed coaching process is the lost time. The evaluation can also be seen as a tool against prejudiced views and false information about coaching. Because of the inter-relational nature of coaching the evaluator of the process is typically either the coach or the coachee. For the organization however a more objective and reliable, scientifically based evaluation method is desired to base the investment decision on. (Greif 2013: 445–446.)

According to McDermott et al (2007: 35–36) there are surprisingly many organizations that practice coaching and strive to build a coaching friendly environment that are not managing the coaching process or measuring the outcomes. Neither is there a systematic way of setting goals and proper follow-up to evaluate the coaching effectiveness. Developing a coaching strategy helps to clarify the strategic context of coaching, its desired outcomes and how they are to be reached as well as offers a vehicle to get all participant on board. (St. John-Brooks 2014.)

In coaching research there is a wish to create more scientifically based evidence for coaching effectiveness. McDermott et al. (2007) set out to find out whether the extent of coaching used in the organization affected its perceived efficacy. The research revealed that coaching produced significant improvement in terms of improved teamwork and strategy execution ability. Also, coaching seemed to be more effective as a driver of behavioral rather than cultural change as well as when the focus was on positive performance outcomes rather than remedial matters.

Some organization may be number oriented and look for numbers such as the return of investment (ROI) of coaching, or quantitative information such as satisfaction rates (of coachees) and improvement of leadership behaviors. Especially the measurement of coaching outcomes through ROI is complicated since there are many other affecting factors simultaneously at play in an organization that it is impossible to narrow it down to one component; in this case to coaching. In addition, coaching impacts show firstly on an individual level and from there on the impact can be seen as an improved organizational functioning. Putting a price tag on the benefits of coaching seems practically impossible. (Greif 2013; St. John-Brooks 2014; Tompson et al. 2008.)

From the stakeholder perspective the existing literature only covers the internal stakeholder aspects in relation to leadership and culture development. Internal stakeholders that are elemental in building a coaching culture are the top management and the HR professionals. Top management's support and advocacy of coaching is of utmost importance. Aligning the coaching strategy with the organization's mission and goals is part of a successful implementation of coaching approaches. HR's competency and understanding of what coaching can really do to an organization was also emphasized. As HR is commonly in charge of training activities, it is also seen as part of their role to develop the necessary structures that the managers need to implement coaching skills into practice. This might mean having internal coaches that act as role models and organizing opportunities to engage in coaching with peers that are in similar posts. The organizations developing coaching cultures will also benefit from evaluating and measuring coaching effectiveness.

The next chapter presents the methodological aspects and choices made for this research, as well as contains the description of the data collection and analysis process and introduces the interviewees and the case company.

4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter describes the research methods that were chosen and how the research process was carried out. Part 4.1 discusses some philosophical aspects and subjectivity issues. In part 4.2 the research process is presented followed by the methodological choices made and the overall approach to the research in part 4.3. Part 4.4 introduces the case company and in 4.5 the data collection process is described; all the decisions it entailed, introduces the interviewees and justifies the analysis tools selected for transcribing the research material. Part 4.6 contemplates aspects related to the trustworthiness in conducting this research and discusses shortly the ethical aspects of the research.

4.1 Philosophical standpoints and subjectivity of the researcher

Conducting a research consists of many consciously and unconsciously made decisions. One fundamental aspect of conducting a research is the ontological and epistemological position of the researcher. In this research the researcher assumes the ontological position of **social constructionist**, purporting that "social actors produce social reality through social interaction" (Eriksson & Kovalainen 2016: 15). Thus one's views and understandings of the social reality can change in everyday interactions. Interpretations of the reality do not exist outside the observer, making them subjective. The epistemological position of a subjectivist researcher implies to the social nature of knowledge creation. Gergen (2009, cited in Drake & Stelter 2014) introduced the notion of humans as "relational beings"; our identities, interactions and institutions are socially constructed in dialogue and social interaction. The emphasis is on communities and relationships in creating psychological and social phenomena. (Eriksson & Kovalainen 2016; Drake & Stelter 2014: 67–78.)

The next part of this chapter describes some central aspects of designing and carrying out this research and illustrates the choices made in order to conduct the research.

4.2 The research process

The researcher was already relatively familiar with the coaching literature for having written the bachelor's thesis on the same topic. For that reason, it was an easy choice when the time to conduct the research for the Master's Thesis came. At the end of August 2016 the search for a company that would provide the research data and material began and through a contact such a company was found very quickly. The first meeting to agree on the basic construct of the research material was held at the beginning of September by telephone and this also marked the beginning of the theory writing process. The criteria for choosing the case company was that they had designed and implemented a coaching process a couple of years ago for their upper management. Coaching is offered in different career transitions, such as when a manager gets a new position with more responsibility, a new project or any other change process to lead where he or she might need support in order to perform well. Furthermore, they have also made efforts in bringing coaching style managerial practice into one of the businesses. Overall the company is systematically developing an operational culture that encourages coaching style managerial practice.

The company agreed to participate in the research with the condition that it would remain anonymous throughout the research. The contact person also promised to provide written material, such as training materials on top of the material that would be retrieved through interviews.

The data was collected within a month in November. When the researcher had the literature review mostly outlined and partly written, the interviews started. Part of the interviews were conducted face-to-face, a couple by Skype connection with a visual, one through a video conference and one by telephone. Conducting the interviews virtually was quite challenging since it was more difficult to form an atmosphere where the interviewees felt comfortable disclosing their personal experiences. Also the quality of the recordings was lower. Despite of the challenges the researcher was able to utilize all interviews as research data. The interviews were transcribed verbatim. After all the interviews were transcribed, the data was analyzed and the conclusions written during December 2016 and January 2017. In addition, the literature review was partly written in parallel with the analysis of the data. The data collection and analysis are discussed and the case company presented in greater detail further on. The research project as a whole is depicted in figure 5.
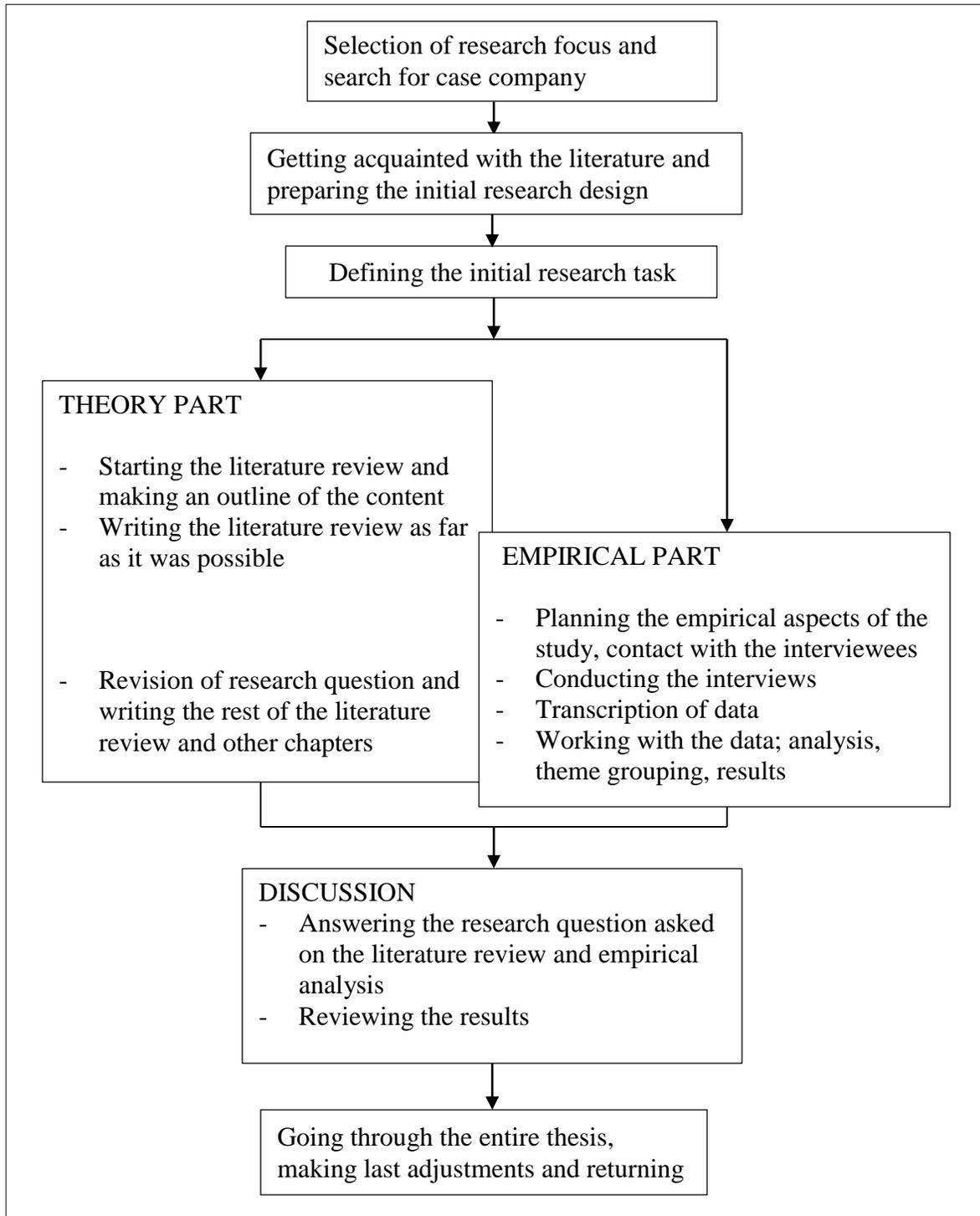
Figure 3. The research process.

4.3 Research approach and methodology

The epistemological position of a researcher guides the choice of research methods. Whereas epistemology aims to define what is considered knowledge and what are the limits and source of it, methodology is essentially describing how a given research issue can be studied. Methods consist of data collection methods and data analysis methods. (Eriksson & Kovalainen 2016.)

The following section elaborates on the qualitative research methodologies and presents some basic aspects of conducting a case study. Later on the data collection methods chosen for this research are presented.

4.3.1 Qualitative research methodologies

Qualitative research methods were a natural selection to carry out the data collection and analysis in this research since the intention was to form an understanding and interpretation of coaching as a phenomenon and in addition examine it in a context, as qualitative research often is designed to do (Eriksson & Kovalainen 2016; Stake 1995). In a qualitative study the chosen subject for the research is commonly an area of interest for the researcher. First, the researcher gets acquainted with the literature regarding to the research area and next step is narrowing down the topics of interest to formulate a specific research question(s). (Eriksson & Kovalainen 2016: 39–40.) The nature of the research question impacts greatly the selection of research methods since they are relevant in formulating the answers to the research question(s). Qualitative research in general does not require unified theoretical and methodological concepts. The idea of a qualitative research, however, is to be a reflexive process. The researcher is an integral part of the study and thus subjectivity is an element in the production of data analysis. (Eriksson & Kovalainen 2016.)

Since the researcher was familiar with coaching literature to a certain extent for having written the Bachelor's Thesis on the same subject area the beginning of the research process was different than it would have been in the case of a fairly unfamiliar subject. There were already some ideas that were pursued right from the start, although naturally the research was designed with the previously mentioned guidelines in mind. In order to avoid biases the researcher checked the ideas with the literature several times. A case study was found

appropriate for this study because it enabled to enhance understanding on how coaching is used in a specific organizational context. After searching for companies willing to participate in the study, it ended up being a single case study. It would have been interesting to include more than one case, but it was beyond the resources and time frame that were available for this study.

