Implementing Coaching Leadership in an Agile Organization

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International business — Abstract

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The aim of the thesis is to examine the leadership that prevails in the case organization and how it is experienced by the employees and supervisors. The research is conducted as qualitative case study. Case organization is a financial service group (FSG) in Finland that operates in retail banking, corporate banking, and insurance services. The case organization has recently renewed its organizational culture into agile management as well as its leadership model.

The objective is to conceptualize managerial coaching, how it is implemented in case organization and its benefits for the organization. In addition, to examine how close the organizational culture that currently prevails in case organization is to a coaching leadership culture.

The research question of this thesis is: *How is coaching leadership implemented in financial service group (FSG) in agile organization culture?* The research question enables defining the possible developmental areas on contributing coaching. Empirical part of the qualitative research is conducted by using two separate questionnaires in Webropol for both employees and supervisors.

According to the research coaching leadership is implemented in the case organization thus it varies depending on the department. The study suggests that coaching leadership as a concept is familiar to majority of the employees working in the organization regardless if it was not applied in some departments. Middle management contributes coaching approach with their subordinates on their day to day activities. The results of the study indicate that coaching benefits the organization by improving employee's job satisfaction, personal development, and self-management which in turn increases the organization's efficiency.

Keywords Coaching leadership, agile organization culture, leadership
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International business Abstract

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Opinnäytetyön tarkoituksena on luoda yleiskatsaus case-organisaatiossa vallitsevaan johtamistapaan sekä tutkia miten se koetaan työyhteisössä. Tutkimus toteutetaan laadullisena tapaustutkimuksena, jossa case-organisaationa toimii suomalainen finanssiryhmä. Finanssiryhmä harjoittaa liiketoimintaa vähittäispankin, yrityspankin sekä vahinkovakuutuksen saralla. Case-organisaatio on hiljattain uudistanut yrityskulttuuriaan ketterämmäksi, jonka yhteydessä myös johtamismalli on kokenut muutoksen. Muutosten taustalla on lisääntynyt sääntely sekä digitalisaation mukana tuoma kilpailu. Tutkimuksen pääkysymyksenä on: Kuinka valmentavaa johtamista toteutetaan ketterässä finanssiryhmässä?

Tutkimuksen tavoitteena on luoda katsaus valmentavasta johtamisesta työyhteisössä, miten valmentavaa johtamista toteutetaan case-organisaatiossa ja miten se palvelee organisaatiota kuin sen työntekijöitä. Lisäksi tutkija pyrkii selvittämään, miltä osin organisaatiossa vallitseva johtamiskulttuuri vastaa valmentavaa johtamiskulttuuria.

Tutkimuksen empiirinen osuus toteutetaan laatimalla kyselylomakkeet organisaation esihenkilöille sekä työntekijöille. Kyselyn toteuttaminen sekä vastausten keruu suoritetaan käyttämällä Webropol-sovellusta.

Tutkimuksen tulokset osoittavat, että case-organisaatiossa toteutetaan valmentavaa johtamista riippuen työntekijän. Valmentava johtamiskulttuuri on tuttu valtaosalle organisaation työntekijöistä, siitä huolimatta, että osa työntekijöistä ei kokenut saavansa esihenkilöltään valmennusta. Esihenkilöt soveltavat valmentavaa otetta kaikessa päivittäisjohtamisessa alaistensa kanssa. Tutkimuksen tulokset osoittavat valmentavan johtamisen hyödyntävän organisaatiota sillä se parantaa työntekijän työn mielekkyyttä, itseohjautuvuutta sekä henkilökohtaista kehittymistä. Nämä osaltaan kasvattavat organisaation tehokkuutta.

Avainsanat Valmentava johtaminen, Ketterä organisaatiokulttuuri, johtaminen

Sivut 48 sivua, joista liitteitä 2 sivua

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1 Introduction

Almost every business is aiming to increase their market shares, productivity, and quality. Yet many of them are stuck in the old patterns, processes, and mindsets. It is an inevitable fact that change is vital in order to survive and thrive in today's rapidly changing business environment. Changes in technology, competition, and customer behavior are requiring more agile practices from the organization. (Medinilla, 2014, p.7)

The worldwide pandemic has also forced organizations to renew their course of action in order to succeed in the unpredictable environment. It has led to organizations thinking outside the box and strengthening their ability to adapt into new atmosphere. The era of control-oriented management has come to its end leading to a new model of organizational cultures being presented. According to Sydänmaanlakka (2012) the main challenges of leadership in Finland are in a continuous change, accelerating complexity, virtual leadership and managing network.

Research conducted by financial service sectors indicate that several challenges in working life during the pandemic are currently trending. Employees are experiencing lack of motivation due to workload not being divided equally or due to not receiving enough guidance from their supervisor. Self-management has increased some employees burden leading to distress and burnout. The pandemic has served opportunities to a better work life balance by enabling remote working which has had positive effect on over 40% of employees within financial sector. On the other hand, some employees have faced decreased motivation and workflow due to continuous remote working. The executives and leaders of the organization have a significant role in setting standards for working life and leadership that is sustainable and pleases everyone. (Karhunen,2021)

"Leadership science develops frameworks, models and processes that picture leadership in practice and theory while solving the main problems in regards of leadership" is Sydänmaanlakka's (2019) portrayal of leadership science which he has been researching and developing for the past 20 years.

As Ristikangas & Ristikangas (2013) describes, leadership is in a revolution and the need for change is unavoidable. Traditional ways of leading individuals are not functioning as they used to. The competition of qualified and highly skilled specialists is ruthless, and organizations are forced to find new ways to induce and engage employees. Eventually this can be seen as a success factor for a corporate.

Rapid development of technology and digitalization has led to financial services such as banks and insurance companies to create new business models and strategies to maintain their position in changing business environment. Especially the value of using "big data" has increased over the years drastically. (Finanssivalvonta, 2017)
Other challenges that financial industry is facing are regulatory requirements that are tightened since the financial crises has started. The changes of digitalization have reformed the organizational culture for employees working in the financial sector. Employees are expected to care of developing their competences and to be self-directed professionals. Changes in business environment and increased competition has led to development of organizational culture and leadership.

For the past couple of years coaching has been integrated in many Finnish organizations as part of their leadership models.
Ristikangas & Ristikangas (2013) accentuates the change in generation's needs. The new Y-generation is demanding different things from the work life than the previous ones. The Y-generation requires inspiring and meaningful working environment where equality and individuality are valued. Having a great work-life balance is appreciated even more than before.

1.1 Background of the study

The topic for the study arose from the researcher's own interest to explore modern leadership and to examine how leadership could be developed based on an organization's needs.

The aim of the research was to study what kind of leadership prevails in the case organization and its developmental areas. The objective was also to perceive how coaching leadership could benefit the organization. Interest in coaching as a leadership style has increased remarkably within the past two decades resulting in over 700 professional articles and dissertations in literature. Researchers faced an impediment regarding the lack of empirical studies in the literature leading to conducting further studies by using quantitative methods.

The three different types of professional coaching are: life coaching, managerial coaching, and executive coaching. (Ladyshwesky,2017, p.25) Life coaching is not discussed in this study rather focusing on managerial coaching.

These key concepts have been studied and presented in the theory part of the research. There are many studies that encompass the managerial coaching, the performance effects at different organizational levels, the relationships, trust in managerial coaching and developing coaching. The literature review in this study focuses on managerial coaching, executive coaching, and agile management.

1.2 Objectives of the study and research questions

This research focuses on creating an overview of coaching leadership and how it prevails in the case organization. The objective is to conceptualize how coaching is implemented in case organization and how it benefits the organization as well as the employees. The researcher aims to understand how coaching leadership is embraced within the organization and what developmental aspect occurs. The objective is to search for evidence through empirical point of view to which extent coaching is effective and the essential attributes of coaching leader. While the existing literature suggests positive outcomes of coaching it is needed to deliver empirical data to support the hypothesis.

It is also interesting to look into features that are required from employee in order to achieve best results of coaching.

Since coaching leadership is tightly related to Agile management, the research will define the main concepts of Agile as well.

The main research question of this thesis is:

How is coaching leadership implemented in financial service group (FSG) in agile organization culture?

Finding the answers to the main research question helps to identify the possible development areas of leadership style. It also presents how leadership is experienced in the case organization on daily activities and what are employee's needs for the future. The research question enables defining the possible impediments to contribute coaching in the case organization.

The sub questions of this these are:

What is coaching leadership?
How does coaching leadership benefits the employee and the organization?
What characteristics does coaching leadership require from the leader?

The other questions help to conceptualize coaching leadership theory while studying the effectiveness of leadership through coaching and its benefits for the case organization.

1.3 Research methodology

In this study the researcher aims to build comprehensive understanding on the leadership that prevails in the organization and what the individuals are experiencing.
The research method is a case study where the case organization is a Finnish Financial Service Group (FSG).

