Exploration into Building of Coaching Relationship for Millennial Finns in Finland: A Social Constructionist Approach

HENLEY BUSINESS SCHOOL

UNIVERSITY OF READING

Doctor of Business Administration

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September 2020

Declaration

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Acknowledgements

This work would not have been possible without the support of several individuals who have contributed to the study in various ways. Collectively, I want to thank all of you.

I wish to express my gratitude to Henley Business School in general for the program and special thanks to all the people I have had the pleasure to meet and work with during these years. The spirit and kindness that greet me at Greenlands are always exceptional. It would be my favourite place to spend time in if it were not so far from Finland. I feel privileged to call it my place of study and to have had the pleasure and opportunity to know the very special people who work there, for whom I have the greatest respect. There is also a small Henley campus in Finland with yet more great people, to whom I would also like to express my sincere thanks for their support throughout this journey.

Individually, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to three very special people. I will start with the two who have made great efforts towards this study becoming a reality and, frankly, without whom this would have never been done. These two professors and wonderful individuals have encouraged, endured, motivated, listened and guided me. To my supervising professors, Prof Jean-Anne Stewart and Prof Claire Collins, I say thank you with great respect and admiration. I hope I can continue my own development onwards with the example you have given me in so many ways, as persons and academics.

Finally, I would like to say thank you to my husband, Aksu. Of the 26 years that we have spent together, I have been in Henley more than ten years, first with the MBA and now the DBA. Thank you for our shared love for books and for your eternal learning and resilience. Thank you for giving me the time to be away and to learn. Thank you for being a part of my life and for the support you provide.

The travel never ends. No one is perfect and, therefore, there is great beauty in imperfection and in the differences of individuals and cultures. I hope that this work will also in some way support the idea that difference is good in all of us. The journey is so much nicer when you have good people to rely on and to share it with. Thank you Henley, thank you Finland, thank you California.

However, I was blind and deaf until the day of awakening came to me, just like
once as a boy, when my eyes opened and I woke from sleep, and joy
with my mind I asked myself: Why? For the scary key to all the right information is the
question: Why?"

Mika Waltari. Sinuhe The Eqyptian, 1945.

Abstract

This is a social constructionist, inductive and exploratory study conducted within the Finnish culture. It investigated coaching pair formation in Finland between a coach and a coachee and, especially, the building of the coaching relationship. The project concentrated on the Finnish millennial generation, in contrast to other generations. Furthermore, the study examined what happens in the building of the coaching relationship and what elements foster coaching.

The work began with an iterative literature review, which focused on coaching, the coaching relationship, generational issues, and Finnish cultural aspects, and due to the nature of the subject, the academic literature was complemented with practitioner literature. The literature review provided the foundation for the original topics or themes to be explored.

The literature review was followed by three focus groups sessions: HR directors, professional coaches and millennial Finn coachees. The focus groups pondered the themes and provided individual outcomes. The results from the focus group sessions were reflected upon, and an interview protocol was created based on both the literature review and the focus groups. The investigation continued with semi-structured in-depth face-to-face interviews with fourteen coaches and fourteen millennial coachees. All the above informants were Finnish and embedded in the Finnish culture. The interviews were transcribed verbatim and analysed using framework analysis, which is a form of content analysis. For presentation, key passages of the transcripts were translated in English, and the quality of translations was verified by a professional translator.

Several discoveries were made in the analysis. It was found that in Finland, no "matching" normally occurs at the beginning of the coaching contract, but coaching begins with an introductory session, which almost always results in a coaching contract. In addition, it was also found that individual coaching services offered by organizations to millennial Finns are often not very professional due to lack of funding and coaching is sometimes provided by an internal coach, such as managers acting as coaches, or in the form of team coaching.

Furthermore, the study explored the coaching relationship with respect to a millennial Finn coachee. Relationship building is always the foundation in coaching, since it will determine whether openness (in Finnish, "avoimuus") is achieved, which in turn will support and facilitate the creation of deep trust that is essential for coaching, especially for Finns. The study argues that, based on typical characteristics of the Finnish culture, "openness" is challenging for Finns, whereas in some other cultures, it occurs almost naturally. However,

while a basic level of trust is almost automatically present in the Finnish culture, i.e. Finland is a trusting society, this study argues that creation of deep trust in Finland requires openness. The "openness" and "deep trust" are thus key factors to be understood and managed when coaching millennial Finns.

The study will shed light on this interesting aspect of the Finnish culture and Finnish millennials and their impact on the coaching relationship. The study concludes that millennial Finns, with their generational attributes challenging hierarchies, constitute a special customer group for coaches. They require a coach with an ability to coach millennials. This ability is the sum of the coach's traits, values, characteristics, coaching skills and positive interest towards coaching millennials, and this ability provides a platform for the coach to be in service for a Finnish millennial coachee. The coach must be fully focused and open to various signals and emotions the coachee is expressing, and the coach needs to support each coaching session with her/his ability, forge the coaching relationship onwards and fortify openness and deep trust. The ability of the coach is the heart of the coaching relationship for a millennial Finn.

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List of Abbreviations

BECI	Berkeley Executive Coaching Institute
GROW	Coaching model: Goal, Reality, Options, Will
HRM	Human resources management
ICF	International Coaching Federation
IGROW	Coaching model: Issues, Goal, Reality, Options, Will
MBTI	Myers–Briggs Type Indicator
PVO	Personal value orientation

Please also note that in this study, the terms "coaching" and "executive coaching" are used interchangeably and refer to the same concept.

1 Introduction

This study sought to explore executive coaching in the Finnish cultural context in cases where the coachee represents millennial Finns. Furthermore, the study sought to gain an understanding of the Finnish cultural context with respect to the coaching relationship, how one is constructed and what role matching, or a 'fit' between the coach and the coachee, plays in this relationship. The study was qualitative, exploratory and inductive in nature. It was based on relativist/interpretivist ontology and social constructionist epistemology (Miles and Huberman, 1994; Cassell and Symon, 2004; King and Horrocks, 2010). The ontological and epistemological underpinnings of the study and its design will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 3 ("Methodology"). In addition, it must be noted that the study was conducted in Finland, within the Finnish culture, and by a Finnish person. The data for the study were collected in three focus groups sessions, totalling fourteen informants, and in a total of twenty-eight semi-structured, in-depth interviews. All the informants in both the focus groups and interviews were born in Finland and Finnish nationals and they represented both coaches and coachees.

1.1 Background and Context

In recent decades, executive coaching has gained popularity as an intervention of personal development among managers. It is today one of the key interventions used in many professions to provide individual managers with a platform and an opportunity for self-development (De Haan, 2016), and the knowledge base underpinning coaching is growing at a substantial rate (Grant, 2011). In short, coaching can be described as a formal consulting relationship between a professional coach and an executive client (Tobias, 1996; Armsby and Fillery-Travis, 2009; Passmore, 2012), where trust is essential for success (Stern, 2004; Gyllensten and Palmer, 2007).

This study opted to use De Haan and Duckworth's definition of coaching, since it brings forward the closeness of coaching and psychology (De Haan and Duckworth, 2012:7):

> *"A form of leadership development that takes place through a series of contracted one-to-one conversations with a qualified "coach". Executive coaching aspires to be a form of organisation and leadership development that results in a high occurrence of relevant, actionable and timely outcomes for clients. Coaching is tailored to individuals so that they learn and develop through a reflective conversation within an exclusive relationship that is trusting, safe and supportive. Coaching is, therefore, much more psychological in nature than more conventional training and development*

is characterised by the imparting of actionable information, instruction and advice."
(De Haan and Duckworth, 2012:7)

In practice, the executive coaching industry and the overall comprehension of executive coaching is still rather limited in Finland. The knowledge of coaching intervention is focused on larger national and global companies and especially within the field of professional services. However, the coaching industry in Finland is growing. The Finnish economy is driven by small and mid-size companies (Statistics Finland, 2020), and there are many start-ups in Finland in the technology and media sectors that are growing fast (Slush, 2019). From the perspective of this study, it is interesting that many of these start-up companies are managed and driven by millennials (Yrittäjät, 2019). In this study, millennials are referred to as people born between 1982 and 2000 (Wong et al., 2008), i.e. their ages varied from twenties to late thirties at the date of this study.

In Finland, coaching is in its infancy, and there is no wide comprehension of how coaching can be applied as a personal development tool. However, in the last few years, and during the preparation of this study, the popularity of coaching has also increased in Finland, and many companies and prominent executive education institutions, such as Henley Business School Finland and Aalto University Executive Education have added coaching into their executive education programs and deliver post-graduate courses in this field. These institutions have also started offering coaching services to both companies and individuals.

When this study was commenced six years ago, coaching in Finland was not as widely recognized or used by organisations and individuals as it is today. While the change has been steady, there is still much room for increasing overall awareness. This slow change is probably due to the characteristics of the Finnish society. Finland is a small nation, with only approximately 5.5 million inhabitants, and even though the country ranks high in global education and liveability ratings (Statistics Finland, 2020), Finnish companies are small, both in terms of turnover and the number of employees, when compared with those of many other Western European countries. In fact, it is often said that large companies in Finland correspond to small or medium-sized companies in Germany. Finland is geographically isolated from Western Europe and, as a nation, Finns can be described as genetically isolated as well (Kääriäinen et al., 2017). The small size of the Finnish economy, together with the country's location at the north-east corner of Europe, has resulted in Finland sometimes following what other nations do first. This seems to be the case with the popularity of coaching as well. However, Finns are fast in adapting and very consensus-oriented (Hofstede, 2001), which usually means fast implementation. Under these

circumstances, the popularity of coaching in Finland is expected to grow and Finnish businesses expected to increasingly apply it as a development tool.

Finland is very a technology-driven nation and, in general, long-distance working is supported by many public and private businesses. In addition to this very modern and tech-driven working environment, the millennials have entered the workplace, which means that several generations are co-working at the workplace. In addition, the popularity of coaching is increasing in this evermore complex and dynamic work environment. However, the academic research into coaching in Finland is practically non-existent, and there are gaps in knowledge. These factors made it very interesting to examine the both the academic perspective and the practical application of the coaching intervention within the Finnish culture. The researcher was also keen to further examine the relevance of academic research for the "coaching relationship" and "matching" in the Finnish context. Finns are generally understood as people who admire order, punctuality, space and quiet surroundings and who like to be by themselves (Finland.fi, 2019). This preference for privacy and quietness is very interesting in the context of the coaching relationship. One important element in understanding the scope of this study is the coachee, who in this study is a millennial Finn.

1.2 Statement of Problem

Coaching is gaining popularity in Finland, but there is virtually no academic research into coaching in Finland. Lately, there have been a few studies published on the characteristics of millennial Finns and their work life values and expectations. When this study was commenced, there was still some ambiguity and unanswered questions regarding the personal traits affecting coaching as well as forming the best coach-coachee dyad (De Haan et al., 2016; De Haan, 2016). Furthermore, previous academic studies (Kultalahti et al., 2013; Kultalahti and Viitala, 2014; Kultalahti and Viitala, 2015) have focused on baby boomers and "generation x-ers". Baby boomers are those born between 1944 and 1960, and generation x-ers between 1961 and 1980 (Arsenault, 2004). In the literature, there is wide discussion on how different generations are motivated by different leadership styles (Meister and Willyerd, 2010; Rudolph et al., 2018, Shrivastava et al., 2017). This discussion also contributed to the strive to understand the millennial generation in the context of executive coaching. It is also a fact that millennials have recently emerged as the dominant generation in the workplace, for example in the United States (Time, 2015), and their number is also growing fast in Finland (Statistics Finland, 2020).

Therefore, it was evident that there was both a gap in academic knowledge and practitioner interest to gain a better understanding of the Finnish cultural dimension with respect to coaching and the traits of a Finnish millennial coachee. Further issues with a more general interest were forming the coaching dyad and the elements of a successful coaching relationship.

1.3 Statement of Purpose and Research Question

The purpose of this study is to explore several issues in relation to coaching and millennial Finns within the Finnish cultural context. These issues can be categorised under four key headings: the Finnish cultural dimension in relation to coaching, millennial Finns, coaching relationship and matching. First, the study aimed to fill a gap in academic knowledge related to coaching in the Finnish cultural context. Furthermore, there is a gap in academic knowledge in relation to the millennial generation and coaching. For example, it seems that in academic generational studies, the national characteristics of generations have not been considered to sufficient extent. Second, the study aimed to answer to the industry-related interest and improve the knowledge among business managers and millennials in Finland on coaching intervention.

The subject of the study is especially interesting, since while the Finnish coaching industry is growing, general awareness of coaching in Finland is still limited. In fact, the academic research into coaching in Finland is practically non-existent. The general discussion on millennials at the workplace in Finland is lively, but it is often based on stereotypes, while empirical evidence on millennial Finns, their behaviour and desires is lacking. Therefore, one of the aims of the study with respect to academic knowledge was to bring empirical evidence on the key issues related to the coaching relationship, the concept of generations and cohorts and the characteristics of millennial Finns. To reach this target, this study emphasised empirical methodology, such as focus groups and interviews, and approached the research question without a bias caused by common hypotheses related to Finns, the Finnish culture and millennials as its representatives. From the perspective of contribution to theory, the study used these empirical findings to challenge the prevailing views in the academic literature and to build an understanding of which elements and characteristics of the coach-coachee dyad are important when building a working coaching relationship.

On the practitioner side, the study aimed to bring important information for the Finnish coaching community in order to give it visibility and bring forward its current topics. The focus groups and interviews also brought into light the current situation of the Finnish

coaching industry and the reasons behind the management's decisions when making decisions on purchasing coaching services for millennial Finns.