In general, the selection of the case is guided with the desire to study a case that is typical or representative of many other cases. The first-hand commitment a researcher makes however, is to understand the selected case. Overall, the most crucial criterion in choosing a case is to maximize learning. (Stake 1995.) In this instance the selection criteria were not really that idealistic; the case was picked when the other party expressed their willingness to participate and promised to search for suitable participants for the data collection within the company.

As pointed out by Baxter & Jack (2008) case study in itself is not a research method, but it allows the researcher "opportunities to explore or describe a phenomenon in context using a variety of data sources". According to Yin (2003, cited in Baxter & Jack 2008) conducting a case study is appropriate if the research is to cover contextual conditions because they are believed to be relevant to the phenomenon under study. In addition to being context-bound the case studies also commonly emphasize "developmental factors", meaning that the case usually evolves with time as events unfold. (Flyvbjerg 2011). This case study was planned to be connected to interpretative traditions and the selection of the data analysis enforced this choice (Eriksson & Kovalainen 2016).

Stake (1995: 44) posits that the qualitative researcher in noninterventionist; does not want to influence the phenomenon being studied and strives to "observe the ordinary". At the same time the "noninterventionist" researcher usually has a personal interest in the subject at hand which may cause him/her to raise questions that the interviewees or respondents of the study have not previously thought of (Stake 1995: 46).

The following sections provides a short description of the data collection methods which for the purposes of this study were chosen to be semi-structured interviews as primary source of data and written documents and other material as secondary source of data.

4.3.2 Data collection methods

Qualitative research data collection methods that were decided to be used in order to gather the data for this research were interviews as the primary source and document and visual materials as a secondary method. Semi-structured interviews were a natural choice for conducting the interviews since the purpose of the interviews was both to gather information and collect personal experiences.

For **semi-structured interviews** typically an outline for the interview is planned and a list of questions or themes but the order and exact wording of the questions is not relevant for the analysis that takes place later. In semi-structured interviews the interviewer allows the interviewee also partly to lead the conversation in the hopes of getting more in-depth information that the interviewer cannot perhaps prepare for or predict. The interview questions are mostly "what" and "how" questions, and the interviewer also needs to be aware of not asking closed questions that the interviewee can answer to with a mere "yes" or "no". Leading questions are that demonstrate pre-assumptions of the interviewer are also to be avoided; neutral questions allow the interviewee to tell his/her truth or version of the topic at hand. There may also be some topics that are more sensitive and it takes a lot of skills to get the interviewee disclose very personal experiences, feelings and thoughts. Approaching a sensitive theme discreetly, for example by asking indirect questions to see whether the interviewee is willing to talk about the theme, is a good idea. (Eriksson & Kovalainen 2016: 94–97.)

In this study the people that were interviewed to gather the sample were selected according to the appropriateness principle; people that know about the phenomenon as much as possible and have experience or represent a group that is relevant for the purposes of the study (Puusa & Juuti 2011).

In addition to interview based data the researcher can use **secondary data** which usually is in written or virtual form; documents, reports, journals and so on. The secondary data can be analyzed just as the primary data, or it can be a complementary aspect of the research data. (Eriksson & Kovalainen 2016.) For this research the written data that was given to the researched consisted of selected parts from training materials that had been used in the management training program of the whole corporation. Some training material from the line

of business was also given that depicted the operating model that is currently being implemented in practice. Also some newsletters that contained real-life comments from the field and descriptions of the leadership index and its results were granted to the researcher. Finally, the description of the coaching process as well as documents that the managers fill out prior to starting the coaching process were given.

The next section introduces the data analysis method and describes how the data analysis is done.

4.3.3 Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA)

For this research the analysis method selected is called the Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA). Passmore & Fillery-Travis (2011) suggest that IPA is an appropriate analysis method for coaching research since it can help the researcher to gain understanding of the richness of human interactions in coaching. This research aims at constructing a picture of how different stakeholders in an organization perceive coaching's impact on leadership and culture development. Thus IPA as an analysis method was seen appropriate to discover how common understanding of the phenomenon is constructed between different stakeholders in the case company.

Phenomenology stands for examining people's lived experiences and how people themselves make sense of these experiences. The researcher is attempting to get close to these experiences through his/her own conceptions, which makes the nature of the analysis interpretative. (IPA 2016; Smith, Flowers & Larkin 2012.)

Interpretative nature of IPA is informed by hermeneutics, the theory of interpretation. IPA aspires to examine how a phenomenon appears and the analyst is in a position to facilitate and make sense of the phenomenon. The hermeneutic circle is helpful to the researcher as it makes the analysis more of an iterative process. The analysis is done in a step by step fashion as qualitative analysis in general, but the hermeneutic circle allows the researcher to approach the data simultaneously in a non-linear manner. The idea is to enter the meanings of the data on many levels and seek to see how they are related and what kind of perspectives they offer. (Smith et al. 2012: 21, 27–29.)

The nature of IPA is also idiographic, which refers to the commitment of the detailed examination of a particular case. That is why IPA does not require a big amount of participants since it intends to explore in detail the experiences of each one of them. In general, the number of interviewees tends to be small in IPA studies. The similarities and difference between the participants may also be examined and possibly make more general claims, but only after the potential of each independent case with thorough and systematic approach is realized. (Smith et al. 2012.)

Fade (2004) suggests that to analyze the data, the researcher needs to be very familiar with the text, so reading the transcript over and listening to the audio tapes was the first step in the analysis process. As suggested by Smith et al. (2012), the text was then approached and comments made on the margin on three levels: descriptive, linguistic and conceptual levels. Descriptive comments were about the content, linguistic comments observed the use of language and conceptual level comments were more interpretative. At the conceptual level the interesting features tended to create more questions to the researcher but this is exactly where deepening the interpretation began. The transcripts were worked through several times. As it is recommended by Smith et al. (2012), the text was also approached by reading it backwards the second time around in order to deconstruct the content. This caused the analyst to see aspects and details that she did not see before. After going through the text three times, an overview of the initial notes was written. Last phase consisted of searching connections between emergent themes. (Smith et al. 2012; Fade 2004.)

After all the transcripts were analyzed, one by one, in the aforementioned manner it was time to look for patterns across the cases and possibly deepen the analysis before moving on to write the analysis. If there are more than 3 cases analyzed, it is recommended to assess key emergent themes in the whole group. Even if the analysis primarily took place on group level the examples that are put in the text are taken from individuals. It is also important that the themes presented in the write up are recurring, meaning that they are present in at least half of the sample. Using excerpts is important, but they have to be meaningful and be used in moderate proportion. The analysis is supposed to be interpretative and, in the meantime, the "voices" of the participants need to be accurately presented and illustrated. The analysis can seek to point out anomalies and contradictions on top of the common experiences. (Smith et al. 2012.)

Lastly, as coaching literature does not provide a clear-cut theoretical base it could be expected that this study would not be clearly either theory testing or theory building. It was considered quite possible that it would include elements from both, resulting to be an **abductive** way to achieve scientific knowledge. (Eriksson & Kovalainen 2016.) The existing theory was applied in designing the data collection process and in the meantime the literature review of the thesis was left unfinished, with the possibility kept in mind that it's content could be affected by the collected material, which indeed was the case. As in qualitative studies in general, the findings of the research are reflected against the existing research literature in the discussion.

Next, the case company is introduced.

4.4 Introduction of the case company

The company in which this case study was conducted is a multinational company that operates in three different lines of business and in addition has two separate business units. The company has a long history and roots in Finland. All lines of business have a significant presence in the marketplace of their respective fields of operation. The company employs around 15 000 people altogether in the countries it operates. Approximately 50 per cent of the revenue comes from the Finnish market and the rest from other countries. The company values are built around customer focus, high quality promise and collaboration. In the 2015 annual report the overall strategy is named profitable growth that emphasizes the importance of competent and committed personnel and encourages goal-directed work culture to reach the full potential the company possesses.

The existing coaching process for the top management of the company has been designed in the corporate HR in cooperation with a Coaching Partner. Every individual that participates in the coaching process has a specific need for the coaching, be it a new position, a new project or a change process they have been designated. Before the coaching takes place there is a discussion between the coach, coachee and the superior of the coachee to clearly define the purpose of the coaching. Fundamental to the coaching is the focus on business goals; this is to make sure that benefit for the manager being coached is connected to the company's interest to improve the leadership quality and capability. The coaching consists of five

coaching sessions within a time period of approximately six months. After the coaching there is a post evaluation discussion where the fulfillment of the goals set for the coaching is assessed. The process was piloted in 2015 in Finland. The superior of a manager is the person who initiates the process. HR is involved in the planning and honing of the process but the content; the coaching itself; is absolutely confidential and thus remains between the coach and coachee. All of the top management interviewees have been coached by an external executive coaching professional, although two of them received coaching before this current coaching process was in place.

In one line of business coaching style of leadership has been extensively trained to the whole managerial corps (approximately 550 managers) within the last 5 years. This line of business consists of a large number of independent units that provide daily services and goods in many different customer sectors. There are 120 people working in the headquarters and the rest is out in the field. Right now there has been an organizational change that has put a lot more power and responsibility in the hands of the unit managers. A new operating model is being trained to the whole personnel of about 3000 people that intends to imbed new and creative ways to operating the business, creating service experience and leading people. Principles of coaching style of leadership are regarded elemental in creating this new way of operating.

Thirdly, the corporate HR that provides managerial training programs have incorporated elements of coaching into these programs. Also the company has designed "Company behaviors" that are desired behaviors of every single citizen of the company. These behaviors will appear to some extent in the research results in chapter 5. The goal-directed operational culture that is currently promoted in the company also contains elements from coaching that are also presented in the following chapter.

4.5 Description of the data collection process

The aim for this study was to conduct an in-depth study of the coaching phenomenon in one organization using more than one data source. Since coaching often takes place on multiple levels and involves cooperation of different parties, it was seen appropriate to gather material and data from multiple perspectives, not just from the managerial perspective. The data

sources used were interviews and written documents. The following segment elaborates the research process.

The organization was not previously familiar to the researcher. Prior to conducting the interviews, she did not receive much information of the current state of affairs in regard to coaching practice within the organization. When designing the study, there was an awareness that the collected data would most likely alter the original focus of the research.

For the research seven (7) interviews were conducted within the company and one outside the company with the Coaching Partner they had chosen for the cooperation. IPA as the analysis methods concentrates on producing a rich and in-depth analysis and thus the sample sizes tend to be smaller than in qualitative research in general (Smith et al. 2012). The interview of the Coaching Partner was not analyzed as it served mainly as a background material enhancing the understanding of the researcher.

Looking for the interviewees for the data collection started by sending a short introduction of the research topics and some themes that the researcher was interested in exploring. The contact person in the company then forwarded this information to people that were eligible for the research and asked for their willingness to participate. After receiving the contact information of those that had given their initial consent to participate in the study, the researcher contacted them personally to agree on a time and date for the interview. All of them received an outline of themes that the interview would consist of a couple of days before the interview or at the spot in those interviews that were conducted face-to-face. All interviewees participated voluntarily and before starting the interviews the researcher went through the ethical aspects of the collected data such as confidentiality and anonymity.

