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The Power of being a Mindful Leader

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Abstract

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The objective of this study was to define leader, its different theories suitable for mindful leadership and to determine wellbeing at work. The research was focusing on managers, and the purpose was to examine how mindfulness promotes leadership skills.

The data for this thesis were divided into two sections; previous literature and research, and empirical study. The existent information was collected from online articles, journals and books. The qualitative method was used for the empirical part. This data was gathered from interviews made with Finnish managers and leaders in Finland.

The results of this study show that managers and leaders have a big role and responsibility inside work communities. Work wellbeing has lot more impact on the profit and performance of the businesses than thought in today's fast phased world. Being mindful proves only beneficial results and used continuously, leaders would have a tool enhancing both their own and their employees' performance and wellbeing. To get more information of wellbeing at work and using mindfulness in the businesses in Finland, further study would be required to support already made findings.

Keywords: leader, leadership style, mindfulness, wellbeing, Finland

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1 Introduction

The leaders of the twenty-first-century need to have vision, passion and knowledge. They also need to be collaborative and communicative role models for great success. Today's leaders face challenges that force them to make decisions in a stressed and unstable environment. Challenges can be developing skills of both leaders and employees and managing internal and external stakeholders. The responsibility in today's hectic working phase does not serve positively a leader's capability to handle everything in a long term if the person is not ready to change himself.

According to data found by the Social Insurance Institution of Finland (Kela), sick leaves caused by mental health disorders increased by 16 per cent in Finland in 2017. Mostly among women but also men, disorders like depression, anxiety, eating disorders and insomnia are causing inability to work. (Tuulio-Henriksson & Blomgren, 2018, p.6.) It is possible that different changes in the workplace and increased demands towards employees, big reconstructions by the society and global uncertainty are affecting mental health and therefore more research has to be made to find out about the increasement (Blomgren 2018).

Even though mindfulness is not something that is taught everywhere, yet it has caught attention through different eastern cultures and later incorporated to various studies. Its positive outcome and results on human behavior has brought a new view to it. Today, it is already used in training programs and it keeps getting more value at the business level. Institute for Mindful leadership saw in one-year study increasing results in employee engagement and decision making with great growth in percentage point changes. For example, 80 leaders participating the survey from 12 organizations reported that they had a positive impact on their ability to create innovations, their ability to listen to themselves and others enhanced and strategic thinking improved. (Institute for mindful leadership 2018.) Being mindful helps people to feel calmness. They sense

their environment more accurately and become more understandable (Ström & Hultman 2016, p.22).

This way of acting provides more perspective for leadership skills and used correctly, reminding regularly of the purposes creating more decent, humble, caring and honorable personalities for the society and the world. The word humility, as one of the most important characteristics in Asian philosophies, has taught people to get deeper connection with oneself. It is been said that western management styles have much to learn from them. (Silverthorne 2010.)

This thesis includes the five leadership theories explained because of their qualities related to the Mindful one. The theories will be describing more about the importance of the relationship between the follower and the leader. Also, this work is showing the parities between these five leadership styles and the Mindful Leadership.

We live now in a society where taking responsibility of ourselves and our health is really important. In a society, where finding wellbeing and happiness determine our efficiency. The thesis researches how being more mindful at work can affect leaders' ability to handle today's workload in a rapid changing environment. Getting more understanding how external health and wellbeing start from within.

The theoretical part of this thesis consists of several sources such as previous literature and educational internet sites including research papers, e-books and scholarly and academic journals. Publications of the books Mindfulness työssä by Wihuri Antti Juhani and I'm sorry, you were saying? by Martin Ström with Sara Hultman are included. Different websites, like Forbes and Harvard Business Review, are used also. Some of the articles for information are found from journals like Strategy & Leadership and International Journal of Management and organizations.

Finding lots of information about leadership theories, there can be as many methods and opinions as there are personalities, and the chosen theories are explained fairly along the thesis. Also, it is clear that there is no one specific answer how to lead and which approach is the best one. The definitions vary

and all the authors explaining them do not prohibit the usage of mindfulness since everyone can observe presence. The topic is useful for leaders and for those who want to become one.

1.1 Research question and sub-question

Health at work and especially mental health are increasingly observed, and ways in which wellbeing can be supported have more weight in researches (Mental health foundation 2018). Mindfulness helps people to become more effective by directing focus to the most important task at hand and get away from multitasking. Taking a small break before or during a work day shows improved performance and ability to control situations according to the article "How mindful leader can reduce stress in your workplace" by Hills Rob (2016.)

The purpose of this research is to look at the found benefits of training mindfulness on leaders. The research question for this study is defined as follows:

Could mindfulness promote leadership skills? Later on, it will search the possibilities of using mindfulness as an ancillary for leaders to promote their own and employees' wellbeing at work. It would research the willingness and familiarity of people incorporating mindfulness to their own working routines.

The study is based on a theoretical background, literature and controlled interviews of which the aim of the research question should be solved. The literature used is mostly about the progression of mindfulness and work wellbeing.

Before there was any business talk about mindfulness, it has been researched mainly in the field of health and medicine. New studies are made because of the interest how people's presence could have more impact in the business world, where the concept may be considered a bit uncommon. Finnish executives of different businesses will be interviewed to get more in-depth understanding of the connection between mindfulness and wellbeing at work.

1.2 Delimitations of the study

After the introduction, the thesis will continue with the theoretical framework. Leader and mindfulness are defined and explored. It will analyse the differences

between the leader and manager and what the mindful leadership holds inside. The theoretical framework observes wellbeing at work and work inability through several circumstances including increased discussions of lost labour input and its causes especially in Finland. Some of the sickness absence will be examined in this thesis. The chapter is summarized by the results of wellbeing at work and the role of good leadership skills.

This thesis includes researches about the mindful training and how it has affected those who have already used it on everyday basis; wellbeing, time management, innovations and development. The topic will include the opinions about the future and how mindfulness is seen.

It is not including interviews of employees nor use actual mindful practices during interviews.

The data is collected by interviewing Finnish managers from different business industries, from various departments. Interviews are held in Finland. The interviewees may or may not be familiar with mindful leadership style. Data provided will then show the results on what can be the effects of being mindful and their personal thoughts about the topic.

The used method for the data collection and the analysis process are described in chapter four. In chapter five the collected data in this study are presented, analysing the interview responses and comparing the found results and available data from the resources chosen.

Chapter six is the final conclusion where the outcome and results are reviewed. The aim of the summary is to look at the findings and see the big picture of the results. It will have some personal recommendations for additional researches.