The case study as a research method is suitable when exploring uniqueness of a case. The case study is characterized by finding out something that is not known in advance. (Simons,

2009, p.3) To reach the objectives of the research it requires studying the theory and conducting an empirical research. The theory part focuses on defining the main concepts of leadership and their correlations. It is also important to reflect on the previous studies on this subject.

The empirical study is conducted by performing structured interviews with both employees and the supervisors to get a better understanding on how coaching leadership prevails in the case organization. The interview questions are based on the questions and assumptions made by studying the theory and existing literature. The collected data is processed and analyzed by coding the interview replies.

The participants of the empirical study are divided into two groups: employees as coaches and coaches. The coaches are managers who voluntarily signed up to take part of the research.

The interview questions are used to dive into more specific issues and perspectives in order to generate data. The aim is to build bridge between the existing literature and empirical evidence.

The study is conducted as a qualitative research because of the nature of this study and the objectives. Qualitative research is a term used when studying natural social life utilizing variety of views and methods to conduct a research.

It is suitable for this research due to the nature of the study when data is often collected utilizing non quantitative manners such as interview transcripts, notes, or video recordings. (Saldana,2011, p.4)

Qualitative research is used when studying a behavioral science when the objective is to understand human behavior such as why people do or think in certain way and their inner motives. (Kothari,2004, p.3).

1.4 Case organization

The case organization is one the Finland's largest financial service groups established in 1900's, owned by its customers and it employs over 10 000 people. The Financial service

group consists of over 100 cooperative banks and the central cooperative with its subsidiaries.

The financial group consists of three business segments that are retail banking, corporate banking, and insurance services.

The group's business is based on the cooperative principles which are shared success with its 2 million owner-customers and the trust it builds with the customer and the community. Cooperative generates benefits for its owner-customers through the services used.

The main difference between cooperative and a limited liability company is that the shareholders of LLC receive profit through invested capital. The aim is to generate profit for the shareholder while cooperative thrives to support the economy or industry of its owners. The case organization's mission is to promote prosperity, security and wellbeing of its owner-customers and operating region. The organization's definition of its core values are *people first, responsibility and succeeding together*. The vision is to be the leading and most appealing financial service group in Finland. (Case organization X, 2021)

The strategic priorities have been marked to having the best customer experience possible, generating more benefits for owner-customers, and providing excellent employee experience. In order to succeed in the era of rapid changes it has forced the FSG to reshape and reformulate its strategy continuously. Achieving the mission in a highly competitive market has led to a major transformation is financial service's organizational culture and mindset. The aim is to retain highly skilled employees and to make sure that every individual finds meaning to his or her work. Delivering value to the customer is the core principle of all business activity and this requires a continuous strategy process. This is one of the reasons that Agile practices have been brought into use on a daily basis. Agile management supports the idea of customer first approach and focusing on delivering value to the customer while eliminating activities that are not doing so. Employee engagement and job satisfaction are highlighted through renewed leadership model that encourages self-directedness and autonomy of the employee. Leadership focuses on removing obstacles and supporting employee development through coaching. (Case organization, X,2020)

2 Literature review

2.1 Agile organization

The need for a modern and developed leadership arose from a bureaucratic organization where decision making was complex and time consuming. Today's competitive marketplace has given power to the customers which has forced corporations to place customers in the center of their business activities. The traditional top-down bureaucracy is not delivering value for the customers because of their complex internal systems and processes. Agile organization is externally focused while continuously improving and creating new advantages. Customer-oriented organization aims to eliminate actions and processes that are not delivering value to the customer. (Denning,2018, p.12-17.)

The rapid speed of changes in environment whether it is due to internal or external factors it is required that organizations strengthen their adaptability. Many organizations are struggling since they are unable to adapt to changing environment as it requires agility. Organizations are facing challenges such as rapid development in information technology, usage of data as a strategic weapon and increasing competition. In order to exist and succeed in the highly competitive environment, corporations are forced to continuously innovate new ways to stay relevant. Predicting the future and planning strategy has become more difficult (Hoogveld,2018 p.20-26).

Agile management embraces creating more value to customer as well for the organization itself. Agile principles emphasize the need of continuous interaction with the customers and internal transparency in order to deliver first class customer experience. (Denning, S,2018 p.12-13).

2.1.1 The main principles of Agile

Customer is the main focus of all business activities, such as strategy planning and goal setting. The main goal is to deliver value for the customer rather than maximizing financial

metrics. Comparing to traditional hierarchical organizations the considerable change is in managements role. Rather than supervising and controlling individuals the management focuses on removing obstacles and minimizing challenges in order to help self-managed teams to succeed. When traditionally work is coordinated by the top management, agile management enables the self-managed teams to organize their work by receiving direct feedback from the customers. Agile methods embrace the importance of transparency and continuous improvement on daily activities within the organization. (Denning, 2015, p.11)

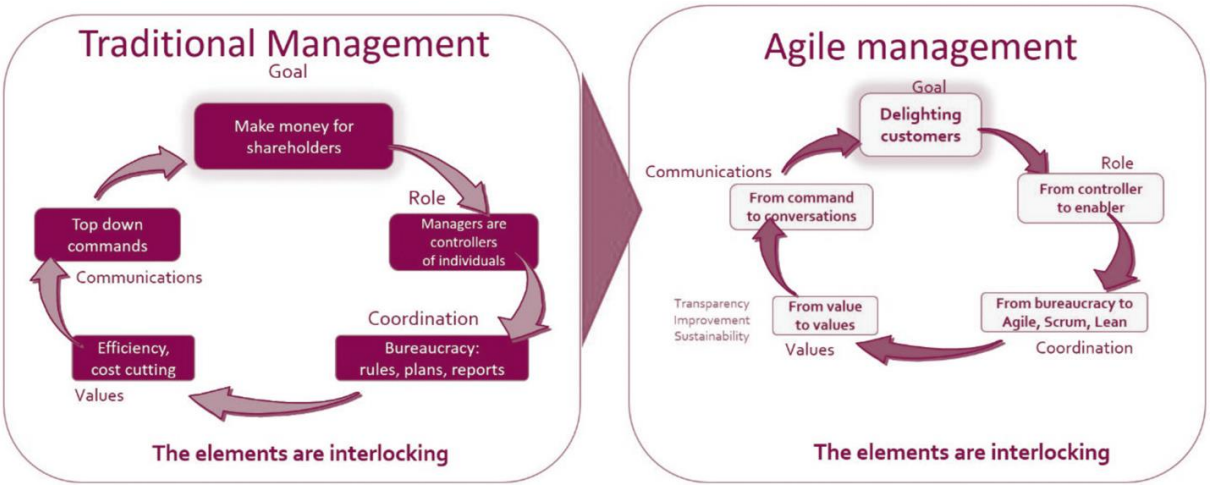

Figure 1. Difference between traditional and agile management (Denning,2015)

As figure (1) demonstrates the major shift from traditional management to agile management is within the five key principles: goal, role, coordination, values, and communications. The first step is to change the mindset that a corporation's main objective is to maximize its profits in order to make money for its shareholders. The main principle of agile management is to place the customer in the center of any business activity in order to retain customer satisfaction. Customer is seen as shareholder who has a major role and impact. When traditionally individuals report to the management in agile organization the self-organized teams are responsible of delivering. Manager enables the success of the team by removing obstacles and supporting employees' development and compliance. Rather than organizing work tasks according to bureaucracy and top management, teams focus on finding the most suitable ways of working by using agile methods and iterative work cycles. Customers feedback is valued, and changes of direction may occur rapidly when needed.

Agile management highlights the importance of transparency and constant improvement of business activities. (Denning,2015 p.11-12)

2.1.2 Transitioning from a manager to coach in agile organization

Transitioning from a manager to coach in agile organization requires removing coordinating individuals into coaching the whole team. Instead of being invested in specific outcomes the coach focuses on monitoring team's performance and supporting their creativity. Agile management endorses transparency and the coaching manager is not expected to know all the answers. It is seen more important to collaborate with the team members in order to find answers and solve problems. Trusting and believing in the team's capability on finding their own ways of doing tasks and giving them autonomy and responsibility is also seen as an essential matter. The team will eventually find the most suitable way of working. Rather than giving orders the manager guides the team to a certain direction. (Adkins, 2008)

By giving the team autonomy it is more likely to achieve high performance level and great workflow. This endorses a pleasant working environment where ideas and opinions are allowed which often leads to improved creativity. Even the wildest and boldest ideas are welcomed and considered since by trying is the only way to create new. Manager has a great role in inspiring the team to overcome their personal limitations by setting example. Failure should not be presented in a negative manner but rather as an experience to learn from. Encouraging manager highlights that failure only strengths the team to keep trying further on. Team and its members receive appraisal and feedback accordingly which will help them to maneuver into needed direction.