Three of the interviews were conducted face-to-face in the company premises and two via Skype video call, one via video conference connection and one by telephone without a visual connection. All interviews were recorded with their consent later to be transcribed verbatim. The interview durations varied between 35 and 55 minutes. There was clearly a difference in the depth of the interviewees' disclosure of personal experiences when the interviews were longer. After a rather lengthy discussion on the themes in general they started feeling more relaxed and started telling more openly about their experiences. The researcher would have preferred to interview all participants face to face but it was not possible to organize due to

different factors such as tight schedules and the researcher's location among other reasons. The quality of the recordings was a little lower from those interviews that were conducted virtually, but still there were only a few places where a word or two were too unclear to be transcribed. In couple of instances the connection was lost or got caused fragmentary speech which caused the train of talk of the interviewee to be disrupted. The connection was then successfully recovered in both cases. In spite of these difficulties all the transcriptions could be used for the analysis purposes

Since the interviewees were not hand-picked by the researcher she really had no information about the interviewees beforehand nor knowledge of their coaching experience. Even if the researcher had prepared for each interview separately the course of the interviews in many cases made her adapt the questions and the direction of inquiry as the interviews progressed. Conducting the interviews was very interesting and also challenging for the previously mentioned reasons. Throughout the interviews she also gained a lot of information that developed her understanding of the case as a whole.

After the interviews when the transcriptions were completed the researcher noticed some gaps and questions that she did not remember to ask in the interview situation. The interviewees kindly provided missing answers via email.

A table containing the basic information of the interviewees is presented below. Two of the top management interviewees had participated in the current coaching process when it had been piloted. The other two had been coached as well but before the current coaching process has been in place. Position refers to their management level. Exact title is not presented for the sake of anonymity. After being presented in the table they will be referred to as Interviewee A, B, C, D, E, F and G in the results section, the letter indicating no specific order in relation to this table.

Table 5. Basic information of the interviewees.

Position	Number of direct reports	Years in the current position	Years total in the company	Type of interview
Vice President	6	3	3	Skype
Managing Director	X	9	30	Telephone
Senior Vice President	9	X	13	Video conference
Vice President	4	2	4	Face-to-face
Senior Manager, Corporate HRD	X	~16	28	Face-to-face
Director, Business HR	X	~3	10	Skype
Director, Corporate HRD	X	5	5	Face-to-face

Two of the HR interviewees work in the Corporate HR and thus are responsible for the HR programs and processes of the entire corporation. One of the interviewees in turn, works in a Business HR that operates in Finland in one of the three business lines. This is the Business HR that plans and designs the processes and programs specific to the business and as mentioned previously this particular business has trained their whole managerial corps the coaching style of leadership in the past 5 years. Now the whole personnel are being trained the new operating model that focuses on making a shift from production oriented operating model towards customer-oriented model. It is an extensive training that will continue for a long time. The interviews with the HR professionals were very informative and they also provided all of the secondary data in the form of training materials and depictions of different models and concepts that contain coaching elements. Some real life quotes from weekly newsletters were submitted to enlighten the experience that the managers have had in one of the businesses.

4.5.1 Data analysis

After conducting the interviews and transcribing them verbatim it was time for the data analysis. Analyzing the data was a rather demanding task, since the IPA method requires close attention to detail and an in-depth familiarity with the data (Smith et al. 2012). The transcribed interviews were analyzed one by one in no particular order. The first interview took the longest to analyze but after that it started getting a little more fluent. There was a clear system used to make sure that all of the data was analyzed in a similar manner.

The analysis consisted of four stages. Before making any notes on the data the researcher listened to the audio tape of the actual interview to remember the way the person talked, which words were emphasized, what parts of the interview caused hesitation, amusement and so forth. Next the transcription was read from beginning to end without stopping to analyze anything in particular, but making notes and comments on all three levels: descriptive, linguistic and conceptual. The second time around the data was read backward and more attention given to language use which stood out differently as the text was decontextualized when read backwards. Attention was put on the use of specific words and metaphors. Also, on this second round the conceptual analysis was initiated. The third time going through the data was the most time-consuming as this was when all the concepts were really taken under scrutiny and analyzed in depth. Meanwhile doing the analysis the researcher kept her mind only in the interview at hand and refrained from looking for similarities and common themes in the other interviews. Naturally though, towards the end it became obvious that there were a lot of commonalities. After these four steps a narrative overview was written of all of the analyzed interviews.

After all of the data was analyzed the theme building started with the beginning of the write up of the research findings. Since the analysis consisted of more than 3 cases that is the recommendation for student researchers it was natural that the theme building was done by group-level analysis (Smith et al. 2012: 106). The idea was to search for recurring themes and when analyzing a bigger sample, it is important to assess whether the emerging themes are presented in at least half of the sample. The main themes emerge when the recurring themes are summarized, condensed and illustrated. As suggested by Smith et al. (2012), the researcher can write a summary of the shared experiences that are found in the data. In writing the analysis with the IPA method the use of direct quotes in essential, which is seen in the

next chapter. Since the interviews were conducted in Finnish, all the quotes have been translated by the researcher with close attention to detail and preserving the original use of words and expressions to the maximum effect. Also, there is some "code language" used to preserve anonymity of the organization. Especially when describing the HR efforts in coaching since many of the training programs and other practical tools they have in use had names that were closely related to the actual business.

Next, the trustworthiness and ethical aspects of the research are discussed.

4.6 Trustworthiness and ethical aspects of the research

Since this research relies strongly on subjectivist epistemology the usual validity, reliability and generalizability concepts are not so applicable (Eriksson & Kovalainen 2016). Due to the interpretative nature of the research, it will probably not produce conclusions that are widely generalizable (Stake 1995). Instead it is relevant to examine the trustworthiness of the study. Trustworthiness contains four aspects: credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability.

- **Dependability** refers to the researches responsibility in offering sufficient information to the reader in regard to the process of the research. The process needs to be logical, traceable and documented.
- **Transferability** means that the degree of similarity to other existing research needs to be shown.
- **Credibility** is connected to the degree of familiarity of the topic that the research is about. It also seeks to evaluate whether the data presented is sufficient to make the claims and whether there are strong links between observations and categories that are made for the research. In essence, the question is; if another researcher was to conduct the same research with the same material, would he/she come relatively close to your interpretations or agree with your claims.
- **Conformability** refers to the nature of the interpretations of the inquiry. The researcher needs to be able to prove that the interpretations are not imaginative, that there are links between the data, the interpretations and the findings that others can also see and understand. (Eriksson & Kovalainen 2016: 308.)

The **dependability** of this research has been ensured by giving detailed descriptions of the research process, the case company and the interviewees that were involved. In addition, the data collection and analysis have been recounted in detail to make sure that the reader can get a clear idea of the different aspects that have shaped this research.

Transferability criterion in this research is applicable to some isolated parts, but not as a whole since there were no studies found that would have applied same methods to research the chosen phenomenon. To ensure maximum transferability the structure of the thesis was based on Wilber's integral model.

To make sure that this research fulfills the **credibility** criterion, the researcher studied the existing literature extensively and made sure that the research was built on principles that are recognized in the research literature. Also, there are strong links between observations and categories used in this research. The data could have been more profuse, but it was sufficient to make the claims in the conclusion section.

To fulfill the **conformability** criterion, the researcher made sure that the interpretations that are made from the data are described in a transparent manner, so that the reader can see the logic behind them. The existing research literature was also utilized to make sure that the interpretations were relevant and on point.

Finally, the ethical aspects of conducting research are discussed briefly. At the very beginning of the co-operation with the case company it was agreed that the company has complete anonymity throughout the process. That is why in the introduction of the case company in chapter 4.4 only the information that is absolutely relevant in order to explain the context in which coaching as a phenomenon was studied is disclosed. The interviewees will also remain anonymous. After conducting and transcribing the interviews all of them have had access to the transcription. To ensure maximum discretion the key contact person that has helped to find the interviewees will have a chance to comment on the introduction of the company and interviewees as well as the research results that contain direct quotes from the collected data before this thesis is submitted. The researcher signed a written agreement at the beginning of the interview period that concreted the commitment to

complete confidentiality. This research did not receive funding from the case company, thus the research has been free of conflicts of interest.

5. RESEARCH FINDINGS

The research results are presented in a structure that divides them into four perspectives according to Wilber's integral model that was presented in chapter 1. As it was in presenting the relevant literature, the purpose of using this model in this analysis is to make sure that the research question is being approached from both individual and collective as well as subjective and objective perspectives.

The first section delves into the subjective experience (I) of each interviewee's managerial practice and how coaching has affected it. The second section deals with cultural aspects (WE); how coaching is and has influenced the operational culture of the organizations in which the interviewees participate. The third section examines the objective (IT) aspects of leadership development through coaching. Last, section four (ITS) forms an understanding of the systemic level; how different stakeholders and their actions are perceived to influence the use of coaching for the development of the high performance culture.

5.1 Coaching for leadership development – I perspective

In this perspective the analysis revealed two themes: **the coaching mindset** and the **self of manager as coach**. Hicks & McCracken (2009) define the coaching mindset by simply pointing out that instead of solving employees' problems the managers refrain from giving ready-made answers and focus on listening and making questions. Self of manager as coach is concerned with the internal world of the individual in the management position. A central facet of the self is awareness of one's beliefs, thoughts and behaviors.

5.1.1 Coaching mindset

In this company the HR has, with the support of the CEO, initiated a systematic implementation of coaching elements into the organization's processes. The corporate HR department has a strong belief that coaching style managerial practice is an integral part of developing the leadership. Throughout the interviews with the HR professionals an acute focus on business goals and strategy could be sensed, and there was a strong indication that developing coaching style managerial practice could remove old patterns of organizing the

work and managing people. The interviewees considered that when learning and adopting a coaching style managerial practice, the focus of a manager **shifts from directive mode to a facilitative mode**. They expressed a desire to the development of a different approach to communication and goal achievement. Their common belief was that coaching style managerial practice gives the employees a deeper level of autonomy and sense of responsibility, as the following text excerpts indicate.

> *It* (coaching style of management practice) *is seen as a very central and relevant part of overall leadership development. And why we do the leadership development is that… Well, let's start from that point that as a company we have a strategy, a vision and business goals. And to get there, we need good leadership, that will take us all there.* (Interviewee E)

> *It is giving power to people… power to make suggestions and to certain extent make decisions. In a way take power downwards. …and not just giving orders and ready-made instructions.* (Interviewee G)

> *I think that it makes a manager's job easier. And that way enhances his/her wellbeing and the wellbeing of the entire team. Because a manager of today is no longer the one that knows it all and is the best. Maybe in some way it clarifies the role of a manager, that I don't have to know everything, I can empower my team member to have realization and learn on his/her own.* (Interviewee F)

The HR professionals were quite unanimous that coaching style managerial practice is the way to make sure that the company will reach its optimal performance potential and equip the managers to lead their teams towards reaching their goals. **Giving away decision-making power to employees** and subordinates is encouraged. The interviewees believed that coaching style managerial practice will assist in activating people to think for themselves and learn independently. This in turn means that employees will come up with ideas and be more initiative in their work. The importance of taking personal responsibility for one's work and having a manager that has the necessary skills and willingness to support this kind of independence, was also seen to have positive effects on the overall wellbeing of the organization. All the interviewees were very supportive of coaching style managerial practice, but they all also emphasized that it is not the only way managerial practice can be conducted in the company. This perhaps has to do with the fact that coaching style cannot be forced on to anyone; there has to be a personal willingness to be coached and coach the employees and see the role of the manager from a different point of view as the following shows:

Everybody cannot be coached. (laughter) *You can't force someone to be coached. That is for sure. You have to be willing to participate. ...maybe it is a person's relationship with him/herself, is the person prepared to...* (?) *with other person* (coach). *You have to let go a little, be able to open up.* (Interviewee E)

I don't really see it happening that if I was an authoritarian leader that it would be so easy for me to find another leadership style. I should just be more aware as to what is my natural style and see where I would need to develop and evolve. (Interviewee F)

Coaching as a method; I strongly believe that it is beneficial. But it (participation) *has to be voluntary; the person being coached has to believe in it as a method because if someone is being forced to be coached, I don't believe that it can be very fruitful.* (Interviewee B)

All of the interviewees above stressed the importance of **personal willingness to be coached and to coach.** Interviewee E could not quite put it into words what it is that is needed in order to be able to engage in coaching. Perhaps it is dependent on an individual's self-confidence; to take a leap and trust in the process and in oneself. Interviewee F referred to the need for the manager to see and be aware of his/her developmental needs to want coaching and subsequently coach; if the manager's general mode of operating is very different from what coaching aims at, it requires as personal epiphany and recognition of the areas that are not functioning in the managerial practice as well as openness to try something new. Interviewee B attested to this as well, coaching will not render any real results if the participation is not voluntary and the manager in question does not believe in it as a method.