The practical contribution of this study in the Finnish context is that it provides clear evidence that professional coaching is appreciated and valued by millennial Finns and that they expect to receive professional coaching. Another contribution is the realization of the need to improve training when a company's own staff, such as managers, act as coaches. Additionally, a direct contribution to practice relates to the selection of coaches for businesses that procure coaching services for millennials. The study has shown that there must be more attention to the choice of coaches, and the ability of the coach should be evaluated. Currently, it appears that in Finland, almost anyone can act as a coach, and after obtaining a certification, a coach can be called a professional.

When reflecting on the suggested topic with Finnish industry professionals, it was felt that gaining understanding of these issues would benefit the coaching community in Finland and improve knowledge of efficient and suitable processes in the field of coaching. Furthermore, it was deemed that the study might increase the popularity and demand of coaching among Finnish start-up businesses through an improved understanding of its application.

1.3.1 Research Question

This study aims to answer the following question: How to create conditions for a successful coaching relationship between a coach and a millennial Finn?

1.4 Research Approach

The research approach for this study was qualitative and exploratory. The study aimed to explore social phenomena, i.e. people and their interaction, and to understand what takes place and is present in this kind of activity. This approach provided the foundation of the study. The following figures describe the key steps and timeline of the study:

Defining and refining the research question

Literature review

Focus groups

In-depth interviews

Analysis, interpretation, conclusions
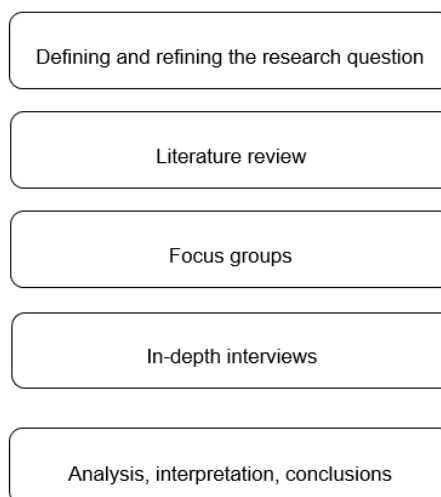
Figure 1.4 (a). Key steps of the study.

2014

Progression from
MSc to DBA

2015

Literature and
Methodology

2016

Methodology
Data collection

2017

Data Collection
Transcription

2018

Transcription
Data reduction

2019 – 2020

Final writing
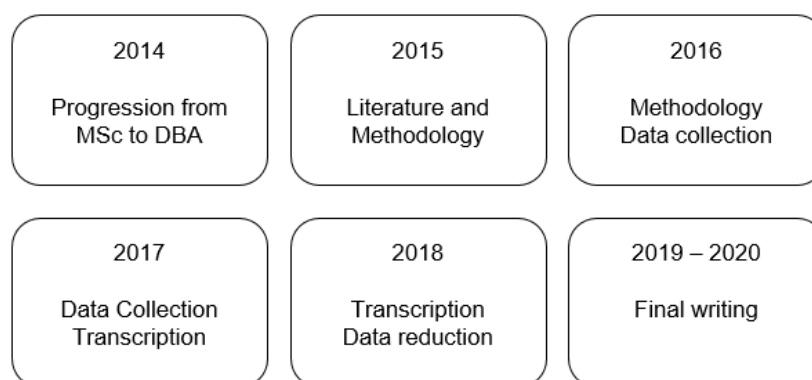
Figure 1.4 (b). The timeline of the study.

The literature review was an iterative process that continued throughout the study. It began with a focus on specific themes that provided background for the study. In general, the review focused on two distinctive elements: coaching and millennials. These were in turn divided into the following sub-themes: what is executive coaching, the effectiveness of coaching, matching in executive coaching and its relation to the coaching relationship, generations, millennials and the Finnish cultural dimension. Various suggestions regarding matching and millennials were discussed during the literature review. One of these was the suggestion that when a systematic matching process, i.e. with matching tools and methods, indicating a fit between the coach-coachee dyad, is carried out before the launch of the coaching intervention, it provides a platform for an ascendant coaching relationship, which in turn is a key for effective and successful coaching (De Haan, 2016). These suggestions were contrasted with those concerning millennials. For example, millennials have been claimed to differ in their values, social behaviour and attitudes towards career and

employment from previous generations (Smola and Sutton, 2002). Interestingly, the literature review revealed that in many respects, the research community seems divided with respect to many key issues, such as the impact of similarity/dissimilarity between the coach and coachee.

In order to ensure richness of data, two types of data collection techniques were used: focus groups and semi-structured, in-depth interviews. The three focus groups consisted of four HR professionals from Finnish organisations, five Finnish millennials and five Finnish certified coaches who had coached millennial Finns, in addition to other generations. After the focus groups, semi-structured interviews were conducted with fourteen coaches and fourteen coachees. The coaches were certified and professional executive coaches practising in Finland, while the coachees were millennial Finns.

Focus groups were used to further specify the research question, while semi-structured in-depth interviews were used to collect deep and rich data. The initial literature review resulted in first-level questions and shaped the researcher's thinking on the subject. At the same time, the methodology and research design were developed. The four themes based on the literature review and addressed in the focus groups were coaching, matching, relationship and generation. The focus groups provided support for the findings made in the literature review but also brought to light certain interesting differences between the groups. The themes tested with the three focus groups further contributed to the preparation of the interview protocol that was used in the subsequent in-depth semi-structured interviews. Therefore, the interview protocol was based on both the literature review and the results gained from the three focus groups.

In accordance with the qualitative and exploratory nature of the study, the interview process allowed for a full immersion into the data and reached data saturation. The process continued with data reduction and analysis, which were conducted by using framework analysis (Miles and Huberman, 1994; Miles et al., 2014), a form of content analysis (Elo and Kyngäs, 2008). In accordance with this method, the transcribed material was indexed with relevant themes and displayed in a framework. Thereafter, the transcripts were analysed and key passages demonstrating the chosen themes were identified by using the framework analysis. Relevant themes were found in the data through careful and contemplative reading and re-reading of the transcribed data in a continuous, iterative process. This was followed by linking the findings, interpretations and conclusions together. Finally, current literature was reviewed in order to corroborate or question the results of the analysis.

1.5 Assumptions

This study started with an interest to explore: to act as a detective who discovers what is behind the corner. There were no prior assumptions as to what was expected of the study as it evolved and became alive. In accordance with the exploratory approach, the study itself was leading the way and the road was open to whatever would emerge with no prior hypotheses. These were the reasons behind the methodological choices made.

1.6 Rationale and Significance

There is an evident gap in literature and in practical knowledge of how to coach a millennial Finn. At the same time, when the popularity and demand of coaching are increasing in Finland, the coaching industry, along with its customers, expects to have more empirical knowledge of coaching. This study brings a new element into the literature, with significance for both the academic and practitioner community.

The researcher has the desire to provide new knowledge on a topic that has not been explored in Finland before, to fill in gaps in knowledge and to explore the unknown. These aims are supported, on one hand, by the researcher's impression that coaching industry in Finland is still in its infancy but, on the other hand, by the interest and encouragement that this industry has shown towards the making of this study. Its significance will not be global but rather local. It will resonate among start-ups and businesses in Finland, as they will have for the first time a study that tells them something about the application of coaching intervention in Finland and the impact of millennial Finns in this context.

1.7 Structure

The structure of the study follows the path of the research project. The chapters of the study are displayed in Figure 1.7 below.
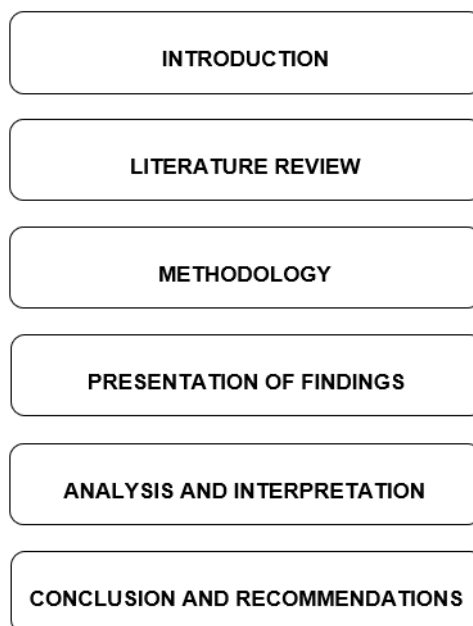
Figure 1.7. Structure of the study.

Introduction, Chapter 1

This chapter introduces the study, the research question and the key issues. It also gives a preliminary description of the research process and design and introduces the ontological and epistemological approach. Furthermore, it provides a description of the structure of the study together with definitions of key terms. It also gives the reader an introduction to the Finnish coaching landscape.

Literature Review, Chapter 2

Chapter 2 presents the literature relevant for the study broken down in key themes: executive coaching, relationship, generation and millennials. As noted earlier, the literature review was the tool that provided the preliminary themes for the focus groups and the interviews. Furthermore, the literature review explores the interesting gap between the peer-reviewed academic studies on coaching on one hand and the practitioner-based materials on the other.

Methodology, Chapter 3

Chapter 3 provides a detailed description of the methodological choices made for the study. It gives an outline of and justification for the ontological, epistemological and qualitative approach selected and justifies the choices in view of the exploratory nature of the study. It

also provides a step-by-step description of the research journey, while justifying the choices in view of the conceptual framework.

Focus Groups, Chapter 4

In Chapter 4, the three focus group sessions are opened up, illustrated and discussed, followed by a presentation of the findings made. The focus groups affirmed certain topics worthy of investigation, while certain other topics became irrelevant. These findings also provided support for the preparation of the interview protocol that was subsequently used in the semi-structured, in-depth interviews.

Presentation of Interview Findings, Chapter 5

In Chapter 5, key passages from the translated excerpts from the semi-structured, in-depth interviews are presented under relevant themes. Chapter 5 presents the preliminary findings based on the interviews, and in accordance with the qualitative approach selected, the focus is on providing a rich, insightful explanation of the phenomenon studied. Various contrasts and comparisons between the selected examples are also presented, in order to prepare the reader for the following analysis.

Analysis and Interpretation, Chapter 6

In Chapter 6, the findings presented in Chapter 5 are subjected to detailed analysis and linked to the literature review. The key aim is to show whether the findings made based on the interviews either corroborate or disprove the findings and hypotheses made in the literature review.

Conclusions and Recommendations, Chapter 7

Finally, Chapter 7 presents the conclusions made based on the analysis, together with contribution to knowledge and practice. In addition, the limitations of the research are discussed and recommendations are made for future research and the coaching community as a whole. This Chapter also presents the dissemination plan and the researcher's personal reflection.

2 Literature Review

2.1 Purpose and Process

The purpose of the literature review is to provide a foundation for the study: first, to amass a body of knowledge at the beginning of the research journey and, second, to present it in a context relevant to the basis of enquiry. The review takes into consideration what has been published, i.e. what was known at the date of the study, where gaps exist in the body of knowledge, and what is proposed as the future direction of the research. It also describes how different sources were discovered and justifies their inclusion in the review.

Along the review process, due attention was paid in order to provide a comprehensive view of relevant literature in the field, and to ensure objectivity so that subjective views and personal preferences of the researcher would not interfere with the study. Therefore, the review process was very transparent, structured and methodical. This provided an opportunity for a critical evaluation of the process and enhanced reflection on the findings. In summary, reflection was one of the key factors shaping the process.

In order of rigour, the literature review consisted of peer-reviewed articles, dissertations and other relevant academic literature, and it was also complemented with key practitioner literature. Historically, coaching has been developed mostly by coaches and the coaching community, while academic interest in coaching is a more recent phenomenon. In fact, there is a considerable amount of practitioner literature related to coaching, which has an important role to play, as coaches refer extensively to such literature as guideline in their daily work. However, it is only in the last twenty years or so that coaching has been included in the curricula of academic institutions, such as universities and business colleges and has been part of the canon of rigorous academic research. While academic literature sometimes adopts a restricted perspective on coaching (Gyllensten and Palmer, 2007; De Haan et al., 2016), practitioner literature takes a more holistic view (Kilburg, 1997; Kilburg and Diedrich, 2007; Kilburg, 2009; Whitmore, 2009; Downey, 2018). Even currently, many practising coaches write extensively about coaching in books, journals and blogs. Therefore, a review of practitioner literature was deemed necessary in order to obtain a comprehensive view of the subject. However, due care was taken in order to bring to light any discrepancies between the practitioners' and the academics' views.

Overall, the popularity of coaching as a development intervention tool in businesses has been a positive contributor for the entire field. However, the increased use of coaching in

businesses has resulted in a growing demand for more advanced knowledge and research on the topic from businesses, clients and practitioners. The practitioners are seeking ways to develop and harmonize coaching within the community. However, some scholars have suggested that the pace of development has been too fast, considering the paucity of research (Baron and Morin, 2009). On a similar note, Boyce et al. (2010) deem it imperative that the research into coaching continues in order to close the existing gap between academics and practitioners, while Ben-Yehuda (2015) also raises the importance of working towards this end. This movement is related to a more general trend in which coaches have become increasingly aware of the need to ground their practice on a theoretical framework, as already noted earlier by Grant and Cavanagh (2004).

The literature search was conducted systematically by using various academic online portals accessible via Henley Business School's s online library, such as Science Direct, Sage, Emerald Insight and EBSCOhost. In addition, articles were also acquired through various portals, such as the American Psychological Association (APA), Wiley Online Library and Harvard Business Review. Key journals used in the literature search included the International Coaching Psychology Review, the Coaching Psychologist, the Coaching Philosophy and the Philosophy of Coaching.