Coaching manager reflects back to the team without judgement while letting the team see through manager's observation. A coaching manager enables an environment where team members are heard, and they can voice their thoughts without a doubt. (Adkins, 2008)

2.2 Leadership

> *"Great leaders move us. They ignite our passion and inspire the best in us. But the reality is: Great leadership works through the emotions. No matter what leaders set out to do – their success depends on how they do it. If leaders fail in this primal task of driving emotions in the right direction nothing they do will work as well as it could or should "*
> (Goleman, 2004, p. 3.)

Goleman highlights the importance of emotional intelligence being the most important attribute of a great leader. Emotional intelligence is further explained in chapter 4.

Management and leadership together form the foundation of organizational culture. Managers are the chiefs in command on daily activities by organizing work tasks and controlling the forces. Whereas leaders focus on the bigger picture such as strategy planning, networking, and establishing relationships for the foundation of organization. Great leaders are the ones who motivate and inspire the members of the work community. The main attribute of leadership is defined as ability to manage one's emotions depending on the situation which is known as emotional intelligence. (Gallos,2008, p.3-5; Goleman,2004, p.3)

The transformation from the industrial to information society has led to major shift in leadership. Traditionally corporations have been bureaucratic organizations. Now they must be developed into open organization requiring less hierarchy while enhancing individual's self-leadership.

Sydänmaanlakka (2019) highlights the need to change leader-centric thinking into collective leadership. (Sydänmaanlakka, 2019, p.143).

According to Kurttila & Aalto (2015) a great leader is someone who wholeheartedly trusts and embraces an employee until proven wrong.

Medinilla (2018) separates managers from leaders based on their characteristics. Her description of a leader is someone who is presented as a role model and is inspirational to

others. While manager's role is portrayed as an operative leader who is responsible of corporate goals and in order to do so it often requires assigning tasks to subordinates. Manager is seen as a controlling force within the organization. (Medinilla, 2012, p.3-5).

Leadership is often portrayed very narrowly when it actually is should be studied as a comprehensive phenomenon. Sydänmaanlakka, (2019) underlines the significance of developing straightforward as well as more complete leadership processes that pictures the relations between the variables. (Sydänmaanlakka,2019, p.140)

One of the most essential variables researched on leadership concept is establishing relationship between manager and subordinate and how to nurture that relationship further. According to many researchers (Kurttila, 2015; Ladyshewsky,2009) the relationship is built on trust and confidential environment. Open dialog and interaction enable finding common ground and meaning. It presents opportunity for individuals to voice their opinions and be respected in the work community by their manager and co-workers. (Kurttila, 2015, p.157)

2.3 Situational leadership

Situational leadership model was launched by Ken Blanchard and Paul Hersey in the 1960s consequently it became the most used leadership theory. As the name situational leadership may indicate, it emphasizes that a leader must adapt his/her leadership style to the situation. Not all styles work for everyone thus employee's personality and individuality should be considered.

Situational leadership model I (1996) consists of four leadership styles: directing, selling, participating, and delegating. Later on, it emerged into model II which emphasized leadership styles as coaching, delegating, supporting, and directing (Blanchard, 2007) Blanchard points that coaching leadership has the best results when the employee is not committed or motivated and doesn't have the needed skills for the tasks. (Berg & Karlsen,2016, p.2-3)

Blanchard (2007) emphasizes the two-way communication where the manager supports and praises the employee consequently leading the employee will build self-confidence and

commitment for the tasks needed. The manager also encourages the subordinates to be proactive and innovative. This enables the employees to learn from the process and therefor develop their competences. (Berg & Karlsen, 2016, p.3)
Situational leadership has been praised for its straightforward application and the flexibility it gives to the leader. It emphasizes the significance of the subordinate in regards of leader's behavior. Sosik and Jung (2010) pointed some of the criticism on situational leadership theory e.g. the fact that the outside factors and demographic differences weren't considered. (Berg & Karlsen, 2016 p.2-3)

2.4 Coaching leadership

Almost in any situation someone must take the leading position, whether it is in a household or leisure activity. It is that person who is pioneer or a trendsetter who is being followed by the others. Supervisors are organizations trendsetters who have influence on the mode of operations and develop new ways to practice leadership.
Originally the term *coaching* dates back to the ancient philosophers consequently it became widely used in sports. From the sports coaching arrived in leadership literature in the 50s. (Ristikangas & Ristikangas, 2013, p.19-21)

Coaching is defined in different ways depending on context, literature, and the researcher. Ladyshewky's definition of employee coaching: "*a short-term developmental interaction focused on performance, with goal setting, providing practical application, feedback and teaching as components."* (Ladyshewsky,2009, p.293)

Kurttila (2015) described coaching leadership as a process where the *coach* helps the *coachee to* discover his/her own resources which enables reaching the goals. The core elements of employee coaching are two-way communication, focusing on the teams and appraising people over tasks while continuously supporting employee development and self-confidence. Manager as a coach (MAC) focuses on improving performance and developing the special relationship between manager and employee. (Ladyshewsky,2010)

Well established leadership is often linked to success factor on improving corporation's performance. Yet so many organizations are failing on developing a functioning and fruitful manager-employee relationship. Managerial coaching concentrates on valuing the employee by giving them constructive feedback and appraisal. The focus lies also on enabling the employee's competence development and continuous learning in order to success in one's work tasks. (Ellinger & Ellinger, 2005, p.621-623) The main principle is empowering employees and build their self-confidence in order to enable their own strengths to flourish and help them to make own decisions. (Mäkelä & Viitala,2010)

2.4.1 Benefits and barriers of coaching

Manager as coach focuses on the behavior linked to achieving certain performance level, setting goals, and delivering productive feedback to the employee. (Anderson, 2013 p.260). According to Mäkelä and Viitala (2010), confidential and nurturing relationship between the supervisor and the subordinate is the foundation of practicing coaching leadership. Ladyshewky (2019) highlights the importance of building trust in order to develop working relationship between individuals. Nevertheless, building trust is remarkably time consuming therefore many managers fails to do so.

Studies reveal many benefits of successful coaching such as increased job satisfaction, improved work performance, relationships, and employee commitment. Regardless of the positive outcomes of coaching Ellinger enhances that only some supervisors are enthusiastic to coach their subordinates due to other managerial responsibilities that are seen more important. (Ellinger,2013, p.312) Some managers also assume that the employees do not want to be coached and that they might not need the guidance and support that they could be receiving through coaching. This is often a false assumption made by the managers. (Hunt & Weintraub,2002, p.40)

Hunt and Weintraub (2002) brought forward a research conducted by the Gallup Organization which revealed contrary to assumptions that employees are actually willing to

receive coaching in order to develop their competences and career path. One of the reasons for not contributing coaching could be that the traditional leadership ways are seen more preferable since it allows to monitor the subordinates. Whereas coaching accentuates the need of shared responsibilities and embracing the employee development to increase job satisfaction as well. (Hunt & Weintraub,2002, p.40)

2.4.2 Coaching process

"Most managers practice the sink-or-swim philosophy of people development: Give them a good assignment and, if they survive, promote them." (Hunt & Weintraub,2002) Hunt and Weintraub (2002) defined how learning from experience is often conceived amongst leaders which may lead to employee adopting the wrong lesson. Coaching in this case is seen as a useful way to help the employee succeed and learn by giving them constant feedback. In many organizations managers wrongfully tend to believe that coaching is suitable only in cases where employees are facing difficulties reaching their targets and that coaching is the key to avoid that. (Hunt & Weintraub,2002, p.42)

Managerial coaching focuses more on facilitating and guiding *how* to manage or solve a certain problem rather than explaining *what* the actions are needed by the employee. (Agarwal, Angst & Magni 2009, p.2112). In the 20TH century the manager's role in empowering its subordinates and enabling their personal growth and development is significantly increased since the past century. Coaching is viewed as a development process where the manager provides needed tools and competences in order to enable success of an employee (Ladyshewsky, 2017, p.26-27)

Coaching process starts with a qualified and accomplished manager who has the qualities of a coaching supervisor. Empathy, patience, listening, adaptability, and problem-solving skills are the vital characteristics of a manager as coach. (Ladyshewsky,2009, p.293). Furthermost it requires a manager who wholeheartedly is eager to support and help the employees to succeed. It requires a leader who emphasizes the significancy of learning by giving feedback

on a daily basis. This enables the continuous learning process for the employee. (Karlsen, 2016, p.4) According to Goleman (2004) the most vital feature of a thriving leader is known as *emotional intelligence* rather than persons IQ or analytical skills.