Becoming a coaching manager seems to create a **shift in perception in terms of how the managers see his/her role.** Thinking that the manager is the ultimate go-to person in decision-making, the source of wisdom and best expertize came through as an old-fashioned way to see the role of a manager. The common view of the interviewees was that communication was at the center of their managerial practice. A coaching manager focuses on providing sparring for the employees that are the experts in their jobs. Moreover, it seems that a manager that coaches considers the people with whom he or she works to have the knowledge and wisdom for the benefit of the team and organization. A coaching manager also wants people with a certain level of autonomy in their teams and wants to support the development of such autonomy. The importance of communication and trusting the

employees to possess the required skills was evident in three of the top management interviews.

> *I would hope that in the matters of substance I would have in some way been able to open things from new windows or perspectives through sparring. Perhaps my strength is to see entities and form connecting links between things. Each one of them* (team members) *is the expert in their field, in that regard I am not supposed to replace or to be better than anyone.* (Interviewee A)

> *And what I aim at is that these people make the decisions and that way also take the responsibility for the decisions. And not so that they come to me and delegate their things to me,* (and expect me) *to make the decisions.* (Interviewee D)

> *...I really don't believe that in any business the best intelligence and wisdom resides in the corner office. No way, it really does not. It resides in the organization. The question is how we find it from there and harness it.* (Interviewee B)

Interviewee A considered the work relationships within the team members and the manager to be equal and had set supporting the employees' top performance as the priority. Creating open communication and trusting relationships were also mentioned to be central in his/her management practice. It seemed that the central role for this manager was to be an enabler, offering opportunities for sparring sessions in order to help the team members see their work and the daily issues they deal with from new angles. This focus on sparring and conversational support came through in other interviews as well.

Interviewee D was very clear that she/he expected the people in the organization to have the ability to make their own decisions and naturally bear the responsibility that comes with it. As a leader this interviewee wanted to be available and offer coaching in situations where the employee is contemplating on what kind of action to take. It was apparent that the abilities of the subordinates were also trusted in independent decision-making.

As for the interviewee B, he/she pointed out a distorted belief about the leaders being the source of wisdom and intelligence. He/she emphasized that to build a team where all parties can bring forth their knowledge and know-how will create the best results and benefits for the whole organization. The comment implied that a manager needs to know his/her people; recognize their strengths and develop their capabilities so that the organization's know-how capital would not be dependent of just a few selected people. All of the three text excerpts

give the impression that the managers perceive their employees to be the experts in their jobs, to be intelligent and capable of solving their own issues and taking charge of their decision-making. These managers seem to possess the kind of coaching mindset that illustrates how they see their employees: as individuals who have the capacity to learn, grow and develop the skills and mental strength it takes to succeed in the job. The role of the manager is to accompany people on the journey towards high performance, by providing the necessary tools and support they may need in order to achieve it. All these aspects were summarized by the interviewee E:

> *We are trying to bring forth this kind of thinking that the more people grow in a team, the better the manager. So if we all support each other's growth people will develop and flourish. It is motivating and beneficial to people, but also to the company.* (Interviewee E)

This remark depicts the kind of attitudinal climate that puts a focus on the improvement of people and performance of teams, not just a narrow focus on the current state of the organization.

In conclusion: The analysis showed that coaching style managerial practice in essence, is developed to create and boost a proactive and innovative operational culture, where leaders do not really cling on to decision-making power and thus the organizational structures will no longer be obstacles but instead enable real ownership in the case company. There were also some comments that illustrated how it is not to be taken as a matter of course that all managers want or can be coached. One of the interviewees also commented that some people consider it a punishment and regard coaching as a corrective intervention. Thus the coaching mindset can be seen as a shift away from directive leadership style towards a leadership style that encourages independency in thinking and problem-solving as well as taking personal responsibility for one's work. The organization as a whole encourages this kind of leadership style because it is seen as a vehicle in developing the skills and behaviors for both managers and employees that are needed for high levels of achievement. It takes personal willingness to participate a coaching process and believing in coaching as a method is necessary for coaching to have any benefits.

5.1.2 Self of coach

Three out of four of the interviewees in top management experienced that coaching has opened them up to see the vast possibilities for **personal growth** and knowing oneself further. Self-awareness and knowing who you are serve as portals into revealing unconscious thought patterns and behaviors that may affect relationships and collaboration with employees and team members.

> *And it starts from that if you don't know yourself you cannot lead others. ... No one is born a leader, but you can learn to be one. It is, it really is... a rocky and painful journey. It takes a lot.* (Interviewee B)

> *It is eye-opening to receive feedback, sometimes it can even hurt. ...You gain understanding on how you perceive yourself and how others perceive you. And through that you get to thinking that if this is the picture they have of me and I want to achieve these things; what needs to change* (in me)*.* (Interviewee D)

> *...*(learning) *to be more... aware of own feelings and thoughts. Because it is all reflected pretty much directly into how I am, how I act and talk to others. So that in order to be a better coaching manager it means that I have to get to know myself more profoundly and in my opinion I am on that journey at the moment.* (Interviewee A)

Their remarks indicate that becoming a leader is a process, a journey. For interviewee A such an inner journey has begun seeks to bring to light thoughts, perceptions, feelings and beliefs that can reveal sides of oneself that have been unconscious before. **Increased awareness of self** can be seen to have effects on how one relates to others and faces different kinds of situations and people, especially people who are very different. This process of getting to know oneself requires openness and curiosity, objectivity and questioning of these habitual ways of thinking, acting, feeling and believing.

There are certainly aspects and characteristics in everyone that one would not like to admit or see; this is what supposedly is referred to in the remarks as painful and the hurting that ensues. As interviewee C said, it takes a lot, humbleness, patience and willingness to go through experiences that make one see where there is lacking, erroneous beliefs and misunderstandings.

Especially important to a leader is to have a point of reference; feedback from people around; employees, superiors and colleagues that can help see the gaps in one's self-perception and that of others. Interviewee D pointed out that the gained perspective from receiving feedback can really help in a goal-oriented quest to finding and replacing the missing pieces in order to build an intact "picture" of oneself.

Having people as mirrors can bring about a realization that the idea you have of who you are may be, in the end, your own idealistic idea of yourself. Interviewee C stated the following:

> *In my opinion coaching is a brilliant intervention to help us all notice and recognize our 'blind spots'. In my experience those blind spots are the worst obstacle to an individual's development.*

A coach can create a safe space to this kind of discovery. At the workplace receiving feedback and having open and confidential relationships with people that act as mirrors can help shed light on these blind spots that exist. As it was the case for interviewee D; feedback and people can also help in the process of better aligning one's intentions with outcomes through communication. Naturally, being a coaching manager means that the extent of your self-knowledge defines also how much you can support and help others in the same process.

To summarize: the interviewees' experience is that coaching can provide an opportunity to see one's thoughts, beliefs and attitudes in a new light. This kind of deepening self-awareness enables making the desired behavioral changes in order to be a more effective leader and to be able to better communicate and portray the intention that are the basis for the managerial work.

5.2 Coaching relationships and coaching culture – WE perspective

The interobjective (WE) quadrant includes the coaching relationship and the development of the coaching-friendly organizational context. The focus of this quadrant is about communication, relationships and operational culture.

5.2.1 Coaching relationships

In the analysis the most repeated theme in regards to relationships was the stressed importance of **continuous open communication** and **relationships that are based on trust**. The open communication according to different interviewees contained elements such as having the freedom to say one's opinion, disagree and question; having the space to express concerns and ask for opinions and different points of view. Also connected to open communication, the top management interviewees all mentioned that listening and being present, approachable and available to their employees is important to them. One of them mentioned that he/she does not want to have separate office from the team, but prefers that they feel that he/she is present in the everyday life situations.

> *It* (coaching) *probably reflect more in my way of being and communicating with people as an equal. At the other extremity are facing these difficult situations and at the other it is more about fostering positive, constructive and good conversations and sparring.* (Interviewee A)

> *I would say that listening is important but even more important is that you hear what is being said. …Through experiences you realize that it is awfully important to monitor that we understand the issues through the other person and not only cling onto our own ways of seeing things and modeling things. And this takes continuous scrutiny.* (Interviewee B)

Interviewee A considered equality in the relationship to be important. Situations that require especially good communication can vary from handling very difficult situations to having an inspiring conversation. The interviewee had experienced that in difficult situations it is elemental to treat the other person with dignity and utmost respect. Another interviewee also considered coaching approach in difficult situations to provide a softer way of opening the conversation so that the other person would not get so defensive. At best the communication is very inspiring, encouraging and motivational. All the top management interviewees mentioned that the ability to listen is high on the list of a coaching manager.

Interviewee B emphasized that **listening**, is more than just hearing people out. It requires knowing the other person well and knowing their way of modeling things and seeing the world to really be able to understand where they are coming from. To really understand each other, people need to be able to take the perspective of other. One of the interviewees also

had realized that in order to really know the employees a manager needs to be invested in, not only what they are doing, but how they are experiencing things.

Three out of four top management interviewees advocated the importance of **presence** in the relationships with their people. To ensure this they have regular meetings, both one-on-one and in teams. One of the managers told that he/she has experienced a shift in perspective when it comes to sitting down with people. Before, he/she used to be focused on his/her on agenda and make sure that it was completed. Now, the focus is on staying open and listening to people, hearing what they have on their minds. Different types of meetings can also serve as opportunities to check on goals and hear how people are getting on with them. Two of the top management interviewees said that coaching had given them the assurance to communicate the manager's vision and goals as well as use different gathering for team building. There were no mentions in the interviews as to how much the coaching takes place in formal pre-planned meetings and how much of it is just having a conversation when passing by.