The key terms used in the literature review are shown in Table 2.1 below:

Coaching	Finland / Millennials
Coaching	Generation studies in Finland
Coaching active ingredients	Generations in Finland
Coaching and mentoring	Millennials and work life
Coaching evolution	Millennial studies Finland
Coaching outcome	Millennials and coaching
Coaching pairs	Work life and generations
Coaching relationship	
Coaching result	
Coaching validation	
Executive coaching	
Who is a good coach	

Table 2.1. Key terms used in the literature review.

Even though the key terms used in the search seem basic, it is vital to comprehend the mechanism underlying the evolution of the search process. The literature search was begun with the key terms but then expanded by investigating alternative suggestions made by the databases. This kind of 'shooting in the dark' resulted in new and exciting discoveries. In addition, the references in the articles also supported the search for related studies. Even

though the literature review started with limited base knowledge, it developed into a virtuous circle, where the search process was iterative and supported by the relentless search for new discoveries and knowledge building. Had the researcher had prior experience in the field of coaching, there might have been articles, authors or books that would have provided a natural base for the study. However, an evolving and self-repeating approach which lasted until the completion of the DBA journey, provided a unique platform for the study, added to its richness and ensured its objectivity.

2.1.1 Main Subjects of the Literature Review

The main subjects of the literature review were executive coaching and millennial generation. Within the domain of executive coaching, the review addressed its history and current practice, together with the foundation and basics. The two key subtopics under the theme of executive coaching were the relationship between the coach and the coachee and matching, i.e. finding the suitable coach for the coachee. Under the topic of millennial generation, the two subtopics were the Finnish context and the Finnish culture. Since this study was conducted in Finland and addressed Finnish coaches and their Finnish millennial coachees, it was important to include these Finnish aspects in the literature review. The topics of the literature review are listed in Figure 2.1.1 below. Each topic is addressed and summarized individually, and the topics are brought together at the end of the section.
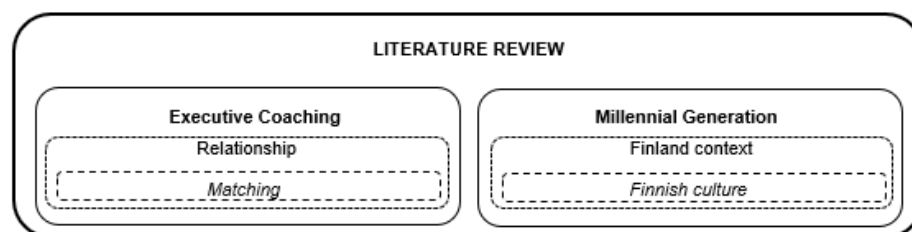
Figure 2.1.1. Topics of the literature review.

2.2 Coaching: Definition

The definition of executive coaching began to develop among academics and practitioners as the interest towards coaching began to grow and, on the other hand, the popularity of coaching increased. Since 2000, there was an evident increase in the amount of practitioner literature, in which the definition of coaching was proposed and discussed. Various authors, such as Tobias (1996), Kampa-Kokesch and Anderson (2001), Armsby and Fillery-Travis (2009) and Passmore (2012), offered such definitions, but there was no agreement on a

universal definition (Bozer et al., 2015). In addition, various groups proposed different views on coaching practice and guidelines on coaching, and as Law (2013) notes, each professional coaching body had its own definition, representing "diverse styles of coaching and mentoring, ranging from a direct instructional approach to non-directive, facilitative techniques" (Law, 2013:57). Law (2013) even stated that, in broader terms, potentially everybody could act as a coach. In that sense, Law (2013) captured what coaching was about: helping another person to overcome an issue that she/he considered as worthy of such effort. Many authors referred to a helping relationship (Kilburg, 2009) tailored to the client (Tobias, 1996). In addition, several authors stated that coaching is a formal consulting relationship between a professional coach and an executive client (Tobias, 1996; Armsby and Fillery-Travis, 2009; Passmore, 2012).

There are several factors typically associated with the coaching relationship. For example, certain authors have raised the point that "trust" is present in the coaching relationship (Stern, 2004; Gyllensten and Palmer, 2007). Many authors also discuss objectives or the job description of the coach. For example, Stern (2004) and Stelter (2007) discuss how the coach's objective is to support the client to gain depth in the coaching discussions, and Tobias (1996) refers to maintaining a consistent, confident focus on the subject matters in order to include the client's individual perspectives to those of the larger environment and other stakeholders with the goal of reaching ground for new understanding and knowledge. According to Tobias (1996), this will facilitate learning towards implementation of improved practices by the client.

A professional coaching relationship is based on an understanding between the coach and the coachee, i.e. a coaching contract (Stern, 2004), in which the agreed aspects and terms are defined. These aspects may include goals, time scale, i.e. the number or duration of the sessions, other terms of the contract, the types of analyses suitable in the beginning of the program and reporting and measurement of overall program results. As Stern (2004) suggests, there can also be a more far-reaching development plan for the coachee.

The coaching process can also be illustrated with a description of equipping people with tools and knowledge which are supported by opportunities they need to develop themselves to become more effective (Peterson, 1996). Similarly, according to Sperry (1993), coaching involves the teaching of skills in the context of a personal relationship between the coach and the client and providing feedback on the client's interpersonal relations and skills.

There have been other popular definitions for coaching. For example, O'Brien (1997) emphasised that coaching is highly confidential and focused not only on interpersonal but

also on intrapersonal issues (O'Brien, 1997). Kilburg proposed in 2009 the following definition, which became popular within the discipline. This definition reflected the events and mutually agreed goals within the coaching contract and described how the aim was to achieve improvement through the coaching intervention. Furthermore, it highlighted the important role of the coach (Kilburg, 2009: 65-66):

> *"A helping relationship formed between a client who has managerial authority and responsibility in an organisation and a consultant who uses a variety of behavioural techniques and methods to help the client achieve a mutually identified set of goals to improve his or her professional performance and personal satisfaction and, consequently, to improve the effectiveness of the client's organisation within a formally defined coaching agreement." (Kilburg, 2009: 65-66)*

De Haan and Duckworth (2012:7) define coaching as follows:

> *"A form of leadership development that takes place through a series of contracted one-to-one conversations with a qualified "coach". Executive coaching aspires to be a form of organisation and leadership development that results in a high occurrence of relevant, actionable and timely outcomes for clients. Coaching is tailored to individuals so that they learn and develop through a reflective conversation within an exclusive relationship that is trusting, safe and supportive. Coaching is, therefore, much more psychological in nature than more conventional training and development is characterised by the imparting of actionable information, instruction and advice." (De Haan and Duckworth, 2012:7)*

De Haan and Duckworth's (2012) definition brings forth the roots of coaching in psychology. In fact, current studies aiming at certificates and master's degrees in coaching are often supported by elements of basic psychology, which are being recognised to an increasing degree (for example by Henley Business School and Berkeley Executive Coaching Institute).

Passmore et al. (2018) discuss differences in defining coaching and coaching psychology. Their work defines coaching psychology as a separate domain which includes the application of psychological approaches and processes to coaching. While there are few noticeable differences between coaching and coaching psychology in practice, when using tools from psychology, the outcome of the coaching intervention can be materially different (Passmore et al., 2018). Van Nieuwerburgh and Allaho (2017) also discuss the definition of coaching and compare six different definitions as shown in Table 2.2. below, which provides an illustrative comparison between various definitions and in conclusion, suggests a clear summary (van Nieuwerburgh and Allaho, 2017:6).

Unlocking people's potential to maximise their own performance. It is helping them to learn rather than teaching them (Whitmore, 2009).
The art of facilitating the unleashing of people's potential to reach meaningful, important objectives (Rosinski, 2003).
The art of facilitating the performance, learning and development of another (Downey, 2003).
Coaching is a method of work-related learning that relies primarily on one-to one conversations (De Haan, 2008).
Coaching is a human development process that involves structured, focused interaction and the use of appropriate strategies, tools and techniques to promote desirable and sustainable change for the benefit of the coachee and potentially for other stakeholders (Bachkirova et al., 2014).
Executive coaching is a conversational process that leads to a change in thinking or behaviour with the aim of improving outcomes in professional contexts (van Nieuwerburgh, 2016).
Summary by van Nieuwerburgh (2017): coaching is: - a managed conversation that takes place between two people - aims to support sustainable change to behaviours or ways of thinking - focuses on learning and development

Table 2.2. Definitions of coaching (adapted from van Nieuwerburgh and Allaho (2017:6).

When reflecting on various definitions of coaching, it is to be noted that they all speak about the same action and the same goal, albeit with different wordings. De Haan and Duckworth's definition (2012) has been referred to throughout this study. While recognising that it is only one of many definitions that all speak about the same intervention, it is comprehensive and also brings forward the psychological element of coaching, which is why it was chosen for this study.

The comparison above shows how coaching has evolved and is evolving further. In fact, the fragmented nature of the coaching industry is challenging for those researching the subject for the first time, for those applying it, and for those procuring the services. However, after exploring various academic traditions and interviewing various practitioners, it is not so much the definition that matters in the end, but rather how the coach performs the coaching, what is her/his approach and also, to a certain extent, what fits her/his character. For example, certain coaches are fluent in using coaching skills or techniques, while some rely more on psychology. The interplay between psychology and coaching is discussed in further detail later in Chapter 2.8.4.

2.3 History of Coaching Studies

First citations on coaching appear in Gorby's (1937) report of senior staff coaching and Bigelow's (1938) article on how to best implement a sales coaching program. According to Tobias (1996), executive coaching arrived in the business world in the late 1980s and began gaining popularity as an applied intervention method for the personal development of managers and employees (Law, 2013). Likewise, according to Kilburg and Diedrich (2007), executive coaching was formally launched as a sub-discipline of coaching in the 1980s. This is also shown by Kampa-Kokesch and Anderson's study (2001), in which they reviewed 90 key literature sources on coaching between 1980 and 2000, and also by Douglas and Morley's annotated bibliography (2000), which referred to 71 studies on coaching.

In the 1990s, consulting companies began to offer more executive coaching services, and the International Coaching Federation (ICF) was established in 1995 (ICF, 2019). The term "executive coaching" appeared after the publication of the first academic articles that assessed the impact of executive coaching, such as Sperry (1993). The subject received a genuinely academic tone after the first issues of Consulting Psychology Journal: Practice and Research in 1996. Practicing psychologists also took interest in the field, which gave it more structure and increased its reliability (Passmore and Gibbes, 2007). During the last two decades, growing interest into coaching resulted in hundreds of training organisations offering different coaching programmes, ranging from one-day course to post-graduate level qualifications. Currently, the most prominent professional associations include, in addition to ICF, Association for Coaching, European Mentoring and Coaching Council and Association for Professional Executive Coaching and Supervision (van Nieuwerburgh and Allaho, 2017).

Accordingly, the last two decades also witnessed a surge in the number of articles on the subject (Passmore and Fillery-Travis, 2011). Between 1937 and 1999, 93 articles on coaching were published, compared to 425 between 2000 and May 2009 (Grant et al., 2010). According to Grant et al. (2010), 77 dissertations and 186 empirical studies on coaching were completed between 2000 and May 2009. Thus, it is justified to say that research on coaching is on the rise (Joo 2005; Spence, 2007; Passmore and Gibbes, 2007; Joo et al., 2012). It is also to be noted that there are currently various peer-reviewed journals that focus on coaching, such as *Coaching: An International Journal of Theory, Research and Practice*, *The International Journal of Evidence-based Coaching and Mentoring* and *the International Coaching Psychology Review*. There are also special interest groups focused on coaching within the American Psychological Association (APA), the Australian

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Psychological Society (APS) and the British Psychological Society (BPS) (van Nieuwerburgh and Allaho, 2017).

Further, the social science's interest towards executive coaching has had an interesting and positive effect: it has brought coaching research closer to that related to psychotherapy, and the boundaries between the two have blurred (Senior, 2007; Baron and Morin, 2009; Smither, 2011). Likewise, it has been noted that in order to engage with clients, executive coaches must also address the personal element in their client's professional lives (Cavanagh and Grant, 2004), which has brought executive coaching closer to life coaching.

Since 2000, the number of articles on whether coaching works has increased, and the majority of these studies conclude that it does (McGovern et al. 2001; Finn et al., 2007; Kombarakaran et al., 2008; Kilburg, 2009; Gabriel et al., 2014; De Haan, 2016; Kovacs and Corrie, 2017a; Wiginton and Cartwright, 2020). In a mixed method study by Kombarakaran et al. (2008), 81 percent of executives agreed that the coaching outcomes were consistent with expectations. Similarly, Fillery-Travis and Lane (2006) and Dingman (2006) reported positive results on the effectiveness of coaching. However, while Lord's (2010) thesis on learning transfer with coaching provided evidence for its effectiveness, it did not identify significant differences between coaching and traditional learning. There were also contrasting perspectives that argued that coaching works to certain extent (Feggetter, 2007; Kilburg and Diedrich, 2007; Sandler, 2011). One way to understand this is to be aware of the conditions that support the intervention and enable a change within the individual. For example, it is always necessary to assess the individual's overall ability to be coached. Self-efficacy and positive self-esteem have been noted to have a significance in cognitive behavioural coaching, where positive self-esteem, self-efficacy, self-acceptance and self-evaluation support delivering behavioural change (Dinos and Palmer, 2015). Likewise, Kovacs and Corrie (2017b) argue that self-reflection has a positive impact on coaching.