2 Leader

Constant change and transformation, ruled by several intricate institutions, economic and social situations, force companies and organizations to try to balance between the important profit and the people who wish for wellbeing and respect. Those can be difficult matters and that is why there is pressing need for a new

individual and collective leadership competence, a new awareness, to process the known and unknown challenges of the moment. To accomplish the balance between those described, it requires decision making with more stable and intentional mind not to forget the people and environment around the results. (Scharmer & Kaufer 2013.)

As mentioned earlier, the constant change we live in can be called as "the cognitive capitalism". In comparison with the merchant and industrial time, it is different because people had to cope with logic and nature that was not overfloating with material. Today, the long-term prosperity is supposed to build with more innovations, flexibility and creation of brands. (Moulier-Boutang 2012, pp.48-50.)

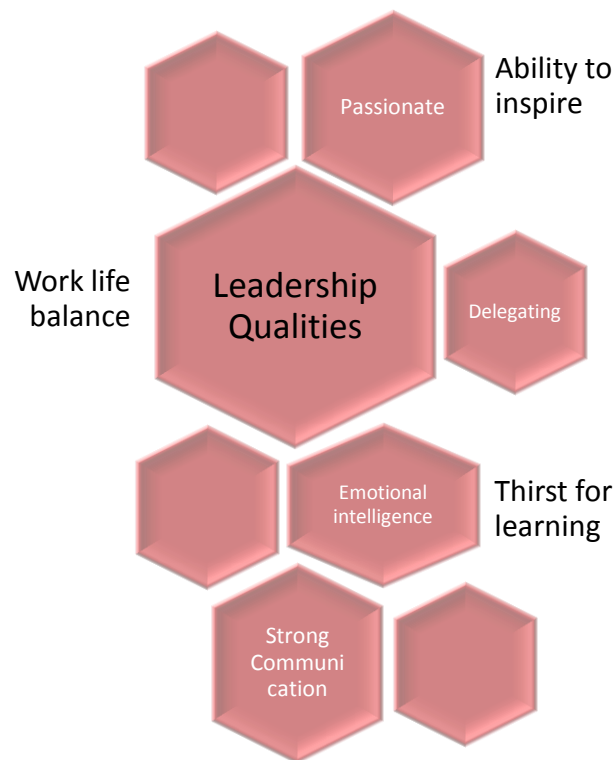Below are listed some of the main qualities each leader should have:

Figure 1 The qualities of the leader by Maxwell (2007)

2.1 5 leadership theories related to mindful leadership

There are many scholars writing theories about authentic leadership starting from 2005. Most of them can be combined with Bill George's (2003, p.18) theory, where he describes the five dimensions of authentic leadership: 1) understanding their purpose, 2) practicing solid values, 3) establishing connected relationships, 4) demonstrating self-discipline and 5) leading with heart. These dimensions include passion, values, relationships, self-discipline and heart. And because authentic leaders are not born this way, they have to build these qualities during their life-time development. (Covelli & Mason 2017, pp.2-4.)

Authentic leader gets satisfied of seeing the development of people. How they value the high standards and get encouraged of creating something new in the life. This type of a leadership is highly focused on internal motivation of self-improvement. (DeCotiis 2015, pp.26-27.)

Transformational leadership got its attention in the 1970's. It became researched by James Mc Gregor Burns and later on more developed research by Bernard M Bass. (Leadership Central 2016.) The original characteristics for transformational leadership are: charisma, inspiration, intellectual stimulation and individualized consideration. Transformational leadership promotes intelligence, rationality, and careful problem solving. These characters enhance innovative results (Bass & Avolio 1994, pp.3–4). Transformational leaders pursue followers' self-efficacy and self-worth. When the leader gets in the self-efficacy state, trust and commitment for the leader and the organization are earned. (Yukl G. 1999, p.286.)

Robert K. Greenleaf, the father of the servant leadership movement states that the main purpose of servants are clients, employees, customers, or the community before tasks. The servant-leader wants to serve people, which wakens the ability to lead in self. This kind of person differs from one who is a leader first. The qualities needed to become servant leader are as followed:

1. Listening: Dean Rusk, former secretary of State, stated: "One of the best ways to persuade others is with your ears - by listening to them."

2. Empathy: Goleman, author of Emotional Intelligence, put empathy in form of the ability to understand people's emotional express.

3. Healing: Servant-leaders have a big role in the organization's path to transformation and regeneration. Servant is the healer of people, groups and organizations.

4. Persuasion: Servant-leaders convince rather than force people to finish their tasks.

5. Awareness: Without good self-awareness, servant cannot be aware of others. Goleman says that having confidence, assessment and deprecative sense of humour helps to be aware of others.

6. Foresight: Servant leaders who understand experiences from the past, present and future moments get more pleasant results with their decisions. Servants like that are perceptive, anticipative, and proactive.

7. Conceptualization: It is about seeking the large picture and thinking beyond the moment. The more responsibility increases in the organization the more conceptual skills have meaning.

8. Commitment to Growth: Servant-leaders believe in immeasurable possibility to learn and grow. They are devoted to the personal, spiritual, and professional growth of those within their sphere of influence. There is statement that "to grow and know what one is growing towards" supports people to stay strong and confident.

9. Stewardship: Within the organization everyone is responsible of being a good steward. It means that everyone delivers the trust for the greater good in their working environment.

10. Focus on Community: Building community especially by developing an organizational culture based on joint interest is a really important task of servant leader. (Carroll 2005, pp.19-20.)

Resonant leadership is considered to be quite a new theory compared to others reaching relation-centred leading style. Boyatzis and McKee have designed this theory and discovered that it is standing out because of its fundament on the emotional intelligence. (Goleman et al. 2002.) Resonant leaders are empathic and inspired. They have compassion and are committed to read people and groups precisely. They also have the ability to show the best qualities of each and every one by giving them the keys to cope with challenges, change and future. (Boyatzis R. & McKee A. 2005, 201-204.) Resonant leader does not necessarily have to resonate so deeply with his internal "frequencies" (such as the leader's emotions or personal vision), but mostly with the people around him that follow. Resonant leader knows how to communicate and knows when and why to do so. This type of a leader is recognized of its capability of self-management, self-awareness, social awareness and relationship management. All of these capacities lead to a high level of emotional intelligence. They value strong relationships where trust is the core. Resonant leader knows also how to control his own emotions. As in other theories this is not exceptional in terms of empathy and talent to read people, inspire and encourage them to become better. Like McKee and Massimilian (2006, pp.45-49) have discovered, the resonant leader is more about the performance of the organization rather than his own personal development. A leader like this builds his way to influence by structuring their financial, intellectual, human, environmental and social resources to perceive and control the energy of the people in the same place.