The common thread in their focus in communication seemed to be **facilitating and supporting employees' proactive thinking**. One of the interviewees stated that if the employees are used to getting the answers from the managers they will never really have their own ideas and own insight, their motivation level goes down and they may evade responsibility. The manager is there to offer information, but then he/she need to hold back on giving answers and instead support the employees in thinking through their own issues, problems and challenges and make their own decision. One of the interviewees expressed that keeping quiet can be difficult at times, since he/she has a lot of experience that might be helpful to people. Another interviewee added that the manager can assist the decision-making process by offering guidance and reminding of the bigger picture. But creating and setting the goals for themselves is important since it enhances people's commitment to them.

All the manager interviewees were unanimous that in the management practice it is important to **take into account the array of operating styles and personal differences**:

> *The bigger the post, the more you have to embrace the spectrum of people and allow different operating styles. If we stay within a certain frame and the direction is the right one and we are moving forward and the people feel good… In a way that is enough.* (Interviewee A)

Other interviewees coincided with the previous line of thought; the manager will adopt different approaches and consider personal differences in dealing with people. Also, two of the interviewees had a similar view in that the manager's job is to see the big picture and be a few steps ahead in the game. Two of the managers recollected that they were originally extremely result-oriented and had trouble relating to people that did not have the same level of ambition. They had learned that in a management position it is crucial however, to be able to adjust approaches depending on the person they were working with.

Lastly, another recurring theme throughout the interviews was the **importance of offering positive and constructive feedback**, in the right proportion. In the company overall the emphasis is on positive feedback, but as one interviewee said, if things are not going well the feedback needs to be given accordingly. Two of the interviewees mentioned that they prefer approaching giving constructive feedback in a positive manner. In one of the businesses where they are implementing a new operating model giving feedback and reinforcing even for the slightest improvements is fundamental in creating the change:

> *It's supporting the budding courageousness. And of course offering inspiration... enabling an ambiance for creativity and if everything doesn't go the way the manager had thought… to still be able to encourage and give positive feedback for going to the right direction. And not always correcting. Naturally it takes an atmosphere that is based on trust.* (Interviewee G)

The positive feedback directs the attention and appreciation to the small attempts and steps that people take in order to practice incorporating new behaviors. As interviewee G puts it; in encouraging open-mindedness in their approach to work, the manager has to also leave some room for people to use their own creativity, even if the outcomes are not always what he/she expected. In essence the manager can encourage people to step outside their comfort zone and take a chance at trying out some new approaches to work. This came up two of the interviews as well; the relationship goal is also to challenge and guide people discard their typical ways of acting and can result in new learning experiences. The manager can keep track of this kind of progress and enhance it by giving inspiring and assuring feedback. The manager soliciting feedback from the employees came up only in one of the interviews, which also is an important aspect of developing mutual open communication and relationships based on trust.

To summarize: the fundamental aspects of relationship in teams and between individual were open and continuous communication and relationships built on trust. Listening, hearing what the other person is really saying; in other words, creating real understanding in the relationships. Being present and approachable; asking question and being interested in people's thoughts and feelings, not just what they are doing. Facilitating independent thinking and decision-making. Approaching people taking into consideration their personalities and different ways of acting. Lastly, giving positive feedback in order to support people in their pursuit to incorporate new operating modes.

5.2.2 Coaching culture

The company is currently putting a lot of effort in systematically building a high performance culture (HPC), that they have named the goal-directed operational culture. In essence to succeed the organization depends on motivated and competent people. Everyone's best effort is requested. "Employeeship" was mentioned in this and connection as it refers to **taking ownership of one's work**, stepping up to think, act and communicate proactively. Also focused leadership was mentioned as an integral part of high achievement. When talking about the coaching culture, one of the HR interviewees said the following:

> (Coaching culture) *has to be a natural part of it. It cannot be disconnected from it. So we thought that we won't talk about a coaching culture. But it is conversational culture, feedback culture, it's about not telling absolute truths about how things are. It is appreciative, we want to harness the expertize and opinions of the whole organization. We ask, we discuss; I think it actually is the type that a good coaching culture is. It is participative and provides feedback.* (Interviewee E)

The operational culture the company is striving to develop contains elements of coaching that have been integrated intentionally. Interviewee E explained that they prefer not to talk about a coaching culture, since there are various simultaneous ongoing developmental activities in the company and the use of excessive isms can create negative reactions. This was evident in that none of the interviewees talked about developing a coaching culture even though the prevailing culture and developing aspects of it was discussed with all but one of the interviewees. The company has defined a set of so called company behaviors that are intended to support the development of the new high performance operational culture. The company's values are at the core of the behaviors and the behaviors consist of three areas;

engaging, developing and performing. Engaging refers to reciprocal and respectful communication. Developing encourages co-operation, knowledge sharing, providing and soliciting feedback and continuous development. Performing refers to result-orientation, responsibility and proactive ways of working as well as keeping promises.

It was a common desire of all the interviewees for the company culture to keep evolving. They all believe in a culture that supports individual thinking, decision-making and taking responsibility of one's work. In the last three years when conscious efforts have been made to develop the aforementioned aspects in the organization, there have been some substantial improvements, which four of the respondent referred to as improved job satisfaction that the company has been measuring. At the same time three of the interviewees mentioned that there is still some conduct that does not fit in the goal-directed operational culture that the company is aiming for; some employees are still coming to their managers and expecting them to solve their problems and decide what they should do. One of the interviewees also pointed out that not all managers are willing to adopt new approaches in their practice. Interviewee D pointed out an important aspect of developing such a culture that promotes independent decision-making and personal responsibility to achieve high performance levels:

> *In order to get to the next level performance-wise...* (refers to HPC) *I believe that people need to be given more power if they are demanded more. So power and empowerment go hand in hand and people need to be given tools on how to proceed. And I believe that coaching and how people treat others – they are significant matters.* (D)

It became apparent from most of the interviewees' comments that the company has been transitioning. Interviewee D talked about the importance of **providing tools and giving away power to enable the desired changes in conduct.** Other interviewees coincided with the view that coaching and putting effort in building good communication and relationships was central to successfully implementing the culture change. Many of them named the aspects of the company behaviors as factors guiding their management practice, the feedback culture especially was mentioned in 3 of the management interviews. Overall it came through in their comments that they are invested in developing their management practices according to the promoted behaviors.

In the line of business that is undergoing the big change in developing a new kind of operational culture there is a special focus on shifting away from production-centered approach and putting customer service in the forefront. They have a high standard for quality and it is by no means compromised, but in addition to producing excellent quality they are now seeking to bringing an enhanced focus on the customers. Interviewee C expressed the following:

> *We have people working here that are very decent, diligent and thorough. And they gladly follow given instructions. This has both good and challenging effects. ...The challenge is that people are glad to receive pretty much any* (instructions) *without thinking whether it is smart or a bit foolish. ...and then to get this kind of customer-oriented thinking and decision-making for the benefit of the customer to fit here... It's a long way* (to go). (Interviewee C)

This view of the fabric of the personnel was shared by the other interviewee working in the same line of business. Both regarded that the change was needed to achieve the desired results in improving the customer experience, but simultaneously considered it to be a big challenge for the managers that are driving this change. They thought that **coaching style managerial practice is needed to create a thriving atmosphere and equip the managers with the tools to elevate the level of engagement that the employees are used to having with customers.** The goals they mentioned is that the personnel will learn to come up with independent solutions in the everyday life situations with customers and take personal responsibility for those choices. The business HR are has come up with several tools to support the managers in incorporating new procedures and approaches to developing the customer service quality.

A concrete platform where the culture is lived out are meetings and other events that provide an opportunity to carry out the principles that the company behaviors purport.

> *The* (culture) *can be seen in meetings, you have, for example, the agenda planned out in a way that it's not just one person telling how things are and other are spectators or shooting it down. The meetings can be more facilitative events where the participants have been taken into consideration and they are included in developing the themes.* (Interviewee E)

Two of the management interviewees confirmed that their approach to having meetings and gatherings differs from the norm or their previous style to arrange meetings. They find it

essential that such events are organized for the purpose of building the team and working out solution and planning together. Other one of these interviewees also pointed out that the manager can also take advantage of these kind of situations to just let people express what is on their minds and really keep track on the overall atmosphere that exist in the team.

To conclude: Elements of coaching culture have been integrated into the company's culture development pursuits. The current focus is to develop a high performance culture that promotes participation throughout the organization and taking ownership of one's work. Company behaviors support this culture change; engaging, developing and performing which encourage open and respectful communication, co-operation and knowledge sharing, continuous development, increased giving and receiving of feedback and the aforementioned proactivity as well as personal accountability. Overall the aspects of the HPC were represented in the interviews, feedback culture and ownership of one's work mentioned were the most.

5.3 Coaching skills, behaviors and tools – IT perspective

This section consists of coaching behaviors and skills that managers develop improve their management practices. These skills and behaviors may become a part of the managerial practice through receiving coaching or other types of training. Tools and models that coaches and HR professionals equip managers with are presented in this section as well.

5.3.1 Coaching skills and behaviors

Coaching for the managers is usually provided in different career transitions and taking new roles of facilitating change in the organizations, as had been the case for two of the management interviewees. They, and another one of interviewees reported that receiving coaching had offered new insight in seeing how one's behavior is impacting people around them. As interviewee D pointed out, coaching can help to see the behaviors that impede leadership success:

> *…Only I can change my behavior and so... then I myself have to understand what are these things that impede for example my leadership or my success at different points* (in my work)*.* (Interviewee D)

As to what kind of coaching behaviors are utilized in the managerial practice, **ability to listen and openness** in the overall communication was a recurring theme in all of the interviews. All of the management interviewees considered that aside from listening attentively to people they wanted to withhold from providing them with answers since they wanted to be **supporting the employee's own thinking and improvement of problem-solving skills**.

> (Coaching) *has perhaps given the kind of warm assertiveness to my way of leading conversations with people, and... these days I try consciously to avoid, sort of, training people, instead I try to be genuinely open and ask and listen... more than I did before.* (Interviewee A)

> *I start asking that why is it a problem? And then I try to help by asking, how would you resolve it? I also try to guide them to talk about it with a colleague or someone else. And I am very careful... not to strengthen the perception that, oh you really do have a problem. That is the worst I could do. Of course I have to really understand that the problem exists. In a way my role is to help the person find different perspectives to the issue. But I won't tell the person what to do. I try to help by leading the person to talk to different people.* (Interviewee B)

Interviewee A had experienced that coaching has given more confidence in his/her own way of being and also made him more present and receptive to people; 'genuinely open'. Also part of the new approach to leading people is not considering him/herself a teacher, but instead lead people to work out their own issues while **providing support, resources and offer different perspectives.** Interviewee B's approach to problem-solving in turn way to avoid getting caught up in people's problems; instead trying to maintain a level of neutrality and not rely on only the manager in resolving issues but to seek multiple opinions and points of view.

A few of the interviewees also mentioned that coaching style approach to managerial practice means that the manager is invested in **inspiring, creating learning opportunities and motivating people.** The same interviewees also emphasized the role of the manager has in ensuring that people are consciously **working towards the set goals**. Making sure that the whole team has the same vision that is at the core of all action. Two of the management interviewees mentioned that they also apply coaching behaviors not only in one-on-one situations but also when the whole team is gathered. They see coaching as a way to build the team, the open communication and relationship based on trust were, as in one-on-one

situations, important factors. These interviewees told that they organize regularly these situations; workshops, benchmarking trips, leaders' board meeting and so on; to make sure that the team as a unit has time and an opportunity to communicate about this that are on agenda and plan the future. One of the interviewees said that his/her goal is that people within the team can coach each other, not only the manager.