The research tradition within the field of coaching has been mostly qualitative. Grant et al. (2010) found that most of published empirical papers on coaching were surveys or descriptive studies into the nature of executive coaching: contextual or survey-based research about the characteristics of coaches and coachees or the delivery of coaching services, rather than outcome research examining the efficacy of coaching as a methodology (Grant et al., 2010). With respect to qualitative studies, Passmore and Gibbes (2007) state that authors frequently miss out key information about the sample size, sampling process or methodology and fail to adequately summarise their results. This again reflects the two traditions within the coaching research: psychologists have been more

concerned with quantitative research and statistics, whereas within the field of organisational research, more emphasis has been put on qualitative and descriptive aspects. However, recent research indicates that the gap between these traditions is narrowing. Executive coaching is being constantly investigated by doctoral students (Passmore and Gibbes, 2007), as shown by various dissertations (McBain, 2004; Collins, 2012; Lord, 2010; Roether, 2014). However, rigorous randomized controlled studies are still lacking. In fact, in 2012 De Haan and Duckworth estimated that there were fewer than 20 robust quantitative outcome studies on executive coaching. The small number of large-scale quantitative studies (such as Franklin and Doran, 2009; Lord, 2010;) can be understood as coaching is still at an early stage and, as in the case of this study, it can be hard to obtain access to good quality data and a sufficiently large sample. However, a qualitative study can be just as robust and reliable and is particularly suitable to study social phenomena, such as coaching. As regards qualitative studies, robustness requires that the research is carried out from start to finish with transparency and with a systematic approach to data collection, management, analysis and conclusions. When these criteria are met, a qualitative study can be as rigorous and robust as a quantitative study (Leung, 2015; Dey, 1993). De Haan and Duckworth's (2012) comment on the small number of quantitative studies can be understood as they review the domain from their own quantitative perspective. Although the small number of quantitative large-scale studies does not necessarily make the coaching research weaker when compared with more mature domains, it is important to take this fact into consideration. Some scholars also call for more outcome research (Grant, 2013c) or research on coaching as a methodology for creating individual or organisational change (Joo et al., 2012).

2.4 Coaching as an Established Intervention

Coaching has become a highly popular personal development tool in Western business cultures (MacIntyre, 2020), and it is also often used across various professional contexts and also in educational settings (van Nieuwerburgh and Allaho, 2017). However, while the annual report of the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development states that most organisations in the UK offer coaching (CIPD, 2015), no similar statistics are available in Finland. The Finnish Coaching Society, which is, according to its own view, the largest in Finland, had only 281 members at the end of 2019. Due to its small size, the Finnish coaching industry cannot be compared with that in the UK, for example.

Despite its growing popularity, executive coaching has been and still is an emerging field of consulting (Kilburg, 2009; Baron and Morin, 2009; Passmore, 2012). Campone (2005)

stated that coaching is an art rather than a science and deplored the lack of foundational literature, which meant that the coaching community did not have a shared language for framing coaching as a domain at that time. Even today, practitioners apply many models and perspectives and there is no universal standard, even though professional coaching associations, such as the ICF, are becoming more widely recognized, and various international educational institutions deliver training to common global standards (Dromantaite and Passmore, 2019).

Today, there are tens of thousands of "professional" coaches, but there are still no universal or global guidelines that should be followed (Passmore and Gibbes, 2007; Joo et al., 2012; Law, 2013; Athanasopoulou and Depson, 2017). Nonetheless, there are several country or regional-level coaching associations and standards (Law, 2013), and local professional coaches usually follow local standards or practices, such as those of the ICF in Finland or those of the Berkeley Executive Coaching Institute in California. However, there are many non-professional coaches on the market, as there are no official requirements, and this situation also results in confusion about coaching processes and outcomes (De Haan and Duckworth, 2012).

This lack of global systematic guidelines results from the relatively young nature of coaching practice and the scarcity of research on the subject (Law, 2013). Due to the large number of non-academic providers of coaching services, distribution of research to the practitioners has not been systematic (Law, 2013). Furthermore, many coaching associations, such as the Association for Coaching (AoC) and the European Mentoring and Coaching Council (EMCC), are relatively young, i.e. less than 30 years of age (Law, 2013). This can be compared with psychology, in which many associations have a long history. For example, the British Psychological Society was founded in 1901 (British Psychological Society, 2019).

Therefore, it is typical that coaching interventions and relationships take many forms: some employ external and some internal coaching services, some short and some long-term contracts. For example, internal coaching can be performed by a manager ("manager-as coach") or someone else in the organisation trained as a coach. In addition, coaching practices and methods are taught by many institutions. However, a globally unified and unanimously approved code or certificate is still lacking, and differences between countries in content and certification prevail (Law, 2013). However, as the coaching industry matures, basic principles of what aspects and methods constitute professional coaching are being acknowledged by practitioners (Passmore, 2012; Grant, 2013c). For example, the ICF, with its current 25,000 credential-holders and 1,000 master-certified coaches (ICF, 2019), is

globally the most recognised actor in the field, and many institutions follow and comply with its standards.

This lack of standardisation also extends to validation and assessment. For example, Gale et al. (2002) carried out an in-depth analysis on how coaching is practised, and one of their important findings was that after the coach-coachee agreement ended, there was no follow-up. Also, the quality standards set by the coach were inconsistent. Their future research suggestion was to devise an assessment tool for coaches in order to better standardize their practices. Similarly, Linder-Pelz's (2014) study gave proposals for developing a benchmark for coaches' behavioural skills.

Since 2002, the coaching industry has made strides onwards and, as Law (2013) concludes, assessment tools have become more of a standard among professional coaches. In addition, there has been an ongoing discussion around coaching guidelines that were already proposed by Kilburg (2009), De Haan and Duckworth (2012) and Law (2013). In the last decade, even some organisations have taken a stand on the issue. For example, the ICF has brought forward guidelines and tools through its coach accreditation program. Despite this, not everybody follows the ICF's guidelines, and there are also competing organisations, such as Erickson International, which has been operational since 1980 and has 45,000 alumni (Erickson, 2020). Erickson International offers both ICF-accredited and individual programmes (Erickson, 2020).

As discussed above, coaching is obviously both a research subject and a practitioner subject area. This is evident in the various definitions of coaching and in the fact that academic research into coaching and coaching business is increasing. The future will bring more insight to various aspects of coaching, not just on coaching models but also on coaching supervision and coaching definitions and guidelines. It can be anticipated that yet further divisions may still emerge, as some schools of thought will focus on supporting their models and philosophies. For example, this can be anticipated with coaching models, where different practitioners and institutions teaching coaching will subscribe to certain model or models and promote the model accordingly.

There can also be more culture-based differentiation and accordingly research and practitioner development that is focused on certain cultural aspects. For example, when comparing coaching programs in various establishments, e.g. the Henley Business School, Hult International Business School, Stanford Executive Education, HEC Paris School of Management, Aalto Executive Education, INSEAD, the Columbia University and the Berkeley Executive Coaching Institute, the model, practice and the "soul" of the coaching

being taught varies significantly. The Henley Business School offers triple accredited program, consisting of accreditations granted by the AC (Association for Coaching), the ICF (International Coaching Federation) and the EMCC (European Mentoring and Coaching Council), whereas Columbia University has an overall certification as an authorized provider granted by the IACET (International Association for Continuing Education and Training). Their coaching program is aligned with elements of the ICF but is not certified by the ICF. The Berkeley Executive Coaching Institute is similarly positioned as the Columbia University: their coaching program is aligned with certain elements of the ICF but follows its own standards, while the program integrity is guaranteed by the University of California Berkeley. This also demonstrates the differences in culture: American universities prefer individuality over universal certifications, while in the EU and UK, accreditations are valued and expected, as demonstrated by the Henley Business School, INSEAD, Aalto Executive Education any many other educational institutions. However, at the idea level, when considering what coaching does and how it works as a development intervention tool, the approaches are somewhat similar.

2.5 How Do Organizations Use Coaching?

People who are not familiar with executive coaching often make the mistake of considering it to be something occurring at a very high level, only relating to some generic executive skills enhancement, when applications of executive coaching have in fact expanded to all levels of organisation and nowadays cover a wide spectrum of personal development, such as project management and leadership skills (Franklin and Doran, 2009), or even emotional traits, such as humility (Aziz, 2019). This trend also relates to a more general shift in the workplace, where responsibility for career management is no longer merely a general HR function but has moved in the organisation towards team leaders and become more individualistic (Segers and Inceoglu, 2012). Both researchers and practitioners are also increasingly focused on goal evaluation as the popularity of coaching grows, and there is a demand to evaluate outcome measures with more rigour and objectiveness (Spence, 2007; Kombarakaran et al., 2008; Kilburg, 2009). Likewise, Jamieson et al. (2020) discuss the importance of evaluation practices and conclude that traditionally, evaluation of coaching has had low strategic status and organisations have concentrated on the individual and not on the impact of coaching on the organisation. They also highlight that the evaluation framework should always be tailored in accordance with the organisation (Jamieson et al., 2020). Similar challenges in relation to evaluation were also raised by Lai and Palmer (2019).

Executive coaching can be used to meet a variety of goals. For example, Witherspoon and Whyte (1997) categorise these as coaching for skills, performance, development and executive agenda. Coaching can also assist managers in reaching a better balance with themselves, enhancing their resource capacity and allocation and increasing their well-being (Govindji and Linley, 2007). Tobias (1996) noted that when coaching an executive for improved performance, the process also provides insights into other members in the organisation. Therefore, it is a chance to have an informal glimpse to the inter-organisation power balances and inter-accountabilities in the system. This information is important for successful coaching so that the overall "picture" can be identified, and a solution built on prevailing circumstances (Tobias, 1996; Fillery-Travis and Lane, 2006; Ladyshewsky, 2010; Joo et al., 2012). Therefore, coaching always takes place in a context, and therefore, it can also be important to include other persons in the client's life in the process (Kiel et al.,1996).

This study is focused on coaching the individual. However, it does address issues connected to team and group coaching later in association with millennials, since team or group coaching is sometimes used in Finnish organizations. Since they are referenced in this study, it is proper to acknowledge the principles of team and group coaching. However, while there are clear academic differences between team and group coaching, the current low awareness of coaching among Finnish businesses and their coaching clients means that in practice, these concepts are used interchangeably. The below Table 2.5.1. presents the definition of team coaching.

A team-based learning and development intervention that considers the team to be a system and is applied collectively to the team as a whole. The focus of team coaching is on the team performance and the achievement of a common or shared team goal. Team learning is empowered via specific team coaching activities for self and team reflection, which is facilitated by the team coach(es) through the application of coaching techniques such as impactful, reflective questioning which raises awareness, builds trusting relationships and improves communication. A team coach does not provide advice or solutions to the team. Rather, team coaching requires advanced coaching skills from the coach such as considering multiple perspectives simultaneously and observing and interpreting dynamic interactions and is typically provided over a series of sessions rather than as a one-off intervention (Jones et al., 2019:73).

Table 2.5.1. Definition of team coaching (Jones et al., 2019:73).

The below Table 2.5.2 presents the definition of group coaching.

Group coaching is the expansion of the coaching conversation to additional layers of an organisation group coaching is a way to scale coaching, involving more individuals at different level. As such group coaching can play a key role in building relationships across the files that exist and supporting organisational change. Group coaching is an intimate conversational space. It is a rich area of deep dialogue, sharing and discovery. Key to group coaching process is the focus on goals and ongoing accountability (adapted from Britton, 2015).

Table 2.5.2. Definition of group coaching (adapted from Britton, 2015).

According to Hackman and Wageman (2005), the conditions for successful team coaching include group performance processes, a well-designed team, organizational support, focus on task performance and proper timing of the coaching interventions. Team coaching is based on same principles as individual coaching: even in team coaching, all individuals can have their own goals (Whitmore, 2009). The benefit of team coaching is that discussions, reflection and learning take place within the team and thus, it benefits both the individual and the team simultaneously. As with individual coaching, it is important that the team coach demonstrates honesty and openness within the team (Whitmore, 2009).

2.6 Comparison of Methods: Mentoring and Coaching

When discussing methods and techniques employed in coaching and mentoring, it is common for different coaches to promote their individual standpoints, i.e. the school of thought they are following. Where some coaches confine themselves to a certain tool, such as the GROW model (Grant, 2011), others and often more experienced coaches flexibly utilize a multitude of available tools. This type of practice follows the British Eclectic Model, a term first used by Megginson and Clutterbuck in 2004 (Hardingham, 2006). It is a unifying framework which synthesizes tools and techniques from a range of approaches and allows the coach to select a way of working that is appropriate for the client and likely to be effective (Hardingham, 2006). In a later edition, the authors use the term "systemic eclectic approach" (Lancer et al., 2016). They also see it beneficial and appropriate not to draw a too rigid line between coaching and mentoring. However, in the following section, mentoring and various theoretical approaches to coaching are reviewed separately.

2.6.1 Mentoring

The difference or similarity between coaching and mentoring is often discussed and, to a person who is not professionally familiar with the two concepts, the differentiation may be challenging. However, since organisations often use both mentoring and coaching and sometimes use these terms interchangeably, it is useful for the purpose of this study to discuss their differences and similarities. Table 2.6.1 below (adapted from Passmore, 2012) lists the key differences:

	COACHING	MENTORING
1. Level of Formality	More formal: *contract of ground rules set, often Involving a third-party client*	Less formal: *agreement, mostly typical between two parties*
2. Length of contract	Shorter term: *typical between 4 and 12 meetings agreed over 2 to 12 months*	Longer term: *typically unspecified number of meetings with relationships often running over 3 to 5 years*
3. Focus	More performance-focused: *typically a greater focus on short-term skills and job performance*	More career-focused: *typically a concerns with longer-term career issues, obtaining the right experience and longer-term thinking*
4. Level of sector knowledge	More generalist: *typically coaches have limited sector knowledge*	More sector knowledge: *typically mentors have knowledge of organisation or business sector*
5. Training	More relationship training: *typically coaches have a background in psychology, psychotherapy or HR*	More management training: *typically mentors have a background in senior management*
6. Focus	Dual focus: *more typically a dual focus on the needs of the individual and the needs of the organisation*	Single focus: *more typically a single focus on the needs of the individual*

Table 2.6.1. Key differences between mentoring and coaching (adapted from Passmore, 2012).