LMX theory (leader-member relationships) is focused on the interactions between the leader and its followers. With each person inside the working environment he creates a special relationship. From low to high-quality relationships, each of them matters and varies. Impersonal, contractual interactions are low-quality relationships. High-quality relationships are based on obligation, trust and respect. The ground for LXM theory is that using high-quality relationships will benefit all the participants: employees, leaders and organizations. These exchanges are reported to have a positive impact on employees' organizational commitment, job satisfaction, organizational citizenship behaviours and task performance. (Graves & Luciano 2013, pp.513-536.)

The table below is showing the relations between mindful leadership and leadership theories:

LEADERSHIP THEORIES					
Mindful leadership	Authentic	Transformational	Servant	Resonant	LMX
Acceptance	x		x	x	
Awareness	x	x	x	x	
Being present Being mindful	x		x	x	
Compassion	x		x	x	
Letting go	x		x	x	
Listening	x	x	x	x	x
Patience	x	x	x	x	x
Responding	x	x	x	x	x
Trust	x	x	x	x	x

Table 1 Relations between Mindful leadership and Leadership theories

The findings of the above-mentioned theories are showing similarities between the servant, authentic and resonant leadership which are the characteristics of the mindful leadership. In spite of the different qualities each theory has, they fit into the philosophy of the mindful leadership being followed by their own appearance. Acceptance, compassion and listening are examples of the similarities that are important factors for the well-being told more about in the later chapter. Leaders who listen empathetically are not only effective but also working on the relationships that will have positive long-term impacts for the organization. They care about the present moment and avoid saying "We don't have time; we don't make time; we don't realize the importance; we don't know how." (Alexander 1997, p.25.)

Mindful leader has the quality to "be mindful" and "be fully present" which can be understood differently in different theories. Taking again a look at the authentic, servant and resonant leadership styles, they do not always exactly use the words "being mindful". The Authentic leadership has the perception of the reality, appearing in the present moment, and therefore earns others trust and attention. The Servant leadership theory can spot mindfulness as having an inner serenity, where their keen awareness of usual conditions awakes and disturbs them to action. (Boone 2018, p.5.) The resonant leadership sees the pre-

sent moment as living in a state of consciousness. They are aware of others, themselves and the environment they work in.

While both of these practices replenish each other, there is slight contention to them. "Being fully present" means actively engaging in what is going on right now. In practice, it means redirecting attention to the person having contact with and actively engaging in conversation instead of letting mind wander. It requires training the brain to engage with the conversation occurring now and not the one in the past or future. "Being mindful" is a mental state of focused awareness to the present by affirming own thoughts and feelings and being non-judgmental. Mindfulness is the practice of being mindful which enhances meta-cognitive abilities. First the person recognizes that thoughts are not in the present moment, then he brings the attention and focus back. (Griffin 2017.)

The evolution for all the leadership theories is that they need the same key principles: the people, the process and the products. In order to develop and transform for the Mindful Leadership, there is need for constant training like meditation and implementation.

This thesis includes many studies and researches about mindfulness, but will still not be able to cover the whole picture around the topic and its usage. Just recently mindfulness has gotten attention from more investigators, who are willing to find out how mindfulness is seen among leaders and in the workplaces. More of the lectures and trainings are held among managers and bigger companies such as the engineers of Intel, Deutsche Bank, Facebook, Carlsberg, insurance company If and Google. They are showing example and proving in action the long-term benefits. (Wihuri 2014, pp.19-34)

2.2 The difference between managers and leaders

Before describing the potential mindful leader, we should compare the differences between the driven leader and the mindful one. The driven leader is about ego, hierarchy and demands. He is task orientated providing rewards of short-term performances. He is close-minded about the needs of the employees and will neglect the importance of morale, corporate culture, and shared values.

The ethnicity of the company is often underestimated and can cause real problems for the supporter of driven mindset.

The mindful leader on the other hand, values open relationships among its employees by making them feel heard and respected. For mindful leader it is not just about the profits. His working environment is creation of new ideas with support of each person's ethical values. The mindful leader runs the company towards high-impact and profitable results with more productivity. Also, the turnover rates of employees are lower because of open and integrated teams. (Walker 2017.)

The table below demonstrates the differences between managers and leaders:

Manager versus Leader	
PERFORMANCE DEVELOPMENT	**TALENT DEVELOPMENT**
• Exploits individual and team strengths to delegate tasks effectively • Ongoingly researches how to develop workers and how to get teams achieve business goals • Finds and drives solutions to be more productive	• Proactively identifies, develops and retains quality talent within the organization • The structure of the team is the main focus to create as productive and inclusive culture as possible • Has the inner urge to develop people and nurture a culture of self-improvement
PROACTIVE DECISION-MAKING	**EMPOWERING DECISION-MAKING**
• Potent prioritization of individual and team objectives • Takes full responsibility of the initial state to gather information in order to make further decisions • Conscious of commercial information about the business at that time and is looking at all possibilities before making decisions	• Takes into account more than one business area when finding benefits for initiatives and projects • Gives new responsibilities for teams to make decisions that enhance business growth • Delves different aspects by finding open discussions with others including senior stakeholders
ORGANIZATIONAL CREDIBILITY	**COMMERCIAL STRATEGY**

• Takes risk delivering outcome expected • Situations are treated with balanced and appropriate attitude; respecting others • Appreciates ethical and fair outcome	• Focuses on long-term trends of the markets, economy and technology • Creating business plans with ambition, including all team member's skills for competitive advantage • Not afraid of taking risks and breaking the rules; it is natural when coping with problems and chasing vision
SEEKS STABILITY	**DRIVES CHANGE**
• Having a consistent approach and view on challenges and issues being faced • Both pleasant and unpleasant situations are embraced; teaches to learn from the mistakes • Targets high-quality output and deliverables	• Makes others to own and drive the change • Leading environment where others feel encouraged for innovations and being rewarded of their creativity • Leads by example: making business challenges be part of creativity
ENDORSES AN OPEN CULTURE	**SHAPES AN INSPIRATIONAL CULTURE**
• Gives continuously feedback which is constructive; provides ideas and supports improvement • Interacts with others on a regular basis to make sure that their motivation and value stays on points • Is open to all feedback and behaving well towards both positive and negative feedbacks	• Not letting any of the team members stay outside the proactive environment where the business strategy happens • Ongoingly inspires team members and colleagues to shine and speak out loud • Not afraid of pressure; able to make plans for the business/person and make results out of calculated risk

Figure 2 Manager vs. Leader by Recruiter (2017)

2.3   The Mindful leader and training

As the topic is about the Mindful Leadership, one of the key persons to call out is Janice Marturano, who is former vice president at General Mills, but also founder and executive director of the Institute for Mindful Leadership in 2011. Working for more than 15 years in different corporations, she is author of the book "Finding the space to Lead: A practical guide to Mindful Leadership" based on her personal experiences. The writing explains the Mindful leader, how to make time matter and stay focused. Marturano defines the mindful leader to be

someone who appreciates clarity, innovation, creativity, and compassion and self-compassion. Marturano gives leaders practical guidance to pause during the day and the most important – be present. (Institute for Mindful Leadership 2019.)