The interviewees were unanimous that coaching style managerial practice is appropriate in practically any situations, it is dependent on the manager's willingness to allow time for conversation and not rush to provide answers and find conclusion. It was also a shared view that in crises and other situations requiring urgent action are not the place to stop and start asking around for people's opinions and points of view. These are the situations that the manager is to take the lead and make the decisions needed.

> *It is a bit like whitewater rafting. So when you are in the middle of the rapids* (in emergency)*, you don't really have the chance to start negotiating that who should do the paddling, you or I; who is the best and so on. You just paddle. But once you are out on the calm waters you can start pondering that hey, what would be the best way to paddle, who does it and when and how.* (Interviewee B)

> *It is working on a line; the more you have pressure or stress, the easier you slip back to doing things yourself and solving the issues. You have to alert that you have the patience to use the coaching style to manage things and situations.* (Interviewee A)

These interviewees saw that there are some situations that call for quick action and in those situations it is imperative that the manager does so. After clearing these tight situations, they can be utilized as a learning experience for the team to reflect and assess the sequence of events to see what there was to learn and improve on for the future. Interviewee A had also recognized that stress and pressure can trigger old ways of acting and it is thus necessary to be aware in those situations that are actually not urgent that old patterns of behavior do not surface.

To summarize: Coaching behaviors that were most prominent in the interviews had to do with open communication, ability to listen and ask open questions to facilitate independent thinking and problem-solving in subordinates. Communication is the foundation for all relationships. To be able to relate to the employees, a coaching manager is required to have

acute listening skills and ability to ask open questions. The main function of coaching conversations is to enable independent thinking and problem-solving. The managers make sure that all action is goal-focused and that people are proactively working towards their attainment. Coaching skills are needed conduct both one-on-one and team conversations. Coaching has opened a wider perspective to creating opportunities for the team gatherings where the role of the manager is to build conversation, communicate his/her vision, check on the goals and their achievement as well as plan together for the future. It was also a commonly shared view that coaching is appropriate in practically any situations; it is just up to the manager to take advantage of the situations presented to allow participation and use these situations to inspire, offer support and motivate people. Only real emergencies and critical situations that require quick action were unanimously recognized to be situations where the manager was expected to take the lead and make the decisions that are required.

The interviewees did not give any concrete examples of situations and opportunities they use to give feedback although almost all of them mentioned that it is being worked on through the company behaviors. The impression was given however, that they considered it important. Only two of the management interviewees mentioned soliciting feedback from employees, and both had done in a formal one-on-one situation with an employee or through a 360-degree feedback process.

Next, the coaching tools and models that were present in the data are presented.

5.3.2 Coaching tools and models

The top management interviewees did not mention specific tools or models that they would have received from their coach. When asked about the tools they usually gave to the coaches, the coaching partner replied the following:

> *It just that giving 'toolboxes' is not a sustainable solution. Of course sometimes when the issue is along the lines – "I did know that leadership can be something else than giving direction" – (we do give tools). And maybe we give the coachee a book to read in between the coaching sessions. But it is remarkably more important that the person becomes aware of his/her way of thinking and acting so that he/she can start thinking of other alternatives.* (Coaching Partner)

The coaching partner seemed to think that giving tools and model will not lead to any real change and realizations, but the starting point is the increased awareness that then can support the coachee in developing new ways of conduct and relating to people and work issues.

Simple tools that the interviewees had received were mostly methods for **asking open questions and creating an open environment for conversation**. According to one interviewee questioning can assist a person to see his/her role and to discover the potential an individual has. Also with the right kind of questions people can be helped in self-reflection, to begin to seeing their own behavior patterns. A couple of other interviewees told that they use an array of questions to support in the thinking process of others.

The corporate HR is in charge of training the managerial corps as a whole. They have a two-day training entity and coaching is introduced in the first day with a 40-minute section that introduces the basic concept of what coaching style management practice stands for. The idea is to help the managers to realize that their role is not to teach people do things the way they like them to be done, but instead help people recognize and find answers and solutions independently, develop their abilities to plan and carry out their work, solve problems and challenging situations efficiently as well as set their own goals and come up with an action plan. The company behaviors (introduces in the coaching culture section) are also an integral part of introducing coaching style managerial practice approach since they contain a lot of elements that support developing coaching style behaviors. A concrete model that the managers are given in the training is the **GROW-model** that has the following elements:

> *It consists of work; G stands for goal, R for reality, O for options and W for will... So, instead of giving the answer I start by asking what is that you aim for, what do you want to achieve; that's the G, the goal. Then there's the reality* (what is the situation now)*. The ask what have you done until now and what else, (this is the options part), what options do you have? And the will; well, what will you do, when and when do we meet again to see where you're at?* (Interviewee G)

This kind of model can be an impetus for a new approach in managerial practice, but interviewee G also stated that some managers find it very difficult to consider using such an approach when an employee asks for help or advice. The interviewee also pondered that using the GROW-model can enable talking and going through different situations and issues on a deeper level as well as serve as a self-leadership tool. He/she concluded that in order to really utilize the model the initiative and epiphany has to come from the manager him/herself.

The business HR in the line of business that has been extensively **training** their managers (over 500 of them) to incorporate coaching style managerial practice has also come up with different tools and models that intend to provide the managers with down-to-earth practical guidelines to be implemented in practice. Their managerial corps consists of two levels of managers. The managers in charge of the customer segments are also the supervisors of the business unit managers have been trained to bring the coaching style managerial approach to the business units. They have been given very specific guidelines to train forward to the business unit managers and the staff. The tools and guidelines have been developed to carry out the desired changes in the way the business units are operated overall but the customer experience improvement is at the center stage. The managers are also given support and feedback channels have been put to place as well as a weekly meeting to keep track on how the business units are advancing. In the business units there is also a new 'tool' that has received a lot of positive feedback from the whole staff is a coffee session with the manager every six weeks:

> *It gives a totally different opportunity to bring up things that the individual wants to talk about. There are no colleagues around listening in so it's confidential. Whatever it is that he/she has going on. I believe that it gives a sense of importance; people matter and they are listened to. The person can decide whether to talk about work or personal issues, and the manager can also have an agenda, work issues that he/she want to bring forth.* (Interviewee C)

The other interviewee working in the same line of business attested the same; such a simple tool but seems to be a very effective way to enhance the relationships between the employees and managers. Probably it also serves as an opportunity to discuss the feelings and thoughts that the change process arouses and use the situations as mini coaching sessions. These kind of **pre-arranged occasions**, both informal and formal, were mentioned by two of the management interviewees as a great way to work on the work ambience and employee-manager relationships. They clearly considered it to be a tool and were purposefully arranging such occasions for both individual and team developmental activities.

In the line of business with the operating model change underway, they have also faced challenges such as some staff not willing to change their ways and become more active in with customers.

> *...the unit manager is really enthusiastic about this new concept and the operating model and tries to encourage the staff, but there might be someone sceptic who just simply won't get on board… "I'm not the smiling type"... So we have been thinking ways to best support and help the managers so that they don't get tired there in the everyday life.* (Interviewee G)

To intervene they have given the managers tools for example, to give official warnings if people are not co-operative and refuse to get on board despite of continuous encouragement and clear guidelines. They are also doing follow up on all the units to see how the operating model is little by little being implemented. Their goal is that this new way of doing customer service and running the business units overall becomes the new standard way of working.

Lastly, the company as a whole conducts personnel surveys and in the last one from 2015 the leadership index had improved and is over the Finnish average. The leadership index consists of four areas; commitment, leadership, performance and engagement. Also the job satisfaction has improved in the last three years in the whole company. The interviewees agreed that the new approach to management practice and effort put in to increase the coaching style leadership have a lot to do with the improvements.

In conclusion: Tools that are used in the management practice were mainly connected to improving communication and presence; open questions and listening to strengthen thinking processes, independent decision-making and problem-solving. One tool that almost all of the interviewees reported using was different one-on-one one situations and team gathering that can be used to enhance the overall work ambience and build relationships. The company-wide management training program contained the GROW-model which can help the managers to take the first steps in empowering their employees to take full ownership of their work instead of offering ready-made answers and solutions. The line of business where coaching style management practice principles have been widely trained to the whole managerial corps they have also equipped the managers with step by step guidelines how to implement the new approach in practice. The main purpose of the coaching style management practice is to create a change in the operational culture, give more decision-making power and initiative down to the operational level. To ensure that the new operating model can be lived out in the business unit the HR has also come up with tools to intervene in case there is opposition and refusal to comply and participate in the change.

The last quadrant, systems perspective (ITS) is presented next.

5.4 Stakeholders of coaching for leadership and culture development – ITS perspective

The systems quadrant of the coaching framework contains internal stakeholders and groups and units outside the system where the phenomenon is examined. The research data did not contain any aspects of the outside world, families and memberships in other organizations and social groups were not discussed.

Within the organization there were a few aspects between the different internal stakeholders that are worth contemplating in connection to utilizing coaching for leadership and culture development.

First of all, the repercussions of the **decision of only to utilize external coaches and the impetus for it came from the CEO** of the company.

> *Our CEO considered that we definitely would not have internal coaches. But naturally HR for its role can* (be an internal coach)*, it is a part of the function. But he/she saw that having internal coaches can create contradictions and lack of confidentiality, and somehow conflicts of interest… HR can be a professional coach but if we need coaches for the top management, they will always be external coaches.* (Interviewee E)

Interviewee E made it clear that having and training internal coaches had not been an option from the beginning. It was considered of utmost importance that when the top management would receive coaching for different purposes that were specifically defined, that the prerequisite for the coaching was absolute confidentiality. The comment implies that having the coach from inside the corporation would perhaps jeopardize the confidentiality aspect and possibly cause some issues of objectivity that an external coach does not have. Apparently the use of internal coaches for other purposes, such as driving the changes in the operational culture has not been discussed.

Another internal aspect to the systems perspective arose when talking about the role of HR in bringing the coaching to the reach of the management and supporting the managers that do want to promote and utilize coaching style of management in their own practice. First of all, the interviewee F expressed to have been surprised in discovering that the HR professional in general are not that enthused or informed about coaching as a leadership development method:

> *It has been a bit unclear even to the HR that what this coaching is all about. Maybe the biggest surprise has been the understanding that HR has…And another challenge is that, if HR doesn't understand and then isn't committed and enthusiastic about it, so how would they transmit it to the top management and managers who send their manager subordinates to be coached. They would need to know what coaching is and how it can be utilized. Being a HR professional myself I would have thought that the HR knows more about the benefits of coaching, would be excited about it and willing to use it as a method.* (Interviewee F)

Interviewee E also mentioned that part of HR's role is to act as a coach but said that it is not utilized as much as it could be. It did not become clear whether the **lack of HR participation** and activity is because of lack of coaching skills, willingness or if there are other reason, such as lack of time and opportunity. Interviewee F saw that there is perhaps a missing link in the full exploitation of coaching and the benefits it would render for the organization as a whole. It seems that HR may be lacking the knowledge the initiative to be able to comprehend the possible uses of coaching in their organizations and thus the managers are not informed enough about it. There is a clearly defined target group of management that can participate in the coaching process and it always requires the nomination of the coachee's manager to initiate the process. Maybe there are missing pieces in the existing system that is in place that would enable a wider use of the coaching process; who, when and how to send their manager subordinates to be coached. Interviewee A attested to this:

> *We don't probably quite know in the organization whether we have coaching available or not. And if we do, how and to whom? Maybe it could be a little more transparent that what kind of support we have available* (to the managers). *This kind of holistic outline of how the company supports the line-managers and top management… I have not seen one. Maybe it does exist but it's not really a good one if I don't know about it, is it?* (Interviewee A)

Interviewee A also stated that the HR is rather distant, he/she has had the initiative to get coaching and after the process aside from the last feedback, he/she has not received much support in implementing what was learned in the coaching process into practice. Interviewee E mentioned that such support might be needed in order to transfer the learned approaches from the personal coaching experience into practice. There was no mention, however, if such structures are planned or what it would require from the HR. Interviewee B on the other hand was very pleased that he/she has a brilliant partner in the HR department.