As the table demonstrates, mentoring is more rooted in the organisation, either through collective personal experience and the mentor's knowledge, or with the mentor actually coming from the same organisation, usually being someone at a higher position and equipped with more in-depth knowledge and experience (Raabe and Beehr, 2003). The mentor acts as a guide to the protegé and therefore, exercises a guiding influence over the mentee (Hawkins and Smith, 2013). It is also typical for mentoring that the mentor uses his/her own industry/sector experience to guide the mentee's personal development (Hawkins and Smith, 2013). As the above table shows, mentoring is less formal and longer-term than coaching, focusing more on management training and the needs of the individual, while coaching often, but not always, has the dual purpose of furthering the goals of both the individual and the organisation.

According to Garvey (2010), mentoring programs in the United Kingdom have gained popularity in the last 40 years, while Raabe and Beehr (2003) discuss popularity of mentoring in Germany. On the same note, Passmore et al. (2017) refer to the evolution of

mentoring over the past three decades and to the wealth of research into its role in supporting individual development. According to Tong and Kram (2013), such development might include career advancement, accelerated learning and psychological benefits, such as development or personal confidence and positive self-regard. To conclude, it seems that mentoring has already been common at workplaces before coaching started to gain popularity twenty years ago (Law, 2013).

Interestingly, the literature raises many similar issues with respect to both mentoring and coaching relationships. For example, Eller et al. (2014) studied effective mentoring relationships and raised subjects familiar from the coaching relationship literature. According to the study, the following issues were part of an effective mentoring relationship: open communication and accessibility, goals and challenges, passion and inspiration, a caring personal relationship, mutual respect and trust, exchange of knowledge, interdependence and cooperation and role of modelling (Eller et al., 2014).

Raabe and Beehr (2003) also discussed the importance of the mentoring relationship. In their study, the mentor and the mentee had different perceptions of what that relationship was. Yet, on a general note, the relationship was considered close (Raabe and Beehr, 2003; Johnson and Ridley, 2008; Ensher and Murphy, 2011; Stewart-Lord et al., 2017). The notion of how similar coaching and mentoring relationships are is interesting and perhaps explains to a certain extent why some consider the differences between coaching and mentoring difficult to define (Garvey, 2010; Lancer et al., 2016). The difference between mentoring and coaching is not so much in the basics of the relationship, where there are obvious similarities, but more in the way the relationship is conducted, i.e. built, kept and nurtured. Interestingly, Garvey (2010) argues that in comparison with mentoring, the coaching literature is more concerned with psychology and more rooted in understanding the psychological process.

The issue of matching has also been discussed in mentoring literature. For example, Ensher and Murphy (2011) raise the issue of gender with respect to matching. Based on their investigation, male and female mentees had different evaluations and feelings on the mentoring relationship elements. Women felt more challenged with reaching the mentors' standards, whereas men reported more challenges with career goals and risk orientation. Furthermore, Ensher and Murphy (2011) also discussed age and generation and their impact on the mentoring dyad. In sum, they concluded that mentors and mentees should be advised in advance on potential challenges of the mentoring relationship when expectations, perceptions and feelings of one party in the dyad are not fully understood by

the other. Through increased awareness and having a foresight on potential issues within the relationship, the mentor is likely to be more alert on the feelings of the mentee and, therefore, more capable of steering and building the relationship towards success (Ensher and Murphy, 2011). They also hypothesised how different generations pose different and distinct challenges to the mentoring relationship. This same question on the needs of various generations and the challenges these needs might pose on mentoring practices and relationship building has also been raised by Meister and Willyerd (2010) and Munro (2009).

To summarise, there are clear similarities between mentoring and coaching, even though the two are different and require different skills and training. Many studies refer to mentoring and coaching almost interchangeably (Harding, 2013; Stewart-Lord et al., 2017) and openly discuss the challenges related to their differentiation (Garvey, 2010), while Passmore adopts a strong position in concluding that "coaching is not mentoring" (2012:22). For trained professionals, the difference between coaching and mentoring theory is clear and the processes are markedly different.

2.6.2 Different Theoretical Coaching Approaches

As noted earlier, there is a wide variety of theoretical perspectives to coaching. These approaches are presented in Table 2.6.2 below with a short description (adapted from Lancer et al., 2016).

Approach	Short description
Appreciative inquiry	Positive focus approach. What is going right in order to solve problems and effect change.
Coaching and the body	Being intuitive in regards to what signals the body is transmitting. Importance of physiology incorporated in various coaching philosophies.
Cognitive behavioural coaching (CBC)	Looks at how a person responses to an event: the response is what upsets the person, not the event. Classic framework used in CBC is ABC model which stands for activating, beliefs/thoughts, consequences.
Existential coaching	Practical wisdom where methods are ethical and reflective and focus on freedom, responsibility and authenticity with the aim that the coachee could live more fully.
Gestalt	The main idea about "Gestalt" (a structure or configuration) is that it wants to be completed, which means there are no unfinished issues. The coach is interested in what the coachee brings to the here and now from past experiences and fantasies of the future. The coach uses her/his own mental, physical and intuitive experiences "in the moment" to assist the coachee to gain understanding and awareness of her/his situation.
Humanistic coaching	A person-centred approach to enhance personal growth and to free and unblock the coachee's unique potential.
Mindfulness	"Here and now" – being fully aware of the present.
Narrative approach to coaching	Stories – how do we understand the world. Helps to gain a more nuanced comprehension of the situation.
NLP	Neuro-linguistic-programming (NLP) looks at how people perceive reality through neurological configuration patterns of thinking and linguistic structures. Past has coloured the coachee's representations of the world and it is these that the coach works with. There is a discussion whether NLP is a theoretical approach at all.

Approach	Short description
Ontological coaching	"Study of being" – looks namely at language, emotions, moods and physiology – and seeks to address these in the sessions in order to achieve an increased awareness.
Performance coaching	Setting goals for performance improvement and looking at ways for the coachee to work towards them.
Psychodynamic coaching	Looks at emotional experiences and how they shape current behaviour. How the coach/coachee interaction is working is a mirror to how the coachee behaves in general and reveals patterns on how the coachee is behaving in other relationships.
Psychometrics	Not an approach in itself, but a helpful tool in the form of pre-selected questions for the coachee to stimulate reflection, introspection and useful conversation about the individual's world.
Solution-focused coaching	Focus on challenging the coachee's perception to separate the coachee from the problem. Focus on what it will feel like when the problem is not there – what is the future like.
Systematic coaching	Utilises a systems map to understand factors associated with perceived reality and to gain sense and meaning which will help to raise performance of both the system and person.
Transactional analysis	"Ego states, strokes, scripts" – according to this theory the person experiences the world and makes decisions about how the person needs to be in order to survive in it. Since the decision is made by the person the person has the power to change the decision once and when the "script" is in her/his attention.
Transformational coaching	Approach focuses in creating a fundamental shift in coachee's capacity trough transforming thinking, feeling and behaving in relation to others. The approach integrates a number of coaching psychology approaches.
Transpersonal coaching	"Beyond the person" – has a strong focus on imagery as it is seen as an entry point for transpersonal insights. A personal inner journey in a safe environment to access inner wisdom and intuition.

Table 2.6.2. Various approaches to coaching (adapted from Lancer et al., 2016).

2.6.2.1 Systemic Eclectic Approach

As part of their listing of approaches, Lancer et al. (2016) also propose a "systemic eclectic approach", which emphasizes that various approaches may be used in coaching at the same time, while taking into consideration the context of the coachee. In accordance with this approach, coaches use "experimentation and learning to identify where and how a new technique, model of new process fits into their philosophy and framework of helping" (2016: 17). In this approach, there is no one single philosophy, but new knowledge and ideas are continuously absorbed and utilised in the coaching intervention in response to specific experiences with the coachees. As Lancer et al. (2016) argue, it is typical for young coaches to have learned a certain model of coaching. However, with experience and a broader portfolio of tools and techniques, the coach will move from "model stage" to "process stage",

and when coaches reach the systemic eclectic stage, they see the coachee and their issues as a part of multiple and complex systems (Lancer et al., 2016). The eclectic approach emphasizes the coach's versatility and adaptability, while keeping in mind that rigid following of one model or technique may not result in a fruitful coaching outcome.

2.6.2.2 The GROW model

The GROW model is widely used by coaches, and according to Grant (2011), it is the best-known structure of a coaching session. The GROW model divides the coaching session into four distinctive sections as presented in Table 2.6.2.2 below. It is to be noted that there are many variations of the GROW model, and the content of the letters in the model may vary. For example, in many models the "W" stands for "Will" and not for "Wrap-up", as in Grant's interpretation (Grant 2011:120).

GROW – model		
Acronym	Description	Example Questions
G – Goal	Coachee is asked to clarify what they want to achieve from each session. Determines the focus of the coaching.	What do you want to achieve this session? How would you like to feel afterwards? What would be the best use of this time?
R – Reality	Raise awareness of present realities. Examine how current situation is impacting coachee's goals.	How have things gone in the past week? How have you handled any problems? What worked? What didn't work?
O – Options	Identify and assess available options. Encourage solution-focused thinking and brainstorming.	What options do you have? What has worked for you in the past? What haven't you tried yet that might work?
W – Wrap-up	Assists the coachee to determine next steps. Develops an action plan and builds motivation.	What is the most important thing to do next? What might get in the way? Who might be able to support you? How will you feel when this is done?

Table 2.6.2.2. The GROW model (Grant 2011:120).

The model is simple and easy to follow. However, there are variations of the model that have been introduced and many of them take more in-depth and focused look on some aspect of the session, for example gap analysis, resource analysis and scaling issue (Grant, 2011). According to Grant (2011), the models that code various steps and options of the coaching session are more suitable for novice coaches for learning purposes, but not needed for more fluent and experienced coaches.

2.6.2.3 Goal-setting

The goal-setting theory is one of the most popular theoretical backgrounds for coaching. However, Grant (2013a) discusses the dangers of too rigid goal-setting in the coaching contract, which could derail the coaching relationship or prevent addressing emergent issues in the coaching intervention. According to Ianiro et al. (2013), dominant and confident coach behaviour in the beginning of the coaching contract correlated positively with higher goal attainment ratings. This view can be contrasted with the general goal-setting theory as discussed by Locke and Latham (2013). This theory sees motivation as the key reason why some people perform better than others. In this theory, goals have two key attributes: goal content and goal intensity. The goal content refers to the result or object that is sought after, while the goal intensity refers to the effort that is needed to set and reach the goal. Basically, the theory argues that high and specific goals orient the individual's attention and efforts towards the goal while helping to take attention away from those that are deemed irrelevant. Furthermore, high and specific goals help the individual to activate the knowledge and skills that are critical in order to achieve the set goal (Locke and Latham, 2013).

Similarly, Bandura's self-efficacy theory (1997) describes how important it is for the person to have self-belief towards being able to achieve the set goal. The self-efficacy also acts as a motivational force in this task (Bandura, 1997; Deci and Ryan, 2002). Bandura (1997) points out that whether the goal is in the near or far distant future will have a direct effect on motivation. Near-future goals provide accessible, immediate and motivational incentives, while far-distant goals are not as motivating as there are many other items that will interfere with the goal attainment. Thus, according to Bandura (1997) the best way to sustain self-motivation is to have a mixture of both near-future and far-distant goals.

In a similar line of thought, self-determination theory by Deci and Ryan (2002) suggests that all humans are naturally equipped with a tendency to develop towards a more elaborated self-awareness (Deci and Ryan, 2002). The theory also discusses how a person can be affected, either positively or negatively, by external forces and elements that influence the individual's life and ability to achieve the goals (Deci and Ryan, 2002). This can in turn be reflected against Bandura's self-efficacy theory and the element of time in goal-setting (Bandura, 1997). To conclude, it is vital to understand all these elements that affect the coachee's ability to reach the goals.

Within the coaching intervention, the above discussion emphasizes the importance of understanding that sometimes rigid goal-setting can facilitate the desired outcome, for example in relation to work performance, whereas sometimes it might not be the most

suitable way to facilitate intervention, for example in relation to personal growth (De Haan, 2016). When Grant (2013a) investigated whether goal-setting or autonomy of support was more significant towards the coaching outcome, goal-setting prevailed. However, the study also demonstrated the importance of other factors in the coaching relationship. The setting between two humans always includes other elements than just defined goals: goals cannot be reached without the human factor. Indeed, while Grant's (2013a) conclusion was that goal-focused coaching was more effective, this did not exclude the impact of other factors. Scoular and Linley (2006) compared in their study goal-setting and non-goal-setting conditions and surprisingly found that when these two alternatives were analysed with multiple regression analysis, there was no difference between the two.

However, despite these contradictory results, many coaches rely on goal-setting within the coaching intervention (Hurd, 2009; Adams; 2012). Interestingly, David et al. (2014) note that goal-setting among coachees correlates with their experience and training and that in the United States, goal-setting is more common than in Europe. For example, the Berkeley Executive Coaching Institute also relies strongly on the goal-setting doctrine. One reason for this is perhaps the American business culture. Being more goal-oriented and dynamic than in Europe, it also impacts the coaching culture and probably results in a more goal-oriented coaching.