Another definition for mindful leadership is found by Wells (2015). He sees that the classic leadership theory is defined by traits whereas the mindful leadership "offers *a description of presence, a subtlety of describing how leaders enact these traits by ways of being.*"

The difference between Leadership and Mindful Leadership is described below:

Leadership	Mindful Leadership
Striving	Ability to let go of things that no longer serve you or others – letting go the past judgements
Doing	Ability to be and understand – being fully present with current situation on hand
Talking	Ability to listen – hearing without interrupting and arguing
Making things happen	Ability to accept reality – handling the moment and working towards future
Clutter	Spaciousness – of mind and material things
Judging	Ability for compassion – understand self and others
Telling	Ability to hear – the ground for new knowledge
Multitasking	Ability to work on one thing at the time – giving indivisible attention
Distracted thinking about "to-do" list	Ability to be in the moment – not to get distracted
Directing	Ability to accept – the ground of responding
Busyness	Ability to be still – being quiet, able to observe notice and attend

Distracted preoccupation	Ability to be aware – having all the senses to observe the environment

Table 2 The difference between Leadership and Mindful Leadership by Wells (2015)

Mindfulness; living in a conscious state, where person is non-judgemental, aware and attentive to present reality and current experiences. Deeper understanding of this definition is that people are multidimensional, trying to get in the state of acceptance, learning to be less judgemental and learn to be more aware of own internal (thoughts, bodily sensation) and external (physical and social environment) impulses. Conscious of being reflective and open-minded. (Pinck & Sonnentag 2017, p.884.) "*At work, where individuals are confronted with challenging situations every day, mindfulness may thus facilitate adaptive appraisal of stressful events. To the extent that mindfulness affects employees' appraisal of challenging work events as less stressful, these elicit more positive and less negative affective reactions, which, in turn, lead to a more positive evaluative judgment of one's work situation (i.e., job satisfaction)."* (Hülsheger et al. 2012, p.3.)

Followed by the latest decades, wellbeing at work and health of employees' have been causing more conversation. One of the reasons is the healthcare costs which keep increasing. Another reason is the continuing development of the economy all around the world. Health is not something that affects only on an individual level. As defined by the Meikirch Model of Health: "Health is a state of wellbeing emergent from conducive interactions between individuals' potentials, life's demands, and social and environmental determinants." (Bircher & Kuruvilla 2014, p.365.) Along the thesis, these facts are opened to get better notion.

Compared to the working conditions before, people are challenged now more and more with the mental health aspects. Long working hours and complicated problems provoke emotional draining at workplace. Made surveys stated by Hoffman, indicate that 16-25 percent of employees cannot calm themselves after work day and are thinking work-related things without being able to get stressed. Recently, studies of practicing mindfulness even for a short period of

time, can improve the conditions experienced during or after work. As being mindful means to be present, studies have evidence proving that there is a straight link to WBW. The practice helps to lower the amount of work-related rumination, chronic fatigue and also making the sleep better and should be used and trained inside the businesses better in the future. Good results speak for themselves showing mindfulness as a valuable tool for employers who are interested in the overall health but also their workforces' wellbeing. (Hoffman A. 2017.)

Leading with a conscious state has been studied especially in the field of industry and organizational psychology. There are examinations how mindfulness is affecting a person's performance, focusing mainly on investigating the relationship of mindfulness and well-being within individuals. Currently, interpersonal correlates of mindfulness at work in the role of leader mindfulness for employee well-being, are researched and taken into consideration. Even though the topic is kept quite knew and the correlation is not fully understood, it is thought that the role of leaders' behavior through mindful leading may transfer into employee's behavior and that way into well-being. To better realize how beneficial mindfulness is and what are its potentials in organizations, it is necessary to examine the mechanism that connects leader mindfulness to employee well-being. (Pinck & Sonnentag 2017.)

There is need for new models to know how to be in charge of chaos and add more skills to cope with the workload. The organizations may be ruled with overcharged working phase and therefore different situations may cause inability to focus on a one thing at a time. For example, sitting in a meeting the mind can wander at a same time on the unread e-mails or on the documents prepared for the next session. Loosing focus affects also on the ability to be in charge of own work, concentration on the essential things and good quality thinking. That is why leading and cooperation demand active listening and mindful communication in order to achieve solutions and results for the increased requirements of work. (Wihuri 2014, pp.16-17.)

Wihuri (2014) says that practicing being present and mindful gives person wisdom and peace of mind. When being practiced, the mind turns into a stable and

open to regeneration. Even the most difficult situations are easier to handle when the mind is in peace and open to communication. With this state, the person is more compassionate among his employees and that is an important thing when making profit and success in long-term. (Wihuri A. 2014, pp.17-44.)

Training mindfulness helps to direct focus into the present moment. Even when there is a need for letting go of constant negative thought pattern caused by previous failures or new and challenging situations, training helps to release the feelings of anxiety and restlessness. To cut that vicious cycle, mindfulness brings the ease for the mind, teaching how it can create its own believes and how previous memories and behaviors can be reorganized. (Wihuri 2014, pp.50-52.)

According to Wihuri's suggestions, he prefers little mindful pauses during each work day. The main purpose for the pauses is to allow things to be just as they are and not to force oneself to be somewhere else, not to seek for the next moment or to change for someone else. A porous workday can increase concentration, the quality of interaction, helps to notice essential things and to make better choices. All this can lead for faster recovery and even make the quality of life better. (Wihuri 2014, pp.235.)

3   Wellbeing at work

Wellbeing at work (WBW) is defined by The Finnish Institute of Occupational Health as productivity and health at work by workers who find their job meaningful (Anttonen & Räsänen 2009, p.18). WBW brings the company profitability, benefits in competitive markets and good reputation. One of the many researchers, Miller, has discussed the evidence of good and poor well-being and how it is guiding the profitability and productivity in the organizations. Not to mention, that he still points out some missing links between WBW, productivity and the economic impacts that should be discussed more to cover the uncertainty. (Miller 2016, pp.289-311.)