2.4.3 Emotional intelligence

Emotional intelligence as a psychological theory was developed by Peter Salovey and John Mayer (1997). They defined emotional intelligence as follows: *"Emotional intelligence is the ability to perceive emotions, to access and generate emotions so as to assist thought, to understand emotions and emotional knowledge, and to reflectively regulate emotions so as to promote emotional and intellectual growth."* (Salovey & Mayer, 1997)

Emotional intelligence is essential in working environment since one must process and control perceived emotions according to the situation. One of the vital characteristics of a qualified coach is ability to help coachee to reflect on perceived emotions in certain situation and help find ways to deal with them. Coach or mentor has a major role on developing coachee' s emotional skills through common reflection. Mental skills are highlighted in order to overcome disappointments or impediments and to go forward. Developed mental skills help the individual to learn from other people while increasing their resilience. (Ristikangas & Ristikangas,2020, p.160)

Daniel Goleman has explored emotional intelligence in his studies on organizational context to identify the personal capabilities that resulted in effectiveness in leading and high performance. The studies revealed that cognitive skills and intellect is remarkably linked to performance level. On the other hand, the studies indicated that when the ratio of technical skills, emotional intelligence and IQ were calculated, it was undisputable fact that emotional intelligence was twice as relevant as the others were. The significance of emotional intelligence was seen explicitly in executive level where the differences in other skills were meaningless. Other studies support the outcome of emotional intelligence relationship with outstanding leaders and high performance. According to Goleman, organizations can reinforce their emotional intelligence by continuous improvement and trying to establish

new models to operate. Leaders can develop their emotional intelligence by learning from other leaders if one is genuinely motivated. (Goleman,2019, p.7-17)

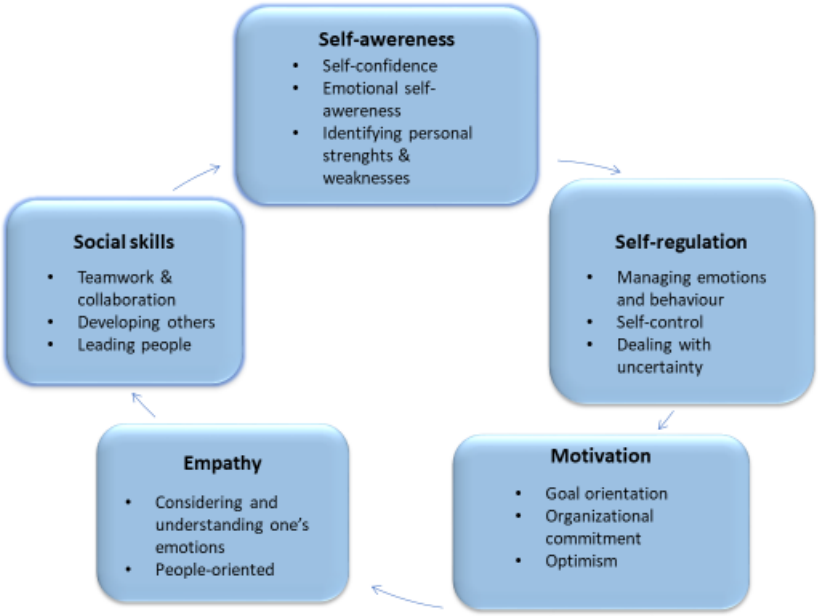

Figure 2. Goleman's model of five components of emotional intelligence at work. (partly adapted Goleman,2019, p.19-57)

Goleman introduced a model consisting the five components of emotional intelligence at work, which is focused on:

1.Self-awareness. Understanding personal strengths and weaknesses and one's emotions as well as their effect on others. Identifying one's emotion and having the ability to manage them. Highly self-aware person is self-confident, goal oriented and assesses their emotion according to the situation and for their best interest. Self-awareness comes often with self-confidence which results in individuals desire to challenge themselves and take chances when opportunity arises. (Goleman, 2019, p.19-21)

2. Goleman highlights the importance of self-regulation as leaders' main attribute. Self-regulation allows leader to build confidential environment where everyone has opportunity to voice their opinions and be themselves without their supervisor judging them. Self-

regulation helps the individual to manage their feeling and impulses in order to thrive in uncertain environment that organization's often face. Emotional self-regulation enables leader to lead through ambiguity and changes while supporting the employee's ability to adapt change. (Goleman, 2019, p.22-24)

3. Goleman defines motivation to be a common trait for all outstanding leaders who wholeheartedly inspire their employees to achieve their goals. Motivation is a key factor for a leader who has strategic objectives, since without being motivated it is almost impossible to pursue challenges or goals. Motivated leaders are committed to their organization and thrive to deliver their best. Commitment retains employees to keep working for the company instead of leaving for competitor. Motivated leaders are eager to explore new ways of working and can easily adapt to changes. Motivation is essential attribute for employees as well since low achievement motivation results in weak performance which often leads to low self-confidence and decreased job satisfaction. (Goleman, 2019, p.25-28)

4. Empathy is the fourth component of Goleman's emotional intelligence and it simple to identify and perceive. For a leader, empathy as an attribute means considering one's emotions according to situation while making intelligent decisions. The difference between being empathetic in personal life and work life is that a leader cannot adopt one's emotions as their own. It is impossible to please every person rather emotionally intelligent leader acknowledges fears and emotions that one faces. Managers empathy towards employee's support collaboration and teamwork by building confidential environment for everyone. Goleman emphasizes empathy in cross cultural communication where there is room for misunderstanding due to cultural differences. Empathy has significant role in retaining talent in a highly competitive business environment. Understanding and empathetic leader is someone that people enjoy working with and there is no need to leave the organization. The remarkable outcome of coaching and mentoring is that it improves job satisfaction while decreasing turnover which is possible with effective leadership. (Goleman, 2019, p.45-50)

5.Social skills also known as people skills are essential attribute for everyone in the organization. Social skills are part of relationship management of emotional intelligence. Goleman (2019) describes social skills as follows: "*friendliness with a purpose: moving people in the direction you desire.".* A common characteristic for socially skilled people is that they

tend to find common ground with different kinds of people. They are sincerely interested in working with people and considerate of other's opinions. Social skills consist of other dimension of emotional intelligence. A leader is required to manage relationships effectively by getting work done by other people. This is example when other components of emotional intelligence take place as well. (Goleman, 2019, p.52-57)

2.4.4 Implementation of coaching

Coaching leadership methods are implemented differently depending on organization and business department. Coaching is used between a leader and employee on day to day activities to solve problems in order to reach business targets. It is also used to strengthen the employee confidence and boost self-efficacy. According to Karlsen (2016), coaching builds *a give culture* which refers to helping and supporting one another while sharing skills An example of a coaching situation could be one where manager helps the employee to find the right answers by supporting and directing instead of giving the answers straight away. The main point is in learning from the process and by receiving feedback the employee will build self-assessment. A question asked from the employee could be: "what do you think that should be done to solve this?". (Hunt & Weintraub, 2002, p.40)

According to Sydänmaanlakka (2012) Coaching leadership requires a leader who sets an example by his/ her own action and demeanor. He encourages managers to "walk the talk" as in to lead with actions rather than only words. Direct orders or guidelines seldom are effective way to inspire employees. In many cases the result is that the employee will do the bare minimum. (Kurttila,2015, p.18)

Solution Focused Approach is part of coaching which determines to recognize problems and to clarify the objectives. Instead of focusing on the problems the emphasis is on problem-solving and rather questioning "how we want it to be". Coaching enables the employee to visualize and broaden thinking since it supports personal development and more efficient use of employee's own resources. (Kurttila, 2015, p.27)

2.4.5 Measuring the outcomes of coaching leadership/effectiveness of coaching

"Helping and facilitative process that enables individuals, groups/teams, and organizations acquire new skills, competence, and performance, and enhance their personal effectiveness, personal development, or personal growth" (Hamlin, Ellinger, & Beattie, 2009*).*

Due to unpredictability of the business environment the need for changes in organizational culture has been unavoidable. A traditional command-and-control-oriented relationship between the manager and the employee has transformed into more nurturing two-way relationship that is built on trust. Coaching is characterized as believing that every individual has capability to develop their personal competencies and succeed with the help of their manager. With the feedback and guidance provided by the manager the employee's performance and competences are improved as well. (Agarwal et. al.,2009, p. 2112)
Agarwal et.al (2009) study reveals that managerial coaching is being linked to employee performance as well as to job satisfaction. Also, Ellinger and Bostrom (1999) researched the effects of developmental coaching on a subordinate's performance.
As observed by Agarwal et.al (2009) managerial coaching has more positive effects on employee productivity comparing to traditional managerial training. A reason behind this could be that developmental coaching enhances an ongoing and continuous relationship between manager and the subordinate.
However, in many cases organizations are unable to see clear results of developmental coaching due to organization culture or behavior. Organization's face barriers and limitations on adapting coaching-oriented behaviors which subsides the visible results. Due to the organizations beliefs the managers may feel that coaching is rather a pediment than an opportunity for them. (Agarwal et al.,2009, p. 2112-2113)
According to Kurttila (2015), solution focused approach is essential part of coaching in order to receive positive outcomes of employee performance and development. It enables the employee empowerment and trust on find the best way to work and solve problems. Coaching leadership supports organizations to create sustainability by harnessing the resources and knowledge of the work community. (Kurttila, 2015, p.26-27)