One interesting theory, which is in direct relation to goal-setting and underpinning the coaching intervention was offered by Laske (2007). Laske argues that the coaching outcome is ultimately decided on a "frame of reference" (FoR). It essentially means how the world is seen and understood by the individual, i.e. how the person contextualises what is real and what is such a goal that is worth pursuing and the person is motivated in pursuing. The coaching relationship has two FoRs in complex interaction. In this model, perception and learning, capacity, social-emotional and cognitive development all play a part in how the coaching works and what methodological coaching options are available. Laske's methodological options available for coaching are shown in Figure 2.6.2.3 below:
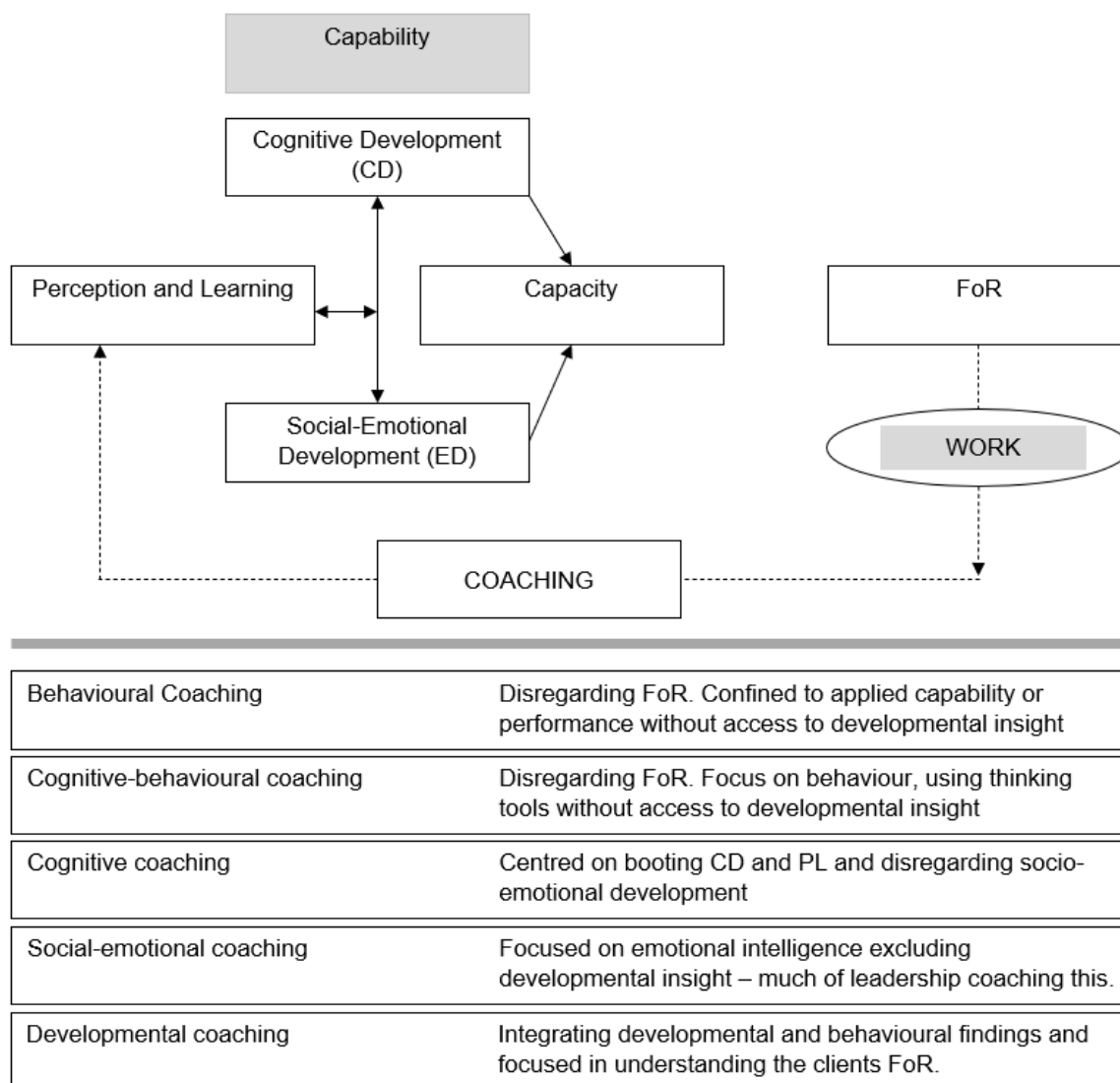
Figure 2.6.2.3. Laske's methodological options (adapted from Laske, 2007).

2.6.2.4 Dimensions of coaching session structure

When discussing the appropriate model and theoretical framework for coaching, several variables play a part, such as the coach's preference to choose a theoretical framework for the session, the coachee's ability and willingness to change, and the overall easiness or complexity of the goal that is pursued (Grant, 2011). According to Grant (2011), experienced and trained coaches can navigate between these choices more flexibly and with ease. The dimensions of session structure are shown in Table 2.6.2.4 below:

Dimensions of session structure	
Less Tightly Structured	More Tightly Structured
More about telling the story	Early SMART goal setting
Focus on micro-skill use	More task-focus
May have more emotional content	Faster paced session
Possibly client less ready to change	Client ready to change
Rapport may need building	Good initial rapport

Table 2.6.2.4. Dimensions of coaching session structure (Grant, 2011:120).

The table also provides an understandable overview of the extremities of the dimension in the coaching session structure and how different as such the entire session can be from another.

2.7 Manager-as-Coach

Instead of formal coaching, managers sometimes act as internal coaches for their employees (often referred to as "manager-as-coach"; Joo et al., 2012). In the general picture, this is not surprising as the coaching-oriented leadership style is on the rise (Goleman et al. 2013), and there is academic evidence that managerial coaching promotes commitment and individual performance of the employees (Ribeiro et al., 2020). In addition, recent studies have provided further evidence that managers and leaders who coach are the most critical aspects associated with organisational learning and development (Ellinger and Ellinger, 2020). Furthermore, millennials seem to prefer this style of leadership overall (Kultalahti et al., 2013). Therefore, the discussion on managers acting as coaches will probably increase, and this way of coaching will probably become more popular. In addition, as suggested by this study, managers are often expected to perform coaching irrespective of whether they have the ability, willingness or motivation for it. Therefore, a review of literature on manager-as-coach seems relevant for the purposes of this study.

Lyons and Bandura (2020) discuss the changing role of the manager. The manager-as-coach can be defined as presented in Table 2.7 below.

Manager as a coach is defined as a managerial practice that helps employees learn and improve problem work performance by providing guidance, encouragement and support (Ellinger et al., 2010).

> Promotion of an element of the managerial role that places the manager in more of a coaching role. This role still involves clearly identifying performance expectations, attending to employee performance data and other related information, delivering performance feedback, conducting meetings concerning these matters and coaching employees aimed at performance improvement and personal growth (Segers et al., 2011).

> Managers are expected to foster trust, manage emotions, maintain employee satisfaction with the process and motivate employees to improve performance (Tseng and Levy, 2019).

Table 2.7. Definitions of manager-as-coach (adapted from Joo et al. (2012) and Lyons and Bandura (2020)).

Usually, a coach should be a professional and trained coach who can coach the executive with correct capacities to enhance the executive's talent and ability to succeed (Stern, 2004; Kilburg, 2009; Passmore, 2012). However, managers are rarely professional coaches. In addition, when managers act as coaches, boundaries between mentoring and coaching may become blurred. However, as Table 2.6.1 describes, mentoring has a different structure from coaching, and it can be loosely described as a more relaxed method of assisting a person inside an organisation to understand and cope with corporate politics, values and dynamics in order to advance onwards in one's career, sometimes under the protection or empowered by the mentor who usually is someone higher up in the organisation (Law, 2013). Therefore, manager-as-coach situations have many similarities with mentoring.

However, managers should act as coaches only when coaching is grounded both in business and psychology and performed by "talented executives" (Joo et al., 2012; Smith, 2020), i.e. the manager is trained to perform coaching and has the required talent and coach characteristics. Furthermore, it is important to understand the purpose of the coaching relationship (Joo et al., 2012), i.e. what are the goals for the coaching (Grant, 2013b). Ladyshewsky (2009) and Joo et al. (2012) both investigated the successfulness and usefulness of managers-as-coach and concluded that in principle, businesses would benefit a lot from this kind of arrangement. However, managers acting as coaches require a paradigm shift which is not that easy to accomplish, i.e. not all managers are suitable to act as coaches (Stern, 2004). For example, certain managers may find it difficult to engage in self-reflection to improve their emotional skills and techniques that are required in coaching (Patti et al., 2015). The manager-as-coach must be highly skilled in balancing between professional and personal issues and be able to control both so that the coaching is

professional (Spaten and Flensborg, 2013). The content of the coaching sessions may take the "coaching relationship" to a level which requires professional coaching practice from the manager, and this can be challenging unless the manager is well prepared and trained for the task. Therefore, this process requires explicit information about the commitment the manager is about to take and a clear identification of those managers that are suitable to be trained to be managers-as-coach (Patti et al., 2015).

Ladyshewsky's (2010) study further supported the importance of the relationship between manager-as-coach and coachee and the level of confidentiality that must be present to enhance this relationship. Authenticity, time, respect, honesty and personal self-disclosure, i.e. open and honest discussion, all support the relationship and building of trust within it (Ladyshewsky, 2010). It is interesting that these attributes of manager-as-coach resemble those mentioned in the general discussion on coaching and trust (Baron and Morin, 2009).

This similarity supports the view by Joo et al., (2012) and Milner et al. (2018), according to which the manager-as-coach should be trained in a similar way to any professional coach. However, certain organisations have adopted an alternative approach to this issue, since "manager-as-coach" and especially a "coaching leadership style" have become more widely adopted in many organisations and can also be found for example in Finnish job advertisements (Monster, 2019; Oikotie, 2019). Still, many organisations have not taught their managers coaching skills or screened their mental and moral suitability for this task, i.e. being in business for the client and not for themselves, and this means challenges for many organisations that are following trends without truly evaluating them.

2.8 Coaching Relationship

Even though there is wide-spread consensus on the coaching relationship being one of the most important elements in coaching, Stern and Stout-Rostron (2013) note that there is relatively little research into it, and Birnie (2019) deplores that despite various calls, there remains a gap in the literature in this respect. However, the coach-coachee relationship and the factors that play a part in its formulation are currently being investigated by researchers and practitioners alike (Sun et al. 2013; McDowall and O'Broin, 2014), and there is wide agreement in both academic and practitioner literature that the coaching relationship is a significant change element in coaching (Crosse, 2019).

Boyce et al. (2010) define "leadership coaching relationship" as a "one-on-one helping relationship between a client and coach which is entered into with mutual agreement to improve the client's professional performance and personal satisfaction", and similarly

conclude that it is one of the most essential processes of coaching (Boyce et al., 2010: 917). Likewise, De Haan et al. (2013) conclude that the relationship is the key factor in determining how clients perceive the outcome of coaching, or the most critical factor in a successful coaching outcome (Page and De Haan, 2014). On the same note, O'Broin and Palmer (2010) argue that all approaches in the field of coaching recognize the requirement of a good working coach-coachee relationship, and this view is also supported by many earlier authors (Gyllensten and Palmer, 2007; Baron and Morin, 2009). In more detail, Baron and Morin's results indicate that it is "by the effect on the coach-coachee relationship that the amount of coaching received influences the development of the coachee" and that there is a positive correlation between the quality of the coaching relationship and the participants' self-efficacy (2009:98-99). Interestingly, Baron and Morin's results contradict the previous findings made in literature in psychotherapy that the therapists' attributes have greater influence on the relationship than the techniques employed (Baron and Morin, 2009).

Boyce et al. (2010) conclude that a coaching relationship is critical in building a trust and common belief as well as achieving outcomes. Furthermore, they also mention trust (openness, honesty, non-judgemental), rapport (mutual understanding, respect, agreement and liking between the parties of the dyad) and commitment (dedication, fulfilment of agreed issues both at task and emotional level) as key aspects in the relationship. They conclude that these aspects have a unique impact on the coaching outcome: for example, positive experience is supported by a high rapport and outcomes in behavioural issues are associated with high commitment to the coaching relationship. They also emphasize that these social constructs involve a mutual relationship between the coach and the client and that the coach cannot achieve the process alone (Boyce et al., 2010).

2.8.1 Real and Valuable Relationship

As noted above, the coach-coachee working relationship has been identified as one key element in providing a foundation for coaching success (Day et al., 2008; De Haan et al., 2013) and that *trust* (Kampa-Kokesch and Anderson, 2001; Bluckert, 2005; Jones and Spooner, 2006; Sun et al., 2013) constitutes the most important element of the relationship. Research also suggests that while coaching outcomes improve when the number of coaching sessions increase, success is more associated with the coaching relationship (Sonesh et al., 2015). In their study, the best outcomes were achieved when there were at least seven coaching sessions. Likewise, Baron and Morin (2009) note the positive mediating role of the coaching relationship towards coaching performance and in the development of the coachee's self-efficacy. However, in contrast to Sonesh et al. (2015),

they conclude that the number of coaching sessions has a direct impact on the relationship and, therefore, the coaching outcome. They further discuss a "real relationship", a deeper and more highly personalised relationship, which has also been indicated as a key factor in psychotherapy (Baron and Morin, 2009). A "real relationship" has also been highlighted as a key factor in determining the coaching outcome (Sun et al., 2013). Their findings and previous knowledge support not just having a relationship, but having a profound, deep, trusting relationship which creates a space for the client, i.e. openness and interest towards the client. In an open and trusting relationship, the coach can bring the coachee to a self-dialogue within the coaching intervention and provide an opportunity for a successful outcome. This view is also supported by Gyllensten and Palmer (2007), who refer to a valuable relationship surrounded by trust and transparency. They refer to transparency as a feeling that the client feels "included" in the coaching process and that the process of coaching is open, defined and transparent, providing the client the beginning of the feeling of trust. Likewise, van Nieuwerburgh et al. (2020) discuss the feeling of safety to explore and to talk candidly without fear of judgment and the importance of trust to facilitate the coaching relationship. Similarly, according to Fields (2017), trust, support, empathy and reliable feedback are the foundations of a working coaching relationship. Likewise, Stelter (2014) emphasizes co-generation of meaning by the coach and the coachee as a building block of their "narrative collaborative partnership" (Stelter 2014:52).