Definition for wellbeing at work depends on the personal experience and the environment of the whole work society. The term work wellbeing may have a

different meaning for various people. The fundamentals that support wellbeing at work are not seen and experienced the same way in every place because people have the freedom to interpret factors differently. Contrasts in the atmosphere of the same workplace can be experienced different too. One can feel that the atmosphere is enjoyable and likeable, and the other finds many deficiencies to improve on. (Otala & Ahonen 2005, p.28.)

Wellbeing at work is linked to the person's health and happiness. When employees are healthy, they are more valuable for the company. Social, physical and economic environments mostly affect the health conditions, but also personal characteristics and behaviors will have an impact. Sensitivity to thoughts and feelings plays a big role in the performance of employees which can lead to increased experience of exhaustion and illnesses. (Luukkala 2011, pp.31–45.) What comes to the public policies, they can promote health choices by providing more healthy organizational environments (Otala & Ahonen 2003, pp.35-36).

3.1 WBW theoretically

There are certain factors related to work wellbeing. The presenter of these factors, professor Manka, has divided them into four sections: organization, supervisor, group spirit and work. Continuous development, a functional work environment, goal-orientation and flexible structure go under the organization section. The supervisor takes lead of the observation and motivation of the whole work community. Influencing and effectual learning are valuable in the work section. Group spirit as well as open communication and team performance are important for well-rounded work environment. (Manka, Hakala, Nuutinen & Harju 2010, pp.7–8.)

Organisation
-goal oriented
-flexible structure
- continuours development
-working environment

Supervisor
- inclusive and motivationg leadership

Attitude

Individual
- life management
- know-how
- health and physical condition

Attitude

Group spirit
- open communication
- team functionality through common rules

Work
- ability to influence ones own work
- incentive value: learning
- inventives

Figure 3 Factors in wellbeing at work by Manka et al. (2010, p.8)

Competence, requirements and social support are the three key parts of work wellbeing according to Luukkala (2011). He states that the most important part is competence. Challenging tasks are handled, and goals are reached with the recognition by colleagues. Success brings joy but also can be harmful if there is no control of the workload, increasing the risk of possible burnout. Expectations of over performance and unrealistic demands are threatening wellbeing at work. The supervisor is in the highest position to look after the balance between the competence and requirements, assisting the employees continuously. And social support should be maintained both inside and outside the workplace for the best performance possible. (Luukkala. 2011, pp.31-45.)

According to Hietalahti and Pusenius (2012), wellbeing at work is most effective when employees take the responsibility of themselves; they are willing to learn and search for solutions, they take actions in different circumstances, organize and recapitulate new challenges and have eye on scheduling and prioritizing. They take responsibility of managing their job. Authors write that with these factors used for management, they support employees' WBW in today's never-ending changing working culture. They also indicate that there should be in-

volved training in terms of work management and self-leadership for employ-ees.

3.2 Work conditions in Finland

In the Finnish Institute of Occupational health, emeritus professor Guy Ahonen has manifested that work disability is a massive problem in the country. His cal-culations show at least EURO 25 billion costs a year due to the fact that the amount of work absences reported as sick leaves, incapacity to work and nona-lignment is massive. (Mikkonen 2016.)

According to Ahonen, the root cause of this issue is the traditional way of think-ing in core businesses in Finland. Work is just performed the way it is supposed to and there is no greater meaning to it like enjoyment. He also thinks that busi-nesses in Finland are not yet prepared to the changing environment and trans-formation where the company could concentrate not only on its own core busi-ness but also other influencers outside the company. He suggests that it should be time to update the attitude towards work and how it is seen. Ahonen under-lines the importance of wellbeing at work, where employees find themselves meaningful and feel the work as part of their life. This would lead for better re-sults and performance. (Mikkonen 2016; Hagelstam 2017.)

Together with Ossi Aura, Ahonen has proved and showed data, where more than two thousand Finnish companies requested to continually invest in their workers supporting their wellbeing, increased the companies' profits. His stud-ies show that developing leadership and employees' capabilities inside the company, the effects are not less than good. (Mikkonen 2016; Miller 2016.)

3.2.1 The cost and health expenditure in Finland

Employers and the Finnish society are very sensitive to the costs caused by any loss of labor input. These wide range costs include healthcare, productivity, administration, insurance and the norms of person's own life. All the made stud-ies and calculations are supporting Finnish national economy. (Otala & Ahonen 2003; Rissanen & Kaseva 2014.)

To recognize the reasons behind increased costs, especially those caused by lost labor input, companies could more effectively take actions to decrease the effects of the costs. The calculations for the lost labor input show that they are minimum the amount payed to the employee, including non-wage labor cost and are paid by the employer.

In 2014, Rissanen and Kaseva made a research for the Finnish Ministry of Social Affairs and Health with available data on that time covering wage-earners. The calculations were based on an employee's pay and non-wage labor costs to find out the numbers of sickness absence and presenteeism in the workplaces. (Rissanen & Kaseva 2014.)

Since the estimations are not been updated annually, the valid data is used from 2011 calculations. Rissanen and Kaseva found facts few to mention. The cost of healthcare for the working-age population (aged 15–64) was EUR 8.28 billion. (Rissanen & Kaseva 2014.)

The list below shows the total cost of lost labor input:

Chapter 2.2.3 Sickness absence ≈ EUR 3.4 billion
Chapter 2.2.4 Presenteeism ≈ EUR 3.4 billion
Chapter 2.2.2 Healthcare costs ≈ EUR 7.8 billion (preventive measures not included)

In total

Calculations involve costs of incapacity for work and occupational accidents and diseases, which are not presented in this thesis: EUR 24.45-24.95 billion.

Sickness absence is one of the main reasons for loss of labor input at work. The time spent on sick leave varies and is not related to different wage-earner groups. (Rissanen & Kaseva 2014.)

In Finland the sickness absence rate keeps increasing from the beginning of the 21st century up till today. From the perspective of societal aspects, sick leave has been estimated to be the single most expensive component of costs in

medical practice, even more expensive than drug prescriptions. (Englund & Svärdsudd 2000.)

KELA (the Finnish public healthcare system) has now collected data showing, that long-term sick leaves are increasing again and one of the reasons are economic trends. They also revealed that the growth of absences is caused mainly due to mental illnesses. Data shows 16 percent increase in both of men and women covering all age groups. All in all, the amount of sick leave days increased by 7000 and 2,5 percent. (Valtanen 2018.)