> *This HR partner has been worth gold for me during the last year. With her we have been sparring* (about all the issues in my team) *and I consider that this is exactly what the HR partnership is at its best. It is really about providing business support.* (Interviewee B)

Interviewee B considered himself lucky and implied that this kind of co-operation with HR is really dependent on the person at the other end; perhaps referring to the proximity that HR is willing and able to have with the managers. For one of the other two management interviewees it seemed to be enough that the HR provides the managers with tools and processes, no desire for closer partnership could be detected.

In conclusion: From the systems perspective the research data did not contain elements to analyze regarding the interviewees' families or other connections and membership in social groups and societies. From the internal perspective there were two elements that arose: The first regarding to the use of external coaches only to coach the top management in order to avoid contradictions, lack of confidentiality and other conflicts of interest. Thus the use of internal coaches for other purposes is completely unexploited. The second element connected to the internal stakeholder connections had to do with the HR's involvement in promoting and utilizing coaching in leadership development. It remained unclear whether the root cause of the lack of promotion of coaching is connected to general lack in competence, willingness or opportunities. In addition, the management interviewees had differing expectations for the HR partnership; what kind of tools and support they wanted.

The last chapter of this thesis examines and discusser the research findings in the light of the research question that was presented in chapter 1. The research findings are then evaluated and their practical contributions discussed research overall. Lastly, the limitations of the research are discussed and some suggestions made for future research topics.

6. CONCLUSIONS AND DISCUSSION

The purpose of this chapter is to discuss the research findings by examining them in the light of the research question that was presented in chapter one. The findings are presented by using the previously presented I, WE, IT and ITS perspectives of Wilber's integral model. The research findings are then evaluated and their practical contributions discussed. The latter part of the chapter contains a short discussion of the limitations of the research and some suggestions for future studies that arose during the research process.

6.1 Conclusions and discussion of the research findings

The purpose of this research was to find out how coaching style managerial practice and coaching principles are adopted in a certain organizational context. The findings are reflected to the existing coaching literature, as is usually done in qualitative research (Eriksson & Kovalainen 2016). Even if the coaching literature tends to be quite scattered and most of the time there are no differentiation made in approaches, techniques and principles that are portrayed in the executive and managerial coaching literature (Anderson 2013), both literatures were utilized in this research. The research question, that this chapter answers to with the findings that were presented in the previous chapter, is: **How do top management and HR perceive coaching to impact leadership and operational culture development?**

Since all of the top management interviewees had received executive coaching from an external professional coach at some point in their career, the subject of interest was to find out how having been coached had impacted their leadership. Moreover, another subject of interest was find out how the HR professionals and the managers perceive the impact of coaching style managerial practices in their own teams to create the desired changes in the operational culture. In this research it was considered important to hear both the perspectives of HR professionals and the managers that are coaching. HR has a central role in coaching as it can be a part of the management training programs as well as other HR processes and HR is responsible of overall learning and developmental activities of an organization (e.g. Hamlin et al. 2008; Ellinger & Kim 2014). The research findings will be discussed next and reflected against the existing coaching literature. Next, the research findings are presented in the form of Wilber's integral model and thereafter discussed.

Table 6. Aspects of coaching impacting the development of leadership and HPC.

Coaching mindset and self of coach – the I perspective	Coaching behaviors, skills and tools – the IT perspective
A shift from directive mode to a facilitative mode	Ability to listen and facilitate thinking and problem-solving
Giving away decision-making power to employees	Offering support, resources and offer different perspectives
Personal willingness to coach and be coached	Supporting goal-focused action by providing feedback
	Inspiring, creating learning opportunities and motivating people
Personal growth as a manager	
Increased awareness of self	Asking open questions
	GROW-model
	Training coaching skills
	Arranging formal and informal situations for conversation
Coaching relationships and culture – the WE perspective	**Stakeholders of coaching for leadership and culture development – the ITS perspective**
Continuous open communication and trust	
Listening and being present	CEO support for coaching activities
Adapting to different people and operating styles	Lack of HR participation in promoting coaching and supporting managers
Providing feedback	
Enabling and supporting "employeeship"	
Engage, develop and perform	
Providing tools and giving away power to enable the desired changes in conduct	

Coaching mindset and self of coach – the I perspective

The research data revealed that the HR interviewees regarded coaching as an elemental tool to assist in development of coaching style managerial practice. The aim is to create a shift in how managerial practice is perceived. Instead of being directive and providing ready-made solutions the coaching manager is thought to facilitate development of skills, independent thinking and resolution of problems and issues that arise in the daily life in order to improve the level of performance. To create such independent approach to work, giving away decision-making power was also seen as a central aspect in creating proactive ways of working. This view of coaching style managerial practice can be found in the coaching literature (e.g. Hamlin et al 2008; Beattie et al. 2014; Ladyshewsky 2010).

It was also evident that coaching, as in both being coached and coaching in own managerial practice, is not something that can be forced onto managers. It requires willingness to participate and personal awareness that there might be something in the managerial practice that needs to change. The manager's willingness and ability to coach has been discussed in the research literature. It is not a given that the manager wants to engage in coaching behavior and dedicate time and resources to building strong relationships (Beattie et al. 2014; McCartney & Milner 2013).

From the management point of view, the coaching mindset presented itself in the data in the way managers relate to and perceive their subordinates. The interviewees reported that they consider their subordinates to have the expertise, intelligence and skills to deal with their own issues and the role of the manager is to support and be a sparring partner that can perhaps help the subordinates to broaden perspectives. Coaching managers expected that people working with them make the decisions concerning their work and take responsibility of their own decisions. The manager's role is to offer help and support this process and be an enabler. The coaching mindset defined by Ellinger et al.'s (2014) has resembling aspect to those mentioned above.

The personal development that receiving coaching had incited in the interviewees was seen to have a big impact on how they are and have grown as leaders. Being coached has impacted the way the managers perceive themselves and has helped them to become more aware of their own developmental needs. The managers also seemed interested in developing

themselves. Developing as a leader was seen as a continuous process and coaching has increased the managers' self-awareness in regards to how one's own thoughts, attitudes and actions may be reflected in the managerial practice and in relations with others. Providing feedback can serve as "reality check" for a manager; it can be painful but very beneficial to hear how one's conduct is being perceived and thus help align intentions with actual conduct in order to create desired outcomes in practice. According to the findings of this study, coaching can serve to shed light onto sides and aspects of the self that have been unconscious and this can potentially improve the management impact due to improved ability to communicate and relate to others. Gaining better awareness and insight of one's performance is mentioned as a central motive for coaching executives (Bozer et al. 2014), but in the managerial coaching literature developing the self has not been explored so much.

Coaching relationships and culture – the WE perspective

Relationships between coaching managers and the subordinates arose to be a central aspect of coaching style managerial practice. The most important characteristics of a coaching relationship that were mentioned were the ability to listen, mutual trust, being present, easy to approach and available to employees. Essentially, it refers to building strong relationships and having overall and relational focus at the core of the managerial practice. Open communication in turn contained aspects such as freedom to express opinions, to disagree, and space to express concerns. Authentic listening was strongly emphasized, and it means not only hearing people out but also being able to change perspectives and understand how other people view the world. This means in turn that a manager needs to know his/her employees well to be able to step in their shoes and needs to have a continuous conversational connection with people. Focus in relationships could also be seen in the efforts the managers are to arrange situations, both one-on-one and in teams, that enable and promote open communication, sharing of information and attentiveness to issues and problems that people deal with. These gatherings can also be an opportunity for the manager to communicate his/her vision and invite people to participate in planning the work and goal-setting.

The aforementioned aspects of a coaching relationships that are closely tied to communication depict quite accurately the definition of Evered and Selman (1989, cited in Gregory & Levy 2010: 110) who define coaching as 'the managerial activity of creating, by communication only, the climate, environment, and context that empowers individuals and teams to generate results'. Other aspects that include the developmental focus of the

relationship, mutual trust and listening can be found largely in the coaching literature (e.g. Gyllensten & Palmer 2007; O'Broin & Palmer 2010; McLean 2012; Gregory & Levy 2010). The developmental focus in the communication between the manager and employee also appeared in the form of refraining from giving answers and instead supporting in proactive and creative thinking. Lastly, two aspects that arose from the research data were first of all the importance of providing feedback, which has also been mentioned in the literature as an important aspect of the coaching relationship (McCarthy & Milner 2013), and second of all the ability to lead different types of people. Providing positive feedback is especially crucial when carrying out change processes and attempting to facilitate changes is the ways of working, as was the case in the case company. The underlying purpose of relationship focus is the intention to optimize and improve the performance of the employees.

To develop an operational culture that promotes high performance, coaching principles have been used in the case company. They did not specifically talk about creating a coaching culture, and it was intentional since they wanted to avoid creating negative reactions as their experience was that it can happen if a lot of isms are used in the developmental activities. It was considered elemental, however, that the elements of coaching are integrated in the overall culture development activities. The company's approach to developing the HPC consisted of focusing on fostering conversational and feedback culture. Opinions and expertise of the whole organization is wanted. The term "employeeship" was used and it refers to the promotion of personal engagement with one's work; being initiative, proactive and accountable. The role of the managers is to enable, facilitate and encourage such independence. The company behaviors have been defined to bring transparency to the culture development and communicate the desired core behaviors. The behaviors consist of three areas: Engaging refers to reciprocal and respectful communication; developing encourages co-operation, knowledge sharing, providing and soliciting feedback and continuous development. Performing refers to result-orientation, responsibility and proactive ways of working as well as keeping promises. These elements that are found in the company behaviors are also mentioned in the coaching culture literature (e.g. Hawkins 2012; Gormley & van Nieuwerburgh 2014). In the literature it is also shown that coaching can be embedded in the performance management and feedback processes. Moreover, coaching can serve as a holistic approach to help people and organizations unlock their full potential. (Gormley & van Nieuwerburgh 2014: 93.)

The data showed also that some positive development had occurred in the operational culture, although there are still some old ways of working that persist. It can be either the subordinates or the managers that may find it difficult to let go of old ways of working that do not support the desired behaviors and performance outcomes that are intended to create. It was also pointed out that if employees are expected to take ownership of their work and carry the responsibility that comes with it, they need to be given the right tools to and it has to enabled and supported by the managers.

Coaching behaviors, skills and tools – the IT perspective
Coaching behaviors and skills that were identified as central in the data were the ability to listen, create open communication and trust in the relationships with employees. It was seen important that the manager refrains from giving ready-made answers and solutions to employees' problems. In addition, in situations where employees come to the manager with a problem it was considered relevant that the manager does not affirm and enhance the problem, but instead attempts to maintain a neutral stance and advices people to search new perspectives from colleagues around. The behavior that a manager exhibits are related creating the conditions that enable people to successfully execute their tasks and also act as a resource. These behaviors are found in the Behavioral Taxonomy developed by Ellinger (1997) and Ellinger & Bostrom (1999, cited in Ellinger et al. 2010). Such behaviors support creating the proactive and independent working style that the company is aiming at with the development of a HPC.