In order to receive results on effective coaching certain skills and behavior are required from the manager e.g. analytical skills, observation and giving honest feedback that reinforces

coachee' s self-confidence. It is highlighted that a manager should enable the employees to find the solutions by themselves in order to acknowledge new skills and improve performance. Coaching manager is expected to set goals and monitor performance as well as present opportunities for employee development. (Anderson,2013, p.253)
One of the main concepts of coaching leadership is giving and receiving feedback which is linked to support employee development, job satisfaction and improved performance. By receiving feedback employee will build self-confidence and acknowledgment of his/her work which is essential to reach personal targets. A positive feedback is more likely to deliver results faster than negative feedback. When constructive feedback is given it is important to guide the individual on the specific matters that needs to be paid attention in the future (Kurttila,2015, p.172)

2.5 Executive coaching

Agarwal et al., (2009) found in the study conducted on three levels of organizational hierarchy that higher coaching intensity is not directly linked to employees improved job satisfaction in order for them to reach better performance levels. Yet it is emphasized that managers supportive behavior and coaching oriented leadership style is vital for developing employee's psychological skills.
Agarwal found also that middle managers coaching has substantial consequence on their subordinate's sales performance comparing to executive manager coaching on middle managers. This is explained by the relationship type and time spent on interactions between the different levels of management. Middle managers spend more time and retain supervision with their employee's than executive level managers with middle managers. (Agarwal, et al., 2009, p. 2126-2127)

Executive coaching as a concept have been defined in many ways such as
"a process of equipping people with the tools, knowledge, and opportunities they need to develop themselves and become more effective." (Peterson, 1996)

Executive coaching is professional coaching which enables authentic two-way relationship between the coach and coachee by supporting managers and leaders to develop themselves Executive coaching accentuates to ensure qualified and skilled managers to lead employees who are motivated and encouraged by their supervisors. (Baron, Morin & Morin 2011, p.849)

Executive is described as CEOs, vice presidents but also lower levels of management. Previous studies have found similarities in executive coaching and psychotherapy since both of them accents human nature, understanding both cognitive and emotional reactions of an individual. However, executive coaching occurs in work setting while aiming to develop one's professional skills. (Baron & Morin,2009, p.86-87)

According to a study conducted by McGovern (2001) over 80 percent of the coachee' s finds the relationship built with their coach important when it comes to measuring successful coaching. Also, Dingman's (2004) study on managerial coaching supports the previous results that there is considerable connection between the quality of relationship received by coaching and the improved self-efficacy of coachee. The study reveals that the amount of coaching received, and the established relationship has great impact to coachee' s development. (Baron & Morin, 2011, p.850) In many studies the main focus has been on the relationship and trust between the coach and coachee since studies indicate how essential the two-way relationship is for the success of executive coaching. However, it seems that there are not many studies that have researched the essential factors on establishing working coach-coachee relationship. Yet the empirical studies on this subject propose that executive coaching has positive outcomes on individual's performance and self-efficacy. (Baron & Morin,2009 p.86-89)

3 Research methodology

This chapter presents the methodology used in the thesis. It will present the empirical part of the study, collecting data and analyzing it. The research method is a case study where the case organization is a Finnish Financial Service Group (FSG). The interest to study leadership

in the case company arose from the recent renewal of leadership model in the organization. For the past decade companies from different fields have been in search of new ways to work in order to maintain their position in highly competitive environment. It has led to curiosity and courage to exit discomfort areas to discover new approaches in work environment.

3.1 Data collection

Data was collected using a questionnaire with open questions since individuals' experiences and opinions were used as a research material. Empirical part of the research was conducted using a Webropol questionnaire which included two separate questionnaires for both employees and supervisors. Questionnaire as a method was chosen due to ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and the remote work order. Also due to the nature of the working environment it was easier to use a questionnaire instead of one on one interviews. The anonymity of the study was a premise in order to receive authentic replies on one's experience of leadership.

54 employees and 6 supervisors from different departments of the organizations participated in the study. Prior to the research it was predicted to receive less answers from management than employees. Ongoing holiday season also affected the fewer number of participants.

The questionnaire was composed based of the theory part of the study and around the themes that occurred prior. Selected themes for the questionnaire were agile organizational culture, coaching leadership, and leadership development. The first questions of the questionnaire were regarding the working department of the participant and years of work. Those were seen vital in order to examine the data according to department and in case there is noticed wide range of variation in answers.

The questionnaire was not indicated to a specific department in the organization, it was accessible for the whole financial service group. The link to questionnaire was shared in company's intranet.

There were open questions that did not have multiple choices so that participants could answer with their own words expressing personal experiences instead of leading them in certain way. Researcher was interested in studying both employees and supervisors'

experiences and thoughts on leadership that prevails within the organization. This enables to perceive broader vision and understanding while studying further development areas.

3.2 Analyzing collected data

Collected data was analyzed by using theoretical analyzing method where received answers were compared to existing literature and theory. The objective was to find similarities or differences between the collected data and previously studied theory.

The first point of view of analyzing the collected data was to perceive understanding of the leadership style that prevails within the case organization and how it is being experienced in the work community. The second research perspective was chosen to be the differences in the opinions of immediate supervisors and subordinates regarding coaching leadership. Researcher read through received answers several times to get overall perception. Then the answers where organized based on the themes and similarities of the answers. The questionnaire was composed using 3 different themes and the answers were categorized using those same themes.

4 Analysis and discussion

This chapter presents the empirical part of the study and the results received using the questionnaire. Researcher categorized responses using themes that occurred. The themes will be presented in the following order: agile organizational culture, coaching leadership, and leadership development. Researcher divided supervisors' and employee's responses in order to analyze them separately. Conclusion and analyses were conducted based on the responses, researcher's views, and projecting to exiting literature. Questionnaire's answers were summarized in the table and some answers were left out due to great number of responses.

Table 3. Respondents years of work in the case organization.

The first questions were regarding employee's personal information, years of work in the case organization and their current department. This was seen relevant to researcher in order to gain better overview on respondents' background and its impact on results.

4.1 Agile organizational culture

One of the themes of the empirical part of the study was to perceive understanding on how agile organizational culture and the new ways of working has been experienced by the work community. The renewal of organizational culture within the case organization has led to shift in ways to operate and lead. Introducing agile practices and renewal of work culture has been one of the most significant changes done in the case organization during the years. Agile management practices were introduced to the case organization to aim better customer and employee experience and to improve efficiency.

Comparing to traditional hierarchical organizations the considerable change is in managements role. Rather than supervising and controlling individuals the management

focuses on removing obstacles and minimizing challenges in order to help self-managed teams to succeed (Denning,2015, p.11-13).

Agile management embraces the shared responsibility within the team by giving them more power to make decisions. Supervisor's role is rather to observe and to make sure that the team is on the right path.

In the questionnaire employees and supervisors were asked of how agile practices are being experienced and how it fits the case organization. This was seen relevant by the researcher since agile practices supports coaching as leadership style while supervisor is enabler rather than commander in chief.

How does an Agile work culture and practices support work?

Employees' responses
It feels that the support of the team is close and there is a lot of help from the team.
Frees up energy to do the work yourself and develop new, more effective practices.
I appreciate agility through the diversity of work, giving opportunities to work remotely and locally. For myself, this is highly valued, and I enjoy being able to combine home and work more smoothly.
Self-leadership becomes very familiar and liberating when you are allowed to work and act in your own way, and there is also an opportunity to exchange experiences with your team members. It also brings responsibility, and both is able to develop itself as an employee a lot. You also need to be able to change your own ways of working, it opens your eyes and enriches the work and how it is done.
I like that I get to have an impact on the course of my own workday and move flexibly between the different tasks of the team according to where the priority is highest
The team has more responsibility. Personally, I don't like the agile model. The supervisor no longer exists, and no one has responsibility. Fairness suffers
Agile practices and work culture have not provided much support to my work but have increased distractions that negatively affect my ability to perform my job responsibilities.

An agile work culture and operating methods was one of the factors that interested me, which is why I decided to apply for a job at this financial service group. I miss the variation of my daily life and I believe that through agile I can get it.
The benefits of agility are still quite unclear to me.
Agile ways of working have not suited me. The idea of sharing responsibility and an agile work community is great, but implementation is limping badly
An agile work culture is reflected in my own work in simplifying decision making.
It is nice to be able to develop one's personal skills in the role of OPO, for example, but when the role is performed alongside one's own work, one cannot invest in development as well as one might want.
An agile work culture has increased one's own responsibility and freedom to work. On the other hand, they support doing their own thing through self-direction, but I also think it creates a lot of pressure.
Agile has brought a lot of good to my own work. Working in Sprints makes it easier to manage your own workload and creates a structure for getting things done. Leadership roles are now clearer than before Agile and I think this works better.
The feedback culture is great, I constantly get feedback on what I do, and I know where I am going in my tasks.
When Agile came, I was excited about what kind of opportunities it could offer. Practically nothing has changed, and micromanagement still seems to be alive and well. On a personal level, I feel that agile management eventually reduced my motivation when the promised benefits did not happen.