4 Empirical study

The empirical part of this study is completed with interviews. The research method is introduced, and the steps of the interviews are explained. Later, the data which is collected from the participated interviewees will be demonstrated and carried out with analysis.

4.1 Research method

The thesis is based on the qualitative research method. It includes definitions, theories and interviews to gather information. The qualitative method is used because it has a more personal approach than the quantitative. It is about experiences and the method will answer questions why, how and what. Analysing topics with this approach brings more inventive and descriptive answers and the outcome of data is collected from people in terms of words. Collecting data using the qualitative method gives a comprehensive way to look at the data. The researcher, together with interviewees, trusts in the information got from interviews and own perceptions more than in the information got from tests for example. (Hirsjärvi et. al. 2009, p.164, pp.185–186.)

Another reason to support qualitative research method is to examine some special characteristics of chosen the group. It helps the research gain larger understanding about the results of findings. (Hirsjärvi et. al. 2009, p.161.)

The empirical data is gathered from several Finnish managers from different cities in Finland to create better understanding how the participants view the

questions as they do. Mindfulness is quite an unspoken and reviewed topic in Finland and therefore not much information is found about mindful leadership in the country. That way the theoretical part will cover definitions about mindfulness and leadership in general including few theories and concepts.

4.2 Process plan

The topic discusses mostly information about mindfulness and its possible effect on leaders. Since only few persons are interviewed, a qualitative research is implemented. The semi-structured theme interviews are based on the experience of the managers and leaders and their attitudes towards leadership skills and wellbeing.

Interviews in this thesis are planned using a couple of steps. The first step is for the interviewer making the content suitable for the interviews and selecting the main subjects for the conversation. As the interview goes on, the interviewee will develop the conversation intuitively.

The involved interviewees are faced personally, and the interviewer will have the control building the discussion according to the selected subjects. The interviewees can freely answer their questions in own words and tell more about events or situations. (Hirsjärvi & Hurme 2000, pp.47–48.)

As the purpose of the thesis is introduced, managers are asked to answer their questions in terms of their own experiences and thoughts about their leadership skills and mindfulness. Conversations are going to be informal, hoping for open-mindedness and deeper thinking to get valuable and good quality information for the thesis. If during the interview misunderstandings or disruptions occur, open-ended questions can be made and asked for clarification (Hirsjärvi & Hurme 2000, p.34).

After all the participants are met, the responses are collected and written in a form of a report. Using qualitative data analysis methods, the content will be construed according to the questions answered in the interviews and combining the findings with the existing theories and studies. (Hirsjärvi et. al. 2009, pp.224–225.)

Instead of a detailed questionnaire, there will be theme areas directed to the questions. Those themes are supporting the interviews as a checklist and guidance. Theme areas are aspired to keep loose in order to get responses as real and clear as possible. (Hirsjärvi & Hurme 2000, pp.66–67, Tuomi & Sarajärvi 2002, pp.77–78.)

In a theme-based interview, the data collected is realistic and true-to-life which can make analysis a bit troublesome and problematic, but also challenging and interesting (Hirsjärvi & Hurme 2000, p.135).

There is no specific amount set for the number of interviewees, but it should be considered to get relevant data for the work. Interviews can be made for group or people individually (Hirsijärvi & Hurme 2001, p.58) by taking notes or recording (Hirsijärvi & Hurme 2001, p.75). Records help the interviewer be present in the moment and replay the discussion if needed (Ruusuvuori & Tiittula 2005, pp.14-15).

The questions are found in appendices 1 and 2 both in Finnish and English.

5   Findings

Before analyzing the results, it is good to have insight of Geert Hofstede's cultural dimensions theory, the framework for cross-cultural communication. From different countries, the data collected for the dimensions are for a comparative meaning to observe different aspects of one nation to another. This study uses five dimensions to understand the leadership styles and national culture in Finland; Power Distance (PDI), Individualism (IDV), Masculinity (MAS), Uncertainty Avoidance (UAI) and Long-term orientation (LTO).

The first score, power distance, equals to 33, which is quite low and therefore Finnish people are seen as independent, equal and hierarchical only for convenience. Leaders in Finland act as coaches and motivators among their employees. Also, Finland falls under a very individualistic country with score 63 and is strongly affecting management styles. Along with these dimensions, Finland is considered to be a Feminine society receiving the score of 26. It means

that Finns value equality, solidarity and quality in their work place. They focus on wellbeing even if the status is not shown. Flexibility and leisure time play a big role in this dimension. Then again, uncertainty avoidance is rather high in Finland with the score of 59. Finnish people demand for rules, strive for specific and precise communication and think time as money. Lastly in the socio-cultural levels, Finland has been classified as a normative society (LTO 38). Traditions are respected, absolute truth is established, and people focus on quick results. (Hofstede insights. 2019.)

The scores for the different cultural dimensions are shown in the chart below:

Figure 4 Hofstede's 5-D Model in Finland by Hofstede (2019)

The position of the interviewees in their company varied depending on the industry, but all were managers of either some department or the whole company. Industries in which they worked at were forestry, manufacturing, accommodation and food services and health care. All respondents were aged between 27-60 and native citizens of their country of residence.

5.1 Self Knowledge

The interviewed managers described themselves as easygoing, cooperative and open. They all liked what they do and being in a higher position did not cause them excessive discomfort.

"First of all, I feel that I am innate leader, but also I managed to be in the right place at the right time. I have a long history in the company and therefor it was easier to apply for higher position" (C).

Two of the respondents told to lead others first. Others felt that in order to manage to lead others, they must lead themselves before anyone else. They told that when the personal weaknesses and strengths are known and goals for the business are set clear, leading others became much more certain and reliable. Being able to lead own self first is the result of being mindful – consciousness of own behavior and people around (Griffin T. 2017).

What mostly connected all the interviewees was the ability to look at uncertainty and unconsciousness. They all wanted to make sure that the information given to their employees would be understandable and manageable. They valued open discussions and talking straight. They also saw the change in a way that would not always be a negative one, but something to be worked with in a curious matter.

"Treating the fear and uncertainty as a chance to make a change and create something new" (E).

The respondents answered that they have not set any roles for themselves between work and home. They try to behave the same regardless when and where they are. They all want to spread positive energy and build a good atmosphere where he or she can be trusted and related to. The personal life can be discussed but not too much. Only one of the respondents told of not making any friendships at work and keeping the relations simple and professional.

The interviews resulted that all of the respondents emphasized open-mindedness. They felt that the change is inevitable, and some of them would let go of the old behavioral and role models by treating new employees as the old ones, valuing transparency and understanding the importance of team playing.