Providing reciprocal feedback was promoted in the company. Giving feedback to the employees was seen as an important tool to enable and keep the focus on goal-oriented action. Soliciting feedback in formal one-on-one situations was mentioned two of by one management interviewees. However, it was not clear how frequently managers ask for feedback or whether they do so in informal situations. Longenecker & Neubert (2005) point out that managers mostly receive very little structured performance feedback. When feedback is given, it is usually more reactive and caused by a problem or some other negative occurrence. In addition, the higher the management position, the less likely the manager is to receive effective and meaningful performance feedback. Coaching managers have potentially more opportunities to solicit feedback since they generally maintain close connection with people. This opportunity is for the manager to seize.

The coaching manager is invested in inspiring, creating learning opportunities and motivating people. The manager also makes sure that people are consciously working towards their goals and communicates the vision to the whole team. The management interviewees reported that in addition to one-on-one coaching sessions they also apply coaching approach to team development by organizing meetings, workshops and other events. These common events provide opportunities to communicate and talk about common issues and plan for the future. For a manager the team meeting also offer a chance build open communication and get a sense of the overall ambience in the team. Dixey's (2015) study confirmed that managers using coaching style approach in managerial practice do it primarily to achieve growth and success by providing motivation to people. The study also attested to managers' preference to utilize coaching in informal settings with a conversational style. This was also a common characteristic in this research. Formal coaching sessions are used too, but they concentrate more on performance related aspects of work.

Coaching tools and methods that were represented in the research data were mainly related to asking open and constructive questions. Questions can assist people in discovering their potential, encourage self-reflection and recognition of behavioral patterns. Open questions support the thinking process of employees and can be utilized in support independent goal-setting and action-planning. These aspects of questioning skills are found in the coaching literature as well (e.g. Hunt & Weintraub 2011; Beattie et al. 2014; Grant 2012).

In the formal managerial training program, the GROW-model is introduced to the manager in the hopes that they will start practicing a new approach in problem-solving and action-planning with their subordinates. In addition to promoting coaching approach to managerial practice the GROW-model can also be utilized as a self-leadership tool. McCarthy & Milner (2013: 774) suggest that for novice coaches a framework can be helpful in the beginning, but in the long run sticking to a coaching model can result in mechanical coaching.

In the line of business where some big changes in the operating model have been made the managers have been equipped with tools to carry out the desired changes. The managerial corps has also been provided with coaching style management training and they are operationally in charge of implementing new ways of working to improve the customer experience. Coaching style managerial practice in this context is seen to give the managers to correct mindset and concrete tools that they need to empower and encourage their staff to

step up and take ownership of their work. The managers have been given, in addition to step-by-step instructions, tools to intervene if staff members do not attempt to get on board with the change. The managers also have a support system in the form of different feedback channels where they can express their concerns and aspects that give hope. Business units can also receive team coaching if they need assistance in developing the team spirit and team coordination.

The unit managers have one-on-one informal coffee breaks with the staff every six weeks that provide a much needed space and opportunity to discuss whatever the employee or manager might want. This is also seen an important tool to build the relationship between the manager and individual employees in a work setting that is otherwise very busy and the team members work in a close proximity. Providing coaching training has been shown to be beneficial in applying coaching style approach in the managerial work (e.g. Berg & Karlsen 2012; Grant & Hartley 2013). Studies have shown that offering support in transferring learnt skills into the workplace is important as well as having opportunities to build good relationships that are based on trust, openness and respect (Berg & Karlsen 2012: 194). Coaching tools and models can serve as the initial inspiration for the managers to apply a new, coaching style approaches in their managerial practice. The tools that the organization has provided the managers with are meant to enable supportive and facilitative behaviors in managers that in turn manifest as proactive, independent and goal-directed ways of working.

Stakeholders of coaching for leadership and culture development – the ITS perspective
The company has designed a coaching process for the use of top management. The CEO of the company is supportive of coaching for the top management, but it has been decided from the start that the company would not have internal coaches. An external coach is utilized to coach the top management in order to avoid confidentiality issues, contradiction and other conflicts of interests that might arise if internal coaches were used.

HR professionals can coach but it seemed that the HR lacks the skills and/or is largely quite uninformed about coaching approaches or simply unenthusiastic to coach. There is currently no system in place to ensure that the 'sending managers', who have manager subordinates in the target group to receive coaching, are informed and aware of the existence of such an option. In addition, the coaching process is aimed to assist managers in career transitions and other challenges they may face. There was no mention that the managers are sent for coaching

to learn coaching skills and approaches, that they could then apply in their own managerial practice. It was implied that the hope is that after receiving coaching the managers would want to apply coaching skill in their own practice, but apparently there are no support systems in place for this either. In this regard, the managers that do want to coach after having received coaching, are on their own.

Hawkins (2012) states that building a coaching culture requires multiple efforts. Often the starting point is offering coaching for the executives. In addition, Hawkins (2012) suggests internal coaches be deployed and the managerial corps trained with coaching skills. Naturally HR professionals need adequate training and knowledge of coaching methodologies. Grant & Hartley recommend utilizing advocates, people in key positions to promote coaching approaches and demonstrate the commitment that the organization has made to developing coaching style managerial practice. From the systemic perspective there are some gaps in how coaching was utilized to transform the managerial practice into coaching style managerial practice.

Next, the theoretical and practical contributions of this research are discussed.

6.2 Theoretical and practical contributions of the research

Theoretical contributions that this research offers are connected to the use of the integral coaching framework derived from Wilber's integral model. The model has not been used to explore how developing coaching style managerial practice contributes to building a high performance culture. As was the initial purpose, the model oriented the research to examine the phenomenon holistically and ensure any single perspective would not be overly emphasized.

This research affirmed findings of some previous studies of managerial coaching, such as the behaviors and skills that are associated with coaching style managerial practice as well as the coaching mindset affiliated with it. This research also confirmed some aspects of manager as coach that have not been discussed extensively in the literature. It seems that managers that have received coaching are more interested in developing themselves, as claimed by Berg & Karlsen (2016). It was also apparent in the light of this study that the manager using a

coaching approach to managerial practice put the relationships with employees to the forefront. A successful coaching relationship is based on open communication and enables attainment of high performance levels for employees, as the research literature suggests.

The practical contributions of this research are involved with the HR's role in training and supporting managers to use coaching style approach in their managerial work. Coaching is currently introduced to the managers in the corporate management program only shortly. The GROW-model is used to illustrate the shift from being a directive manager who provides ready-made answers and solution, to becoming a facilitative manager that encourages independent thinking, problem-solving and action-planning. This is a good introduction to managers that have no prior experience and may be wary of utilizing coaching approach in their managerial practice. In addition, there could be opportunities provided to managers to practice this new approach at work. Peer coaching opportunities, for example, could be arranged for managers, since this is a low-cost option and thus does not include financial risk-taking from the company (Beattie et al. 2014). Moreover, Gregory & Levy (2013) suggest harnessing enthusiastic managers to promote and role model coaching approaches for those managers that may feel hesitant could be a way to embed coaching style managerial practice in those parts of the organization that are not on board so far.

At the moment coaching to the managers is offered in different career transitions in the case company. However, it was not clear whether the organization communicates their desire for the managers to engage in coaching behaviors after they have received coaching. Therefore, to ensure that the coaching experience is a catalyst to engage in coaching with the employees, learning coaching skills needs to be a clear objective for coaching. Hamlin, Ellinger & Beattie (2006) emphasize that in order to create a management culture that coaching calls for, coaching needs to be a core managerial activity. To then transfer coaching skills and behaviors into practice, managers need structures and support systems that provides them a forum where they can express their concerns and practice coaching skills with other managers or HR partners.

Finally, in addition to having a central role in training and enabling the transference of coaching skills into the organization, the HR has an important role in designing and coordinating the coaching process, as was the case in this company. However, it seemed that not all HR professionals in the different business HR units possessed coaching skills and/or

have been eager to promote coaching as a developmental tool to those managers that are the ones that have the incentive to offer coaching to their manager subordinates. Therefore, in the case company there is a need to train the HR professional coaching skills as well as enhance transparency and better communicate what kind of tools and methods the organization has to develop their managers. Hawkins (2012) and Grant & Hartley (2013) confirm the importance of equipping the HR with coaching skills and methodologies. HR also needs to have a good understanding of what can be achieved with coaching style managerial practice to really promote it in their activities.

The next section discusses the limitations of this research.

6.3 Limitations of the research

Limitations of the research are necessary to evaluate in order to evaluate the trustworthiness of the study. The scope of the research was perhaps too large and scattered in the very beginning and it had some effects regarding to the quality and quantity of the collected data. The research process was emergent and the focus of the research narrowed down during the data collection phase as the researcher got better acquainted with the case company and received information on how the coaching approaches are trained and implemented in the organization. Some of the interviews were rather explorative and consisted of various themes. Especially the HR interviews provided a lot of descriptive information, but less for a deeper analysis. In addition, the motives for of the interviewees' relation to the phenomenon under study was not clear to the researcher before conducting the interviews which in part made it difficult to prepare for the interviews. Subsequently these interviews possibly did not render as much data as they could have. Due to these aforementioned reasons, the researcher did not get rich data in those all areas of interest and the data did not relinquish as much substance for a deep analysis as was hoped.

What is more, the sample size was relatively small and as such is not a comprehensive presentation of the company's managerial corps. However, Smith et al. (2012) suggest that when using IPA as an analysis method, it is purposeful to have a smaller sample in order to get rich and in-depth analysis. However, not having representation of the managers from the small business units that make up a substantial amount in the overall managerial corps created

definitely a noticeable gap in the data collection. That line of business has also been training their entire managerial corps coaching approaches to managerial practice. Ideally, there could have been a second round of interviews after completing the first round and recognizing the gaps in the data. In addition, an important stakeholder, namely the employee that is coached by the manager was not included in this research.

Finally, coaching as an approach to developing leadership and HPC is still relatively new in the company as a whole. It is quite possible that those managers that have had a personal interest in coaching are those that are applying it into practice voluntarily and putting a lot of effort in developing their managerial practice and relationships with their employees. The corporate HR management training program contains only a short introduction to coaching style managerial practice, which may not be enough to embed new skills and behaviors into real life without further support and training.

6.4 Suggestions for further studies

As it became evident in the literature review, embedding coaching approaches into the managerial practice to develop a coaching culture to has not been researched extensively to this day. In order to gain a better understanding of the aspects that are relevant in building a culture that supports the fostering of a high performance culture, it would be necessary to conduct research with larger sample sizes and a variety of research methodologies that would involve observations and focus group interviews, for instance.

As the lack of HR involvement and possible lack of understanding of the scope of developmental opportunities that coaching offers became apparent in this case company, the state of HR's coaching capacity and skills would also be an interesting lead for future studies.

Lastly, as already mentioned in before, in coaching literature as a whole the experience of the employees as coachees has rarely been researched. Conducting a research that would include both the managers' and employees' perspective, would provide valuable information on how the employees perceive the coaching style managerial practice and efforts made to develop a high performance culture.

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