When employees were asked of their experiences and thoughts on agile practices many of the answers had similarities. Agile practices were seen to motivate and challenge employees, allow them to make decisions regarding their work. Comparing to traditional management agility embraces the idea of continuous improvement and self-leadership. Generally, it was seen that agile practices are more suitable for some departments in the organization rather than others.

Placing customer in the center of all the business activities is the core principles of agile practices. Multi-skilled and self-managed teams are able to work efficiently supporting each other while focusing on customer's needs. In many responses the employees experienced

many benefits since agile practices were introduced. Respondents highlighted that the structure of their workday is now clearer and more consistence than before. Agility enabled them to work more efficiently since communication has improved within the team. The team members have better tools to support one another in order to succeed and execute decisions faster. While individuals have received more responsibilities, some employees felt that supervisor was not as involved as before.

How does an agile organizational culture and its practices serve your organization?

Supervisors' responses
Agility serves well, especially when implemented in the spirit of being Agile. Agility, I don't think, is about running ceremonies, but focusing on solving a client's need.
Very well. The team members and I are still on a learning process.
Agile practices are serving only partly our organization. Sometimes it is challenging to fulfill all the different wishes while trying to coach own team members to do certain things in a consistent way.
Self-management model has been found to work also in practice. The customer is at the center, operations are streamlined, and continuous improvement is made all the time. The improvement is progressing as planned, we want to become more efficient and our services need to be smoother.
We lead the development of our own business area and in developing agile practices have helped us to make rapid changes of direction and constantly prioritize things. In business operations, agile practices have been used in the past, so we can only reinforce previous practices.

When supervisors where asked the same question on agile practices, they highlighted the benefits and usefulness of practices rather than focusing on the disadvantages. Self-management was mentioned which supports employee development. Supervisors have noticed that agile practices have enabled better customer satisfaction since the customer is the center of all business activities. Continuous improvement has helped eliminating

activities that doesn't increase customer value. Supervisors acknowledge that organizational development is a long and ongoing process and it will take several years before it gets to its full blossom. Some Supervisor's mentioned that they find it difficult since some employees have been reluctant on adapting to changes.

4.2 Coaching leadership

Table 4. Coaching leadership surmount the teams.

The second theme in the questionnaire was coaching leadership. The researcher was interested in finding out individuals' perception on coaching leadership and how coaching is being implemented in the case organization. Employees were asked how they would describe coaching leadership concept, how feedback is given and received within their team and their thoughts on principles of good leadership.

When asked of whether coaching leadership prevails within their teams, 55% of respondents answered in affirmative.

How would you describe coaching leadership?

Employees' responses
Perhaps a leadership style in which the supervisor not only "leads from above" but with a coaching grip that is closer and more easily approachable?
The supervisor does not give you the right answers. Employees are encouraged to look for their own ways of working.

Enables continuous learning and brings out the best skills of individuals. Encourage, not discourage. Mistakes are relevant, we learn from them and move on. Coaching leadership is consistent, equal, and professionals are trusted both uphill and downhill.
Expertise, which in turn contradicts the fact that supervisors are not currently substance experts. Difficult to lead when you don't know the field enough.
The manager / supervisor is supportive. If there is a problem then they will try to solve it, and not just command that there is a problem now, fix it.
Coaching leadership is that the coach (not the actual coaching role) is genuinely aware of the subordinate's abilities and actively directs development.
I am not familiar with the concept.
The team is guided to make their own decisions and seek information. The supervisor does not directly give answers or make decisions but guides in the direction where answers can be found and how decisions can be made.
I think that in coaching leadership the role of the supervisor is to be in a more encouraging position as a person to be relied upon if something weighs the mind.
Coaching leadership is leadership model in which the individual is constantly developed. In coaching leadership, the interaction is continuous with the coachee and ideas are exchanged in different ways.
I think that coaching leadership is a form of leadership where the supervisor and management give the team and organization the opportunity to succeed and take effective practices forward.
I don't know what it is.
Inclusive and goal-oriented employee engagement, which seeks to bring out the best potential of employees for the benefit of the team. The supervisor is required to encourage and support reciprocity.
The coaching leader should be up to date on his / her own area of coaching, know his / her team well, so that he / she can treat each team member on a personal level as well.
I think of coaching as an activity where employees are "challenged" to take more responsibility and consider how our operations could be improved. Coaching also reminds us not to give answers directly, but to consider the means by which problems are solved and the aim is to develop skills through this.

Innovative and encouraging supervisor. Proposing new ways of working and open to experimentations.
With a coaching leadership, the supervisor seeks to unleash the potential of the individuals in his or her team to be unleashed for shared use by the team. Coaching leadership is about empowering, valuing, and purposefully influencing individuals. The coaching way of leading will be even more emphasized in the future instead of command-and-control leading.
In coaching leadership, the manager creates a clear vision for the team and ensures that both the vision and the company's strategy are known to everyone. Goals are set accordingly. In coaching leadership, it is important to remember day-to-day leadership. This means that performance is measured and actively monitored. Any deviations will be reacted to in a timely manner and in a good spirit. It is your own responsibility to make the work transparent so that the supervisor is up to date. Especially in remote working culture, the transparency of work is emphasized. The coaching supervisor also approaches the employee actively and on his own initiative.
The supervisor helps his / her teammates by guiding them for example, with questions, etc., to find a solution themselves. However, the supervisor is supporting the team member in making the decision. Coaching is about supporting and guiding the team member so that the team member develops in their own work.
Leadership aimed at developing the employee on the basis of identified strengths and weaknesses and supporting employees' self-management skills.

Over 80% of the respondents were well accustomed of the main concepts of coaching leadership. Respondents mentioned the main characteristics of coaching leadership as a concept as well as what it requires from the supervisor on a day to day working life.
In many of the answers the individual was placed in the center of leadership rather than business activities or operations. Employees valued that the supervisor is motivated and interested in inspiring his/ her team members and supporting their personal and competence development. Empirical study indicates that employees are aware of the principles of coaching leadership, that is enabling individuals to find solution instead of delivering right answers. Supervisors role is rather to guide and to give the needed tools in order to find the solution. Employees highlighted that a coaching leader should be a people's

person who enjoys open and honest interactions with people and embraces diversity in work community.

Employees recognized well that coaching leadership increases individual's responsibility and self-management. In some cases, increased responsibility was seen in a negative light as it increases individual's stress. Many respondents found important that the supervisor is genuinely invested in the team and values team members opinions and thoughts. Contributing individuals on decision making process regarding their work was found important in order to have transparency. Employees highlighted the need to receive constructive feedback continuously in order to develop themselves.

When supervisors were asked the same question on coaching leadership their replies were quite similar to employees' perception on the concept.

Supervisors' responses
Coaching leadership is an intermediate step on the path from traditional command & control leadership to people's genuine ownership and involvement in doing the work. Coaching leadership is not a goal for me, but it should be a daily occurrence for those already doing managerial work.
Giving my own example at work, close support, and encouragement to try new ways for oneself, even if they didn't feel safe at first. Support is continuous.
For me coaching is enabling independent decision-making by giving my employees space, this allows individuals growth to move forward in its own area of responsibility.
Encourage continuous learning
Praise is given by appreciating and affirming. Let's talk about strengths instead of development targets.

One of the topics that stood out in supervisors' answers were that the executives in the organization were not quite familiar with coaching as leadership and they were likely to have more traditional approach on leadership. Supervisors highlighted in their replies that coaching should be involved within the executive level of management in order to receive better results. Middle management experienced that they were not given enough time to build relationship with their immediate subordinates. As studied previously one of the

principles of coaching is establishing two-way communication between the coach and coachee. In order to build a solid relationship, it requires time and motivation from both parties. In some of the replies Supervisors found that they did not have enough time in order to build firm relationship with their subordinates.
Supervisors pointed the significance of letting go of micromanagement and rather focusing on the bigger picture. Micromanagement decreases employee's self-management and confidence. Instead the supervisors focused on transparency and consistency in leadership.

4.2.1 Implementation of coaching leadership

The main research question was to study how coaching leadership is implemented in the case organization. This alongside with other questions was significant in order to have better overview on the leadership that prevails in the organization. As studied previously, 45% of the respondents answered that they did not receive coaching. Yet over 80% of participants were well aware of the main concepts of coaching leadership. This is seen as a development area for the organization which will be discussed in the further chapter.