"Letting go of constant comfort zone. There is need for open discussions, believing in things and experimenting by sharing new tasks with others" (D).

The interviewed had set future goals for themselves either improving some areas of self-performance or in the business. What was interesting to notice that most of them wanted to be some way better than before and they see that there

is always room to do something bigger and better. There was even talk about the goals of becoming big influencer and a leader working in global markets.

5.2 Performance

The respondents describe their most important tasks as "not threating the prime business" (A), "conducting the business" (B), "leading the production line and employees" (C), "planning shifts for best performance, organizing events and good familiarization of the business" (D) and "making sure that the atmosphere of the workplace is best as it can be" (E).

Only two of the respondents answered that it is easy to share responsibility. Others felt that there were and are days where the need to control situations and their outcomes leads to difficulties of sharing responsibility. Characteristics like perfectionism, lack of trust and not speaking enough are examples rising from the interviews that cause the need to control everything. But they all admitted that that kind of behavior and thinking should be worked on in a way that the workload would not get too big. It was understood that own value in the work is not measured by the number of tasks handled alone.

"I have come to a conclusion over the past years that the more I share the more I get good results back. You are not here to do everything alone, and that was one of the biggest lessons to learn for myself" (E).

Wells (2015) and Hills (2016) talk about the difference between concentrating on one thing or multiple things at the same time. The results of multitasking showed to be more distributed. Those who multitasked, felt that the processes at work have become routines which are easy to follow and control. That way doing them at the same time does not feel insurmountable. One of the respondents does: *"Many things. Unfortunately, it caused problems because the tasks were complex and exacting. Now I have learnt to prioritize and systemize them."* (C), and the other: *"I can concentrate only on one thing at a time, otherwise I lose my ability to stay productive and informative"* (E).

The meaning of work wellbeing was a familiar term to every respondent. They understood what it holds inside and how it can be affected both positively and

negatively. Still, the conditions and interest of wellbeing varied. Broadly in each business the wellbeing was acknowledged. Yearly improvements are monitored and controlled through different surveys. Everyone agreed that there is always room for better wellbeing especially now that more studies show the increased amount of stressed and sick people trying not to fall into burnout.

"Generally in our field, exhaustion is quite common problem because of the lack of resources. It causes vicious circle which might lead to negative atmosphere. Not to mention the attitude of youngsters, who do not fully understand the importance of both physical and mental health" (D).

"In our company work wellbeing is taken seriously and yearly action plan is reviewed for any improvements. Depending on the positions, the responsibilities are circulated. After tighter period follows easier period" (C).

The fact is that each industry has its own requirements and phase to perform and can be related straight to employees' wellbeing. Some of the respondents admitted that they have bigger responsibility of their own actions and time management which should be noticed on a daily basis. They mentioned that they should make better contact with themselves and their employees in order to keep good environment at work and also strenghten each relationship.

5.3 Discovering the leader

This part of the discussion caused the most thinking among the interviewees and revealed some valuable data for the thesis. The purpose of this part was to actually take a look at how the respondents define the leader and are they finding themselves being more managers than leaders.

According to the data, manager was seen analytical, taking responsibility of his own territory and controlling the performance of the workers. Manager was defined as a statutory person who puts policies and frames into practice. On the other hand, leader was described as someone who sees the big picture and guides employees towards it with his own example and education. Leader also represents the policies and frames to work with.

"Leader is someone who is willing to teach rather than demand. Leader uses his or her senses precisely. Manager is a status of being above somebody else" (A).

According to researches, the whole meaning of being a mindful leader is about living in the present moment. Having the skills of acceptance, listening, and being empathic (Alexander 1997, p.25). The answers of what could mindful leadership mean varied from not ever hearing of it to knowing the concept and acting as one. The respondents had a picture that a mindful leader is someone taking perspective of somebody else. Someone who knows who he is, what he does and how to get better as a leader. Some of the respondents mentioned that mindful leader knows how to look at the situations mindfully. One of the respondents said that we all have the skill to be mindful. It just depends on us whether we are willing to have the time to practice it continually and carrying it along the whole life. Two of the interviewees felt that they are managers. Three of them saw one self as being a leader. Those seeing themselves as a leader, were not necessary leaders by titel in the company.

Interviewees were asked to give their personal top three tips for leaders and managers out there: "Listen, be genuinely interested in things and care" (A), "Hearten people, trust and create vision for long-term goals" (B), "Communicate, be transparent and fair" (C), "Be yourself, ask for help and don't ape other leaders" (D), "Remember to stand out, embrace your unique qualities and show your gratitude every day" (E).

The last question discussed whether mindfulness could promote leadership based on the introduction and the purpose of the thesis. Even though some of the respondents were not familiar with the concept of mindful leadership, they all agreed that it sounded interesting. Most of the respondents felt that the topic should be talked more in Finland. They also showed genuine interest in the thought of being mindful and how it could be trained and used to support their own performance. The respondents who had an idea about this concept could see the future of mindful way of thinking in the business culture and have a significant help for any leader.

"Personally, I think mindfulness is the easiest way of promoting leadership. It can be practiced anywhere, anytime and does not require any money" (E).

6 Conclusion and recommendations

The objectives of this thesis were to understand who leader is, what is wellbeing, and could mindfulness enhance leadership skills. Through interviews I got to speak with managers who did their job because of calling. They were open and did not hesitate with their words. I experienced their self-confident attitude through clear discussions and relaxed and positive appearance. I also noticed some differences in thinking among generations. Younger managers seemed to be more transparent for fast changes and they were willing to utilize tools and techniques to help organizing the tasks and ease the workload.

Even though wellbeing at work was discussed with the respondents to some extent, I left with a feeling that people altogether are still too busy. I was sensing that wellbeing is realized and wished to be taken seriously but not necessary been understood completely. Interviews merely scratched the surface and would require further research. I hope these conversations gave the respondents something to think about for themselves and a new perspective for their own working.

Well-being at work not only pushes organizations for success but also for motivation and enhanced ambiance among workers. These improve the level of service, quality of products and customer satisfaction. Everyone will benefit and learn more. WBW develops innovations inside the companies producing new products and services. Eventually this is a straight link to the commitment of workers who are willing to engage and improve the face of both its employer and employer's associates.

Authors Ström and Hultman have published their latest knowledge, research, experience and personal stories to show how powerful the mind can be. Gathered information from psychologists, knowledge workers, brain researches, mindfulness instructors and organizational consultants, there is great evidence how leaders can promote not only their own, but also their workforce's health.