Baron et al. (2011) made interesting discoveries as regards coaching alliance and noted that an over-secure coach may miss subtle and faint signs the coachee might be transmitting or expressing. Interestingly, De Haan et al. (2010) discussed critical moments in coaching, which can have both positive and negative effects on the success of coaching. These critical moments could be described as those moments where subtle and faint messages are displayed by the coachee, and the coach is able to catch that moment and turn it into a positive moment in the coaching intervention. A complementary suggestion was made by Kinsler (2014), who highlighted the role of self-awareness, and also by Gatling (2014), who argued that the coach's ability to bring about an effective and successful outcome can be further supported by the coach's authentic leadership characteristics, such as self-awareness, balanced processing, rational transparency and an internalised moral perspective.

2.8.2 Coaching Skills

Baron et al. (2011) raised the importance that the coach should be paying attention to what the client is experiencing. In a situation where there is an impasse, i.e. that progress cannot

be made on the issues at hand, it is not unfamiliar that the coach tries to push onwards by means of tools and experience collected in the profession. However, this push may prevent the real "repair or cure" from occurring and result in a situation where the method takes over and becomes overpowering. This is an interesting discussion and increases the importance of awareness and constant self-reflection on what is happening with oneself and with the surroundings. In other words, the coach needs to be interested in asking questions and not only providing solutions (Gladis and Gladis, 2015). This approach can also be referred to as "active listening" (Lancer et al., 2016) or "attentive listening" (Kline, 1999). In turn, Bluckert (2005) highlights the competences of the coach in order to maintain integrity and thus facilitate and keep building trust. When comparing these discussions, there are two important factors: the coaching skills which embody the competence, but also the ability to be sensitive to the situation and open to the outcome, limiting oneself to what the coaching tools offer. Bluckert (2005) discusses the importance of the coach's awareness of her/his own strengths and weaknesses and acting while being aware of and in accordance with them.

Boyatzis et al. (2006 and 2009) and Smith (2009) also reflected on the concept of coaching skills and the importance of coaching with compassion, i.e. being on the same wavelength with the client. Contrasting this concept with a coach equipped with all possible coaching tools and knowledge but not actually being on the same wavelength with the client raises obvious questions on the coach's suitability. In fact, Boyatzis et al. (2006) state that an uncaring relationship between the coach and the coachee likely leads to increased stress. This discussion echoes the general idea that emotional intelligence has an important role to play in achieving sustainable change in people (Maddocks, 2007).

As many authors have noted, the coaching relationship, i.e. the human contact between the coach and the coachee and the process associated with it, brings coaching and psychotherapy close to each other (Gray, 2006; Baron and Morin, 2009). Similarities with these two interventions, where an attempt is made at an individual level to help the client to develop themselves, are based on a highly personalised relationship in the contract (Baron and Morin, 2009). In fact, Baron and Morin's study on the coach-coachee relationship was inspired by the working alliance literature in psychotherapy (for a general discussion on the subject of therapeutic alliance, see Horvath and Luborsky, 1993), and they sought to build a bridge between the two scientific literatures: therapeutic process and executive coaching. For example, they noted that similarly to counselling, the outcome of coaching was likely to be dependant on the mutual goals to be attained, the paths to be explored and the coachee's level of interpersonal comfort with the coach (Baron and Morin, 2009). The study

also indicated that the coachee's motivation towards the coaching intervention and self-development contributed to coaching success. On a similar note, Gray (2006) suggested a dynamic alliance of psychotherapy and transformative learning, while O'Broin and Palmer (2010) presented the coaching alliance as a universal concept spanning various conceptual approaches.

2.8.3 Active Ingredients

Smith and Brummel (2013) explored the concept of active ingredients adopted in psychotherapy and their role in executive coaching: executive involvement, developability of competences and individual development plans, and demonstrated that these ingredients had a positive influence on coaching outcome. Furthermore, they also concluded that motivation was an important factor and that it manifested as a client-level belief of being able to develop oneself, i.e. self-efficacy. In the field of psychotherapy, Asay and Lambert (1999) identified four ingredients that accounted for nearly all the variance in outcome. These were (a) client/extra-therapeutic factors, (b) therapeutic relationship, (c) expectancy, hope and placebo effects and (d) theory and techniques.

McKenna and Davis (2009) also studied active ingredients in coaching. They used case studies to demonstrate how each ingredient could be used in executive coaching. With respect to the relationship, they referred to several alliances and forms of alliance: therapeutic, dynamic and coaching alliance, which translates to a strong working alliance with focus on goals and topics important to the coachee. In their study, this resulted in an affective bond with the coachee and, thus, the relationship. They also recommended having regular discussions with the coachee about the relationship itself, and how it was working for them, followed by an evaluation on the elements of the alliance. Nevertheless, McKenna and Davis (2009) noted that even though these active ingredients may be present in psychotherapy, they should not be just transferred to coaching, since coaching is different from therapy, i.e. the coach must have a certain level of know-how in using these skills properly. Furthermore, a later study raised a comment on McKenna and Davis's study on the scarcity of research investigating the importance of active ingredients in the coaching process (Smith and Brummel, 2013). MacKie (2015) also discussed active ingredients in support of facilitating change in coaching intervention and the willingness to experience discomfort during the pursuit of change in the coaching intervention. Furthermore, issues such as a belief that the intended change will take place, readiness for the change and a will to confront issues during the change are also important active ingredients. In many ways, the list of active ingredients resembles those related to self-efficacy, i.e. the person's

own belief that she/he can overcome obstacles and challenges. In comparison, De Haan et. al (2013) identified client's self-efficacy, coaching techniques and personality factors as the active ingredients in successful coaching.

Grant (2013a) examined the coaching relationship, the four key aspects in the relationship and their influence on positive coaching outcome. These aspects were autonomy support, satisfaction felt in the relationship, ideal relationship setting and goal-focused relationship. According to this study, goal setting, among the four aspects, was the most significant factor towards successful coaching outcome. However, the study also concluded that autonomy support, epitomized by factors such as "empathy, unconditional positive regard and trust" (Grant, 2013a:31) had a positive significant impact on coaching success. Ianiro et al. (2013) also investigated goal attainment in relation to coaching relationship and coaching outcome. Their study indicated that the coach's dominant behaviour in the first coaching session had a positive impact on the overall goal attainment at the end of the contract.

2.8.4 Who Is a Suitable Coach?

There is increasing interest in the subject of who is a suitable coach. This issue also relates to the discussion on forging a good "fit" between the coach and the coachee, a process usually referred to as "matching" (Bozer et al., 2015). In the literature, Kombarakaran et al. (2008) recognized the importance of coach selection for good results, while Gray and Goregaokar (2010) studied the influence of gender on the coach-coachee matching process with a mixed method and concluded that an organisation must offer diverse coaches for selection. However, their study suggested that the coach's gender was not the key issue but rather the matching of the coach and coachee.

Feldman and Lankau (2005) also identified the need for future research into identified specific dispositional variables and specific skills that may influence the coach's effectiveness. Bozer et al. (2015) identified gender similarity to have a significant influence on improving self-awareness, however the same study concluded that the gender similarity did not affect the effectiveness. Similarly, Furnham et al. (2012) found that emotional intelligence superseded over gender. In fact, according to Bozer et al. (2015), the question whether there are certain dispositional traits that particularly enhance the success of coaching has not been answered. The authors also emphasized the importance of the coach-coachee matching process but called for further research into this issue.

Collins' (2012) study used speed-chemistry process together with a curriculum vitae, a biographical questionnaire and a MBTI® type, if known, to match the coach-coachee dyad.

Relevant CV and other information were not deemed rich enough to make a reliable choice (Collins, 2012). The study highlighted the importance of a personal meeting between the coach and the coachee before making the dyad decision. Collins (2012) found out that while the speed-dating worked well, five minutes for the meeting was too short, and the participants recommended a ten-minute session. However, the feedback from the participants towards the speed-chemistry process was positive. On the other hand, the MBTI® type did not appear significant, as it was only mentioned by few and only one pair dyad had the same MBTI® type. Collins (2012) also raised the importance of rapport as a "descriptor" of the coaching relationship, allowing for openness, depth and personal-level involvement in the coaching relationship. She also noted "trust" and "empathy" as frequently noted positive factors by the research participants in the building of the relationship. Overall, the study highlighted the importance of a functional and trusting coaching relationship and brought forward a typology of different coaching relationships, demonstrating their different dimensions. One interesting result was that negative attributes were not necessarily less effective than positive ones. Overall, Collins' (2012) study provided insight in the different stages in the coaching relationship, from pre-formation to ending, and emphasized how interlinked and important they were to one another. According to Collins (2012), the pre-formation was the foundation of the relationship: it was where the matching took place and, therefore, where it should be managed.

Besides matching, there has been a lot of discussion on who is most suitable to act as an executive coach (Passmore and Gibbes, 2007). Banning (1997) listed trustworthiness, a solid reputation and compatible chemistry as three important criteria in selecting a coach. For example, Kilburg (1997) raised the question whether psychologists or executives are better alternatives, and preferred psychologists, because they can use their education which has familiarized them with various psychology tools and tests. Psychologists also usually have skills that include the ability to listen and to draw scenarios (Passmore and Gibbes, 2007; Kilburg, 2009), both critical skills for successful coaching. However, it must be noted that not all psychologists have these abilities (Kilburg, 2009).

The other school promotes emotionally intelligent experienced executives, who can be very successful coaches (McBain, 2004; Cox and Bachkirova, 2007). Having an awareness of business, management and political issues is also a necessary element for an effective coach (Harris, 1999). It could be suggested that people who have been in senior leadership positions know how to both manage internal organisational politics and perform according to expectations, since career success is usually dependent on these issues. This type of learning can only derive from the individual's own experiences, and these skills act as good

foundations for acting as a coach. In order to provoke behavioural changes and developmental shifts, the coach should have a higher maturity level than the client (Laske, 2007). Laske describes this graphically while stating that "where clients' maturity level exceeds that of the coach, developmental arrest, thus harm, is in the offering for them" (2007:203).

The concept of matching has been discussed in an increasing manner both in research and in practice. This is an important issue, since the coaching profession seeks to understand the formulation of a successful coaching dyad and whether it constitutes a condition for a successful outcome. Bozer at al. (2015) concluded that when forming a coaching pair, matching based on gender similarity was not required, and due to the highly organised and goal-focused nature of coaching, similarity between the coach and the coachee was not required. In contrast, Ianiro et al. (2013) suggested that the coach-coachee similarity in interpersonal dominance and affiliation was an important factor in formulating a successful coaching relationship. Boyce et al. (2010), while studying building blocks of a successful coaching relationship, identified the need to study possible tools to perform matching. They concluded that one precondition of successful coaching relationship was matching and finding a fit between a coach and coachee, which they referred as "compatible relationship". Their study provided evidence that when creating this fit, *complementary* managerial and learning styles provided more efficient and effective relationships and thus positive outcomes in the coaching. They also discussed the challenge of not having tools and criteria for the matching process and that in so-called systematic matching, only 60% could be considered real matches and others only as "best fits". They further noted that when faced with a limited pool of coaches, the difficulty of matching only increased and matching was often performed without technical tools or assistance, which further increased the risk of mismatching (Boyce et al., 2010).

However, in a study by Scoular and Linley (2006), personality differences were found to be significant. They offered a hypothesis that in coach-coachee pairings with different temperaments, the coachee's assumptions were challenged more, which resulted in more complex interaction. This in turn led to better coaching outcomes.

In De Haan's 2016 article, a quantitative large study was conducted in 34 countries, although without listing these countries or specifying how many responses were received per country. The article also concentrated on arguing that the MBTI profiles, when a coach and a coachee were matched by personality, did not seem to make any difference, neither when matched nor not matched. They also discussed other active ingredients and

concluded that the coaching relationship mediated other active ingredients, i.e. dependencies, such as personality differences, coach or coachee self-efficacy and coach or coachee personality. Interestingly, the article revealed that one of the coaches in the study, with whom De Haan had personally talked afterwards on the telephone, had apparently coached mainly people who were at risk of losing their job, and thus the quality of the relationship did not rate as high in this case. This information begs the question of what other factors might be hiding behind the results: there are obviously various factors within the relationship, which De Haan (2016) does not mention and which might affect the coaching outcome.

In this connection, it should be also taken into consideration that "suitability" does not only concern matching between the personal traits of the coach and the coachee. As Grant argues (2011), the level of expertise of the coach also has a direct impact on the content of the coaching, and the maturity brings the coach an increased capacity to surpass the differences in personal traits. Table 2.8.4 below (Grant 2011:123) depicts the shift from a novice coach to an expert coach and describes the characteristics that are typical for each level:

Level of Expertise	Characteristics
Novices	Focus on immediate tasks. Need to follow clear rules and can't deal with complex coaching issues that arise in the coaching situation. Rigidly follows session model step-by-step.
Advanced beginners	Tends to use rules as guidelines rather than prescriptions, but still finds it hard to handle exceptions to 'normal' coaching practice issues. Relies on model, but not always rigidly. Reverts to basic rules when feels under pressure in a coaching session.
Competent performers	Are at the stage where they can begin to create their own conceptual models of what they do, and can handle more complex situations. More flexible in use of session models. Able to move from one model to another to suit different coaching issues that arise within one coaching session.
Proficient performers	Have experienced wide range of coaching situations, are able to see the big picture, and can interpret underlying principles and adjust their behaviours to suit relatively novel coaching situations. Very flexible use of models. Can develop own conceptually coherent and meaningful models to suit novel situations. Enjoys the challenge of coaching difficult issues.
Experts	Have significant face-to-face coaching experience. Their high level of experience allows them to identify and solve problems with little explicit analysis. Can extrapolate solutions from principles even in very complex or highly novel situations.