The questionnaire was answered by employees and supervisors from different organizations of the financial service group. It is interesting to look at the factors that have affected the wide range of answers.

How coaching is implemented in your team?

Employees' responses
With an individual plan.
I get support and encouragement from my supervisor. I feel that he genuinely cares about my well-being. This increases my commitment to the workplace.
By being supportive and accessible. By listening and helping in problem situations.
Encourages, asks, helps, applies, and guides by example.

Provides help and advice. We would consider together what would be the best way for me to achieve my goals.
Goals are clarified as needed to make sure it is clear what is expected from me. For obstacles, I get help when needed.
By encouraging and following my results.
If necessary, the supervisor advises me problematic tasks. Coaching discussions and development discussions are held annually to review past and future. Provides support for achieving my goals and identifying areas for development.
Regular discussions, support, review of goals and results. Makes sure that I spend my time developing myself.
The supervisor is quite far from my everyday working life. Sometimes he asks how I am doing, but otherwise he is quite an invisible figure.
Encourages, gives feedback, directs corrective action if necessary, shares responsibility.
By listening. The supervisor himself has commented that he feels he can't really support me.

When employees were asked how coaching was implemented in their organization the answers were different depending on the respondent's department. Employee's working in customer service and sales was more likely to not identify receiving coaching than other departments of the organization. Those employees brought forward that coaching is implemented as in monitoring their results and guiding on how to achieve their targets. While employees from other departments would have open discussions more often that covered overall wellbeing of the employee and personal matters.

Many participants highlighted that their supervisor would encourage and support them when needed. Supervisor would provide the needed tools to overcome problems but leave the actual problem solving for the team. Because of the ongoing pandemic the personal meetings were not held rather using Teams-application to communicate. Some wished to have discussion with their supervisor more often in order to become more familiar with the supervisor.

As empirical study indicates most of the employees would receive coaching through one on one discussions with their supervisor. There they could openly communicate and review

what is done well and what to focus on in the near future. Supervisor would offer guidance how to develop one's competence and observe in case of hindrance that could possibly stop employee from succeeding. Some respondents felt that their relationship with the supervisor was superficial and all the issues could not be discussed.

How do you implement coaching as a supervisor?

Supervisors' responses
I myself do not rush to name problems and determine solutions to them. Rather I expect people to identify the problem themselves and try to find solutions.
I don't command or control people, but I expect them to trust me enough and want to come to me to solve problems. This has worked well.
In all situations, I try to consider the person's level of competence and, if necessary, show hand in hand. I also encourage you to find a solution to the problem yourself.
I give responsibility and delegate tasks so that everyone can show their abilities and possibly grow further in their career.
I am also interested in team members as individuals and not just as employees. I believe that with an encouraging and interested approach, my aim is to create a good work environment.
I am constantly sparring with my own teammates and I am involved in the daily life of the team in clearing various obstacles from the road. I highlight successes and celebrate them together. I will give constructive feedback in bilateral discussions.
I have used a coaching approach for a couple of years, the discussion and solving together has increased, the responsibility is more shared
Giving feedback continuously in a constructive and encouraging sense. Strengthen strengths, spend less time on development points. The aim is to get the employee in the right direction by utilizing strengths.
I don't fill meetings with my own speech, but rather listen to what others have to say. Sometimes I verbalize or line things up, but only after I have gathered enough understanding of them.

When supervisors were asked how they implemented coaching they mentioned many practices that were introduced in the theory as well. In many replies' supervisors felt that

regularly scheduled meetings were the common ground on keeping in touch with employee in order to have open discussion. When coaching, supervisors would utilize variation of techniques depending on the situation and the employee. Many supervisor highlighted the need to listen their team members rather than be in the voice all the time. Supervisors would focus on finding individuals strengths and to utilize them instead of searching for developmental areas constantly. In many responses it was mentioned the need to share responsibility within the team and to contribute team members on decision making.

4.2.2 A coaching leader

The other research question was what characteristics does coaching leadership require from the leader?

The characteristics and factors of a successful coaching leader was introduced in the theory part. According to Sydänmaanlakka (2012) Coaching leadership requires a leader who sets an example by his/ her own action and demeanor. He encourages managers to “walk the talk” as in to lead with actions rather than only words. To gain comprehensive view of a coaching leader the employees were asked what they would require from their supervisor.

Employees’ responses
I would like to be asked more about how I am doing. I don’t feel that supervisors support employees as much as there is a need at the moment.
Participation in the employee's daily life, presence, interest in the employee
Strives to be his own self, shows his strengths and also areas for development. Someone I can trust.
Fairness overall. Common sense is also important. You need to know when the right time is to bring something up.
More feedback on your own work and what customers think or gave feedback on.
More presence in everyday life.
A little more participation and a more personal approach. My own supervisor is not in the same place and working remotely is difficult.
I would like the supervisor to be have substance knowledge about the tasks in the team.

Equal treatment, open discussion and understanding of people's differences.
I would like the supervisor to receive training on how to be a coaching leader.
Good communication, getting to know each other, knowing my work tasks
Justice, transparency, encouragement, giving freedom
It is important to listen to the experiences of employees, as they will certainly give valuable feedback on what is going well and things that need to be changed.
The supervisor may not have all the right answers. However, a good leader finds out how the business model works and is willing to receive good, bad, and constructive feedback.
Management must also be open and transparent to every member of the organization.

When employees were asked of their perception of coaching leader there were found many similarities in the responses. Many of the participants mentioned that they would want the supervisor to be more present and aware of what is happening in the team. This way supervisor could react faster and make changes when needed. Employees mentioned their perception of characteristics of a good leader to be someone who is; empathetic, fair, transparent, trustworthy, whole heartedly invested in his or her employees and willing to receive feedback. A leader was described to be someone who is willing to experiment new ways of working and inspires others. Successful coach is someone who utilizes individuals' strengths and support them to develop. Open communication and listening skills were mentioned in many responses. Employees' descriptions of a successful coaching leader were quite similar as what reported in the literature. The responses contained same traits that Goleman (1995) introduced in his *Emotional intelligence* since many of them are seen when describing a successful leader.

4.2.3 Feedback culture

Successful coaching requires open communication, giving and receiving feedback in order to develop personal competences. To have better understanding on the feedback culture that prevails, the researcher asked both employees and supervisors their experiences.

How would you describe your teams feedback culture?

Employees' responses

The supervisor gives proactive feedback on the work, and of course you can also get it by asking. Coworkers are less likely to be given a so-called constructive feedback.
There is very little feedback.
I have not received even though I have asked.
I get feedback from the team and the supervisor. Not much from the coaches. The feedback culture works just fine and adequately.
We have tried to increase the amount of feedback, but I think we still get very little feedback in everyday work.
I think enough.
I get feedback on practical work mostly through quality control and from other colleagues. I get feedback from the supervisor and the team mainly about the successes.
Feedback comes from both successes and failures from the team. Feedback is given quickly in both cases. The supervisor may not yet be so knowledgeable about the work assignments that they could give direct feedback on them and have more background support.
I get feedback from my supervisor. I don't know how my team members could give feedback when our work assignments are different, and we don't work together.
Feedback from the supervisor can be obtained in monthly discussions or by requesting it separately. However, I have found that the feedback I receive does not support my work as strongly when my supervisor has never worked in the same job I do myself. Compared to last year, when my supervisor had strong knowledge of my work, I received more comprehensive support from him for my own work as well as development suggestions for the future.
There is definitely room for improvement here. The Supervisor gives little feedback except for development discussions, and feedback from colleagues is mainly limited to positive feedback. Sure, this is a great thing, but for some reason there is little constructive feedback.

Continuous learning and continuous development are possible when feedback is received from coaching supervisor. Feedback plays significant part in order to change direction when needed. Over 60% of the respondents felt that their organization has a positive feedback culture. Receiving positive feedback from supervisor was more likely than receiving

constructive feedback. Constructive feedback encourages the individual to develop and recognize personal strengths and weakness. Receiving feedback requires open and confidential working environment where individuals are valued.

In some of the replies it was noted that feedback was given seldom e.g. in development discussions, rather than continuously. Participants experienced that it was important for them to receive feedback both from the supervisor and the team members. Many respondents pointed that feedback was given when the initiative was made by the employee. Employees wished that feedback could be received regularly and without request. Answers also indicated that it was more likely to receive feedback from the supervisor rather than from team members.

When Supervisors were asked of the feedback culture that exists in their teams, 70% of supervisors did not receive feedback from their subordinates. This was surprising information since receiving and giving feedback is one of the main principles of agile management and coaching leadership. Supervisors mentioned that when they got feedback from their team, it was more likely to be negative than constructive. They wished that open communication would encourage to give feedback so that supervisors and management could take the occurred aspects in to consideration and make changes as needed.

Agile management culture and coaching leadership embraces an ongoing feedback within the organization in order to enable continuous improvement and learning.