Mindfulness is something that should be trained on a regular basis. According to Ström and Hultman (2016), organizations who have included training stated that their productivity increased, they held more effective meetings and they had fewer sick leaves and employee turnover. Also, the leaders made employees to prioritize their work better. One inspiring example of mindfulness training had been found at IfP&C insurance company in the Danish town of Hvidovre. In 2009, the department manager Halldor Machholm met with his staff daily in the conference room for ten minutes. Together they practiced being fully present in the moment. After one-year experiment, 88 percent of the participants said they experienced more focus on work tasks, three in four were enjoying their work more and 65 percent felt that they had become more efficient and productive. More than half stated that their stress level decreased and was more manageable. Machholm saw the difference in the whole department. The company got clear of the bigger picture and context, found more clarity and calmness. Machholm also experienced that if the mind is not calm and focused, he is just fiddling around.

What being mindful helps is to spot and avoid any unwanted behavior experienced in short-term, because the thoughts can be distracted in seconds. What the authors have found is that practicing mindfulness does not cause any risks nor negative side effects. The only "negative" effect is to not get the mindful state at all. The topic is differently understood and yet has lack of understanding how to practice it. One of the research teams has stated that in order to include mindfulness into the working environment, there should be more open discussion to understand how it "works". They also suggest to not only interpret the training but also to measure and know which components should be included in the training.

Mindfulness can be used as a construct to develop "responsible leadership". It has been seen that the power and authority can cause negative side effects on some people who forget what the original purpose of the work and the organization was. To avoid corruptive and dishonest behavior, leaders should take integrity and humility seriously.

What I personally think through hearing and learning from many people and workplaces, we all seek for self-improvement in a way or another. You are either born to be a leader or you can be led to become one. Being a leader who sees the truth and stands behind ethical decisions. As Albert Einstein said: "Problems can't be solved by the same thinking that created them".

Opposite to mindfulness, mindlessness, means just that we do not pay enough attention to our social environment. I also think that mindfulness and leadership walk hand in hand. If we want to lead in a better way, we have to have the intention – intention to stay in the moment. The essence of being a mindful leader begins by managing yourself first, both inside and outside the workplace.

Even though practices were not included in this thesis, mindfulness can be trained easily right away through these few tips listed below:

1. focus your attention on the person you talk with
2. suspend judgement
3. regulate emotions
4. enhance learning

And then again, having all the information and knowledge needed, why is it so hard to be mindful? From what I have personally studied and experienced through different circumstances now, I found that there are two main reasons. First, there are attentional deficits which cause inability to focus among people. Our society surrounds us by the fear of missing out. We are expected to multi-task even though our brain is not necessarily wired for it. Another reason is the attentional hyperactivity where our minds get easily distracted and we practice so called mind wondering. We begin to think of our personal things in the middle of the task and then lose our presence.

Showing only positive effects of mindfulness, leaders and managers should occupy their actions and step away from their comfort state, improve their physical and mental health, communications, emotions, decisions, performance and satisfaction.

For the future research I would study more about the practical things like comparing multitasking between doing one thing at a time, how those two affect our brains and could multitasking be changed in every industry. Another question worth of researching is that if multitaskers feel comfortable of building routines, how would they see braking their old behavior models and getting uncomfortable.

Reliability in an interview is about the quality. "Reliability means that when researching one person you get the same result in two different research times". Hirsijärvi & Hurme (2001, p.185). Despite of the meaning, people can change over time or their circumstances might have changed. Therefore the research can still be reliable (Hirsijärvi & Hurme 2001, p.186). Both the researcher and the respondent should have a similar idea of the concept. There should be no contradictions in the data analysis. (Eskola & Suoranta 2008, pp.212-213.)

The research is valid when the subject is objective, and the purpose is clear for the respondents (Hirsijärvi & Hurme 2001, p.187). Validity is also the result of the qualitative research without any changes or personal opinions (Eskola & Suoranta 2008, pp.213).

In my opinion the research is valid and reliable. The respondents understood the purpose and subject of the thesis. I gathered 5 interviewees, which in my opinion were enough to get the main idea of the current thoughts and leading philosophies. However, the research would have been even better if I had managed to get more people for the interviews. The interview consisted of 15 questions. The questions are grouped into three different themes. Following these, the findings are presented with text by analyzing the answers and findings of literature.

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Appendices

TEEMA 1. ITSETUNTEMUS JA KEHITTYMINEN

1. Mikä saa tekemään kyseistä asemaa/työtä?
2. Työyhteisössä kuvaile itseäsi 3 adjektiivilla?
3. Johdatko ensin itseäsi vai muita?
4. Miten kohtelet epävarmuutta ja tietämättömyyttä?
5. Mikä on roolisi työssä? Onko sellaista ja kuinka se eroaa henkilökohtaisesta elämästä?
6. Mitkä asiat mielestäsi auttaisivat luopumaan vanhoista käyttäytymis- ja roolimalleista?
7. Tavoitteet tulevaisuudelle?

TEEMA 2. SUORITUS JA TYÖHYVINVOINTI

1. Tärkeimmät työtehtäväsi?
2. Kuinka helppoa on antaa/jakaa vastuuta muille?
3. Yksi asia vai monta asiaa kerrallaan?
4. Kuinka näet tänä päivänä työhyvinvoinnin niiden ihmisten kanssa, joiden kanssa olet päivittäin tekemisissä? (stressi, motivaatio, riittämättömyyden tunne)?

TEEMA 3. JOHTAJAN MÄÄRITTÄMINEN

1. Johtajan ja esimiehen ero mielestäsi?
2. Oletko johtaja vai esimies?
3. Mitä tulee mieleen tietoisesta johtamisesta?
4. Mitkä ovat 3 parhainta vinkkiä esimiehille/johtajille?

THEME 1. SELF-KNOWLEDGE AND DEVELOPMENT

1. What makes you do the current position/job?
2. Describe yourself with 3 adjectives in workplace?
3. Do you lead yourself or others first?
4. How do ou treat uncertainty and unconsciousness?
5. What is your role at work? Or do you have one and how is it different compared to personal life?
6. What would be the things to help of letting go the old behavioral and role models?
7. What are your goals for the future?

THEME 2. PERFORMING

1. The most important tasks?
2. How easy is to give/share responsibility to others?
3. One thing or many things at a time?
4. How do you see wellbeing at work with those people you work with daily? (stress, motivation, feelings of inadequacy)

THEME 4. DISCOVERING THE LEADER

1. What is the difference between the leader and the manager in your opinion?
2. Are you a leader or a manager?
3. What comes in your mind about mindful leadership?
4. What are the best 3 tips for managers/leaders?