4.3 Leadership development

Developing leadership requires recognizing the status quo and the development areas. Trough leadership company can appear attractive for talent acquisition. In financial service industry employer image is considered important.

In order to create an understanding of the developmental areas, the researcher was interested in knowing the current situation.

Supervisors were asked about their experiences and thoughts about barriers and benefits of coaching. This would help to visualize things that needs to be developed further on.

Supervisors' responses
In my current job, I am not sure whether the coaching management approach is valued or understood higher in the organization. It seems that strong, line-up and commanding leadership is still valued more.
The advantage is that you can get to know each employee in depth, and through this you will find the needs and dreams of the person. On the other hand, the same thing is also a challenge, are you being too close to the employee?
It's great to see people grow forward and get to rejoice when someone gets a new and more challenging task for themselves. It's also great to see a team member's self-esteem grow once he/she succeeds in the task
What makes it challenging for yourself sometimes is that you can't always use a coaching approach in all matters as a supervisor, but you also have to manage differently.
I am motivated by the success and development of others. I get energy for myself from it. The challenge is that when, based on your own experience, you see something going totally wrong, then interfering with it must be done subtly.
Coaching takes time and is not always available as much as you would like
Advantages: working together, interaction, vision of both parties, being involved in successes. Also being involved in everyday life makes it easier to help and coach when you know what and how he/she operates.
The challenges are on scheduling side. At moment the supervisor does everything. When there are administrative duties and others with a deadline, coaching and supervision work is most easily left on your feet. The financial service group should invest more in making interim managers. Employer would certainly get more out of the supervisor if he or she was also given time to perform the supervisor's duties well.

In the response's supervisors pointed the benefits of coaching for the employees and organization as well. Through coaching employees' strengths were identified and utilized better. When supervisor is familiar with his/her team members he/she is able to assign tasks according to those personal strengths and desires that the team members have. This resulted in as improved customer experience when team members would share responsibility and tasks according to their preferences. Supervisors noticed that open communication and giving constructive feedback has impacted in their subordinate's results.

Supervisor's mentioned that trough coaching they are able to support employees career paths according to their wishes. Some respondents mentioned that lack of time and resources resulted in not using coaching approach as one would prefer.

5 Conclusion

The main objective of this study was to create an overview of the leadership that prevails in the case organization and how leadership is experienced by the work community. To create an understanding of the leadership that prevails and how it fits in the concept of coaching leadership. The second objective was to find out how agile practices support the case organization. The aim was also to bring up areas for developing leadership.

According to the academic literature and the research conducted, coaching leadership serves the organization by supporting employee's self-management, competence development and overall well-being at work. These contribute to organization's success and efficiency. Organizational culture and leadership are significant factors in engaging and retaining qualified employees. Rapidly changing business environment requires agile processes that can be modified when needed. The new era of leadership highlights the importance of supervisor's coaching approach rather than a commander who gives orders to his/hers subordinates.
Based on the results received by the questionnaire, the case organization has established the basis of coaching leadership. As empirical study indicates coaching benefits the organization by improving employee's job satisfaction, personal development, and self-management. These factors support employees' career as the employee has developed personal competences that are valuable in the labor market.

The case organization introduced an organizational culture in which coaching leadership and agile management are the main foundation. Thus, studying these subjects were seen interesting to the researcher.
The main research question was:
how coaching leadership is implemented in agile organization?

In order to answer the main research question, the researcher studied the main concepts of leadership based on the existing literature, academic articles, and previous studies.
When employees were asked of how coaching is being implemented in their teams, some answered as follows:
"Goals are clarified as needed to make sure it is clear what is expected from me. For obstacles, I get help when needed."
"My supervisor encourages, gives feedback, directs corrective action if necessary, shares responsibility."
Provides help and advice. We would consider together what would be the best way for me to achieve my goals.

The empirical study presented a correlation with the received results and previously studied literature on coaching leadership. The responses received by empirical study presented how coaching leadership is being implemented in the case organization and the characteristics of a good leader.
The received answers contained similarities as the literature when describing coaching processes.

The study found that 90 percent of the respondents were aware of the main characteristics of coaching leadership and what it entitles. Yet when employees were asked of whether coaching leadership prevails in their team only 55 percent agreed. The rest 45 percent experienced that their supervisor did not have a coaching approach. The study indicates that leadership style varies depending on the respondent's department. Employee's working in customer service and sales are more likely to not identify receiving coaching than other departments of the organization. According to the questionnaire, employee's working in customer service brought up that coaching is being implemented by rather focusing on numeral targets. These employees had more seldomly occasions for discussions with their supervisor e.g. regarding their career development or personal issues. The researcher found this to be area for development in order to perceive consistency in leadership.

Based on the questionnaire a good leader was described as follows: *supervisor who communicates with his/hers subordinates, enables their success by supporting their development, trusts enough to give them responsibility and is fair.*
Also, literature backs up that a successful leader is someone who has *emotional intelligence* meaning traits such as empathy, social skills, and self-regulation.
One of the vital characteristics of a qualified coach is ability to help coachee to reflect on perceived emotions in certain situations and to help find ways to deal with them. Thus, *emotional intelligence* is a significant attribute when describing personal capabilities of a successful coach. These previous characteristics were mentioned in many of the responses received from the employees.

Case organization implements coaching in all of their departments. Supervisor's hold regular discussions with their subordinates where they discuss issues that have arisen. These could be related to employee's personal development and overall work well-being. Supervisor aims to support employee's competence development and self-management by enabling tools and resources for the employee. The main objective is to shift the focus from leading things into leading individuals and to harness their full potential in to use.

Coaching is implemented in case organization by sharing responsibility with the employees and relying on that they are the specialists in their own field. Supervisor's role is presented as a coach who guides his/her team for the common success.
Supervisor's help their employees to solve problems rather than give them correct answers or make decisions on their behalf. The case organization highlights the importance of a feedback by enabling open communication where employees and supervisors could give and receive feedback from their team.

5.1 Recommendations

There were several areas for development that occurred while conducting the empirical part of the study.
One of the topics arose from the employee's responses were that some supervisors did not have a substance knowledge in order to give a constructive feedback and to lead the team

members. As previously studied in the theory a leader is to mainly lead people rather than manage operations. In this case study employees identified with supervisor who had the competence and knowledge of the work tasks. Case organization could further develop supervisor's substance competence in order to support and understand their subordinates better. This would also enable finding a common ground for discussions held with the employees.

The shared responsibility of leadership roles was seen inconsistent and confusing to employees. Supervisor was seen to not be as involved in day to day work as before agile management culture. Employees felt that this resulted in lack of motivation and decreased performance. In the near future virtual leadership can be a possible impediment if the organization does not develop the leadership roles and processes.
Case organization could clarify the leadership roles and responsibilities consistently as it would improve employees job satisfaction and self-management.
It was also noted from supervisors' responses that feedback was more likely to be given to employees by supervisor rather than other way around. The need to improve and strengthen the feedback culture is inevitable in order to develop leadership continuously.

When supervisors were asked of possible hindrances, some mentioned that the executive level of the organization was not very familiar with coaching as a leadership. Some supervisors pointed that they were not sure whether the executives valued coaching approach. In some cases, it was felt that traditional leadership style was predominant.
In order for the middle-management to execute coaching it requires the competence and willingness from the executives as well.
The case organization could provide training for the executives of the organization on coaching leadership and contribute them in middle managements day to day activities.

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Appendix 1: Interview questions for supervisors

1. **Background**

   - How long have you been working in your current role as a supervisor?

   - In what organization do you work?

2. How does an Agile Organizational Culture and its practices serve your organization?
3. What do you think coaching leadership entails?
4. How does coaching appear in your own supervisor work? What methods or tools do you use in everyday life?
5. What do you think are the benefits and / or challenges of coaching leadership from a supervisor's perspective?
6. What do you think are the most important tasks of a supervisor in relation to subordinates?
7. Do you get enough feedback from other team members in your role as a leader?
8. Are you present in the work community, close to the team and how can you be reached?
9. How is trust between employees and the supervisor reflected in practice?
10. What kind of leadership development do you think is needed in the organization?

Appendix 2: Interview questions for employees

Background

- How long have you worked for the company?
- In what organization do you work?

Agile organization culture

1. How does an agile work culture support your success?
2. Describe the feedback culture of your team. Do you get enough feedback from your supervisor and from your team members?

Coaching leadership

1. How would you describe coaching leadership?
2. How is the renewed management culture reflected in your own work routine? What methods or tools does your team use?
3. Do you feel supported by your supervisor to achieve your goals?
4. What do you consider as the principles of a good leadership?
5. How have you experienced remote leadership during pandemic?
6. How would you describe your relationship with your supervisor?
7. What would you hope from your supervisor?
8. What else would you like to say, thoughts, feedback, suggestions for improvement?