Table 2.8.4. The novice-expert shift in developing coaching skills (Grant 2011:123).

It seems that the research has not yet solved the issue of whether traits of personality have an impact on the coaching outcome or who is a suitable coach. Results from the studies are contradictory and do not measure the same variables. In addition, the experience and

maturity of the coach is an important factor impacting the development of the coaching relationship, which must also be taken into consideration. In this respect, the interesting question is whether an experienced and mature coach can surpass the obstacles originating from dissimilarities between the coach and the coachee by using various skills and expertise gathered through the coaching career. In conclusion, it seems that the question on active ingredients, matching and the impact of expertise in coaching is far from resolved.

2.8.5 Summary

Based on the literature review, the coaching relationship is both complex and simple concept one – depending on the viewpoint. While literature seems to be divided on how this relationship is built and maintained, there is a generic academic consensus that a good relationship is vital for the success of coaching and thus desired. An opposite view was presented by Offstein et al. (2020). Their proposal is to ignore the relationship building since in their view, there is not sufficient time for it and instead, the coaching should be more directive and facilitate the coachee's needs. When compared with many other coaching studies, this a rather unique viewpoint and brings the ideas Offstein et al. (2020) are proposing close to consultancy.

Coaching relationship consists of myriad of variables, such of coaching skills, working alliance and active ingredients, and various studies seem to highlight one of these variables. On the other hand, relationships are always made of real-life variables, i.e. human interaction, feelings, trust and all human emotions that always exist in human interaction. In addition, the concept of relationship does not become any easier when various cultural, generational and other human traits are brought to the equation. For example, the speed of the formation of a relationship can be quite different in different cultures and generations. When comparing a Japanese baby boomer from the island of Okinawa and a Swiss generation z-er from Zurich, it is likely that their way of forming a trusting relationship will be different.

The literature suggest that various personal traits have an impact on the formulation of the coaching relationship, such gender, age and industry background as well as the similarity and dissimilarity of the coach and the coachee. However, the literature does not offer conclusive evidence on the impact of these variables. There is not even a consensus on whether building of coaching relationship differs from daily relationship building. For example, can it be suggested that the relationship building in coaching varies from a daily relationship building because of the tools and techniques the coach utilizes, or are those

elements just factors that assist the building process? Can it be suggested that relationship building and maintenance of relationship is rooted in something much deeper and profound between two individuals, and it is still the sum of the two people, the "real stuff between them", that matters, irrespective of psychological tools? It would appear that the literature does not provide any simple framework for approaching the question on how and on what grounds coaching relationships are built and maintained.

2.9 The Finnish Cultural Dimension

There has been very little discussion on the impact of culture on coaching. Most of the studies have been conducted in Western Europe, the United Kingdom, Australia and the United States. However, David et al. (2014) conclude that regional and cultural differences have an impact on how coaching is performed. The value of understanding national distinctions is also highlighted in Gentry et al.'s (2013) study on differences between the perceptions of European and Asian coaches on their best practices. According to this study, Asian coaches felt that assessment and feedback were the most important and challenging the client the second most important element of best practices, whereas their European counterparts felt that relationship building was the primary and technique the second element. On a similar note, Dromantaite and Passmore (2019) discuss coaching in the Baltic states and how in that region differences in coaching practices prevail when compared with western Europe. These differences include limited use of coaching supervision and, overall, the immaturity of the coaching profession in the region. They also argue that there needs to be a space for national considerations in coaching practices and that "Americanisation" is threatening the local coaching culture. This discussion underlines the fact that cultural differences must always be considered when assessing the elements of successful coaching. Since the current study was conducted in Finland and among Finns, it is important to understand the cultural aspects that are typical for or emphasised in the Finnish culture.

Following Hofstede's (2001) terminology, Finland is a feminine culture. In comparison, the United Kingdom and Argentina are, for example, masculine cultures (Hofstede, 2001). The cultural dimensions and differences between masculine and feminine cultures can be seen for example in politics, informal rules and even in how politics is played (Hofstede, 2001). Therefore, these dimensions are a part of the daily lives of the people living within these feminine or masculine cultures, and they also affect the nation's generic attitudes. The Statistics Finland, which is the official governmental agency that observes and records statistics, maintains a summary on Finland's strengths in global comparison (see Appendix

D). It must say something about Finns that, according to the rankings, the nation is the most stable and safest in the world and has the best governance and the most modern independent judicial system in the world. In addition, Finland is the least corrupted, has the least organised crime and is the freest country in the world, together with Sweden and Norway. Furthermore, Finland has the second most reliable and the least corrupted election system in the world after Denmark (Statistics Finland, 2020a).

Finland is a collectivist society and, when compared to for example the United Kingdom, Finns have stronger uncertainty avoidance and a more collectivist approach (Hofstede, 2001). Likewise, House et al.'s (2004) study (the "Globe Study") gives Finns a high score in uncertainty avoidance. This high score in uncertainty avoidance is perhaps the reason why Finns value trust. The Finns often say that "trust must be earned", but on the other hand Finns share a basic general feeling of trust towards one another (Lewis, 2018; Statistics Finland, 2020). However, while a general level of trust is present among Finns, they often lack social openness, i.e. Finns are private people, dislike small talk and openness and value personal space and privacy (Lewis, 2018; BBC, 2020). In House et al.'s study (2004), Finland ranked high in "humane orientation", which means that members of the society are responsible for supporting the well-being of others and family, and friends are an important part of life. However, at a typical Finnish family, friends or social meeting, it might happen that people don't speak that much. Silent moments within a conversation are not taken as a negative sign. On the contrary, such moments feel natural to Finns (Lewis, 2018; InfoFinland, 2020). In addition, it is not common among Finns to show feelings openly, while individualism ranks high in the Finnish culture and legislation (InfoFinland, 2020). Lewis described Finnish business behaviour personality as: "strong, silent type with rural background, fiercely independent, a true friend, a good soldier, a bad enemy" (Lewis, 2018: 314).

Based on the above, it is not easy to compare Finns with other Western European cultures, such as the United Kingdom. These qualities are also reflected in the Finnish business life, where the small size of the nation is evident in the size of the businesses. The largest company in Finland, Neste Corporation, generates an annual revenue of some 9 billion euros, whereas the largest Nordic company in terms of revenue is Ge Vingmed Ultrasound in Norway, with an annual revenue of 90 billion (Asiakastieto, 2020), almost twice the revenue of all the largest companies in Finland combined. In terms of staff, the largest company in the Nordics is Aktiebolaget Electrolux in Sweden, with 60 038 employees, while the largest in Finland is a public company, the Helsinki Area Hospital Precinct, with 24,328 employees (Asiakastieto, 2020). In turn, these figures can be compared with those of the

United Kingdom, where in 2017 Shell generated a revenue of 187 billion GBP (Global Database, 2020), while the NHS employed 1,500,000 people in 2020 (Nuffieldtrust, 2020).

Both the numbers and the culture tell a story. Even though Finland might be wealthy in statistics and per capita, the numbers provide clear evidence on the small size of the Finnish businesses, in terms of both revenue and personnel. These facts also explain why the Finnish coaching industry is relatively small and is still in its infancy. Furthermore, the cultural aspects and traits of Finns reveal interesting facts about the landscape in which coaching is being delivered in Finland.

2.10 Finnish Generations and Millennials

While the idea of 'generation', child – parent – grand-parent, has been known since the beginning of time, the concept, as analysed today in science, popular culture and business, only appeared at the end of 19th century and became more widely known and used during the first half of the 20th century (Purhonen, 2007). However, while it may seem that the concept of generation is widely accepted, it has also faced considerable criticism. For example, Weber and Urick (2017) suggest that individuals within one generational cohort may be similar or different and, following this path, question whether millennials can be treated as a homogenous generation and come to the conclusion that demographic differences in variables such as gender, amount of work experience and business discipline specialization result in numerous and significant differences within a generation. Therefore, Weber and Urick (2017) warn that it is risky to assume that all representatives of a certain generation will exhibit exactly the same characteristics. Interestingly, Weber and Urick also mention that these stereotypes are "very common to public discourse under the guise of academic research" (2017:471). On a similar note, Purhonen (2007) deems that the entire concept of generation seems problematic.

Nevertheless, generations in their relation to business and social life have been investigated since the beginning of last century, and definitions such as their years of birth, names and characteristics have been discussed widely (Parry and Urwin, 2011; Weber and Urick, 2017). Based on Kupperschmidt (2006), a generation can be defined as an identifiable group that shares birth years, location and significant life events at critical developmental stages. This definition catches the essence of a generational cohort. It is also interesting to compare the idea of the generational cohort with the concept of lifespan development which argues that people may age differently depending on their life circumstances (Butterworth and Harris, 1994). Thus, there is always a continuum between an individual's hereditary

characteristics and exposure to external environment and factors (Piaget, 1953), and this fact must be considered in all generational studies.

Many critical development stages in human life occur during the teenage years between 12 and 20 (Tiede, 2006). Being a teenager is a time of great development as everyone can identifiably remember. For example, in Finland, generations born in the beginning and the middle of last century were greatly affected first by wars (Hofstede, 2001) and then by the slowly increasing prosperity, the result of a nation-wide and collective idea of hard work, independence and equal prosperity. Baby boomers witnessed a post-industrial revolution, post-war society evolving to a high technology society, and recent generations have enjoyed continuing prosperity of the nation. However, the collective comprehension of what is important and valued has seen changes. Lately, the appearance of millionaires and at the same time having over 700,000 people living under the poverty line, with 300,000 of them considered extremely poor (Ritakallio, 2017), has broken the spine of a previously harmonious collective society and, furthermore, severed the bond between individuals and generations. In public discussion, many young voices accuse previous generations of financial robbery, self-absorbed idealism, environmental destruction and political impotence, while mature generations feel that their efforts and contributions are not appreciated and valued. Finland is certainly a nation at crossroads in many ways. These tensions can be felt in the society and especially in the polarization of the political and public debate and the ever-increasing hate speech and ultra-juxtaposition.

In Finland, the voices between the two different main viewpoints are growing louder: one is suggesting the Finns should abandon the Nordic way and become more attuned towards American and after-Brexit philosophy ("everyone only for themselves") on the national and individual level. Then there are those who argue for "unity and care before personal prosperity", for common European values and close co-operation and cultural cohesion between European nations. One could not be more alien to other. It will be interesting to see how all this will affect the evolution of future generations. The current atmosphere of ultra-nationalism, political impotence and popularism, self-interest as well as EU-wide challenges are affecting the values and motivations of the current teenagers and future generations. It could be argued that we should not expect high ratings on our collective performance.

Interestingly, it has been suggested that this situation greatly affects previous generations as well. When defining a generational cohort, we often look at the events that shaped the teenager years and young adulthood, but it could be argued that currently many are also

stressed and mentally affected by the current situation. Therefore, our individual and cohort level values and motives are questioned and revalued. When changes that occur are so dramatic and challenged so loudly by the young, the previous generations are also forced to reconsider their own standing.

The longevity and psychological well-being of people has increased in Finland (Statistics Finland, 2020) and in many western societies, which is also affecting the discussion on retirement and contribution to society at any age. Whereas some political parties in Finland are considering giving the right to vote to fifteen- or sixteen-year olds (Aamulehti, 2020), at the same time there are calls from the business society to increase the retirement age closer to 70 (Kansan Uutiset, 2020). These suggestions demonstrate how everyone has both more responsibility and a continuous opportunity to contribute to their individual lives and societies. As a result, the living environment and public discussion increasingly support people in making changes, and career and life changes at any age, either young or old, have become more feasible. These events increase the interaction of generations at workplaces, families and in public discussion (Saarenheimo, 2014; Mellanen and Mellanen, 2020). It may be that due to this increased interaction, boundaries between generational cohorts are blurring and generational silos are merging. However, the current COVID-19 crisis has shown that this situation may not be permanent. The crisis has affected the entire society also in Finland and made interaction between generations less feasible, and the life in general has become more uncertain. For example, according to the Finnish institute for health and welfare (2020), in Finland one in ten people of working age have experienced significant mental strain.

2.10.1   Generation: Definition under Review

In principle, the western economies (e.g. the United States, the EU and the United Kingdom) have referred to four main generations during the last century (Meister and Willyerd, 2010). Parry and Urwin (2011) provide the following birth year descriptions for these four generations: silent generation born between 1925 and 1942, baby boomers born between 1943 and 1960, generation x-ers born between 1961 and 1981 and millennials born after 1982. Generation y (which, according to McKinsey, 2020, starts from 1995) was not yet mentioned in these studies.

There are also other birth year definitions for the millennial generation. Smola and Sutton (2002) think of millennials as those born between 1978 and 1995, whereas others have the following definitions: Wong et al. (2008): born between 1982 and 2000, Cennamo and

Gardner (2008): born 1980 onwards, Meister and Willyerd (2010): born between 1977 and 1997, and Siltala (2013): born between 1980 and 1995. For this study, the definition of Wong et al. (2008), i.e. those born after 1982 and before 2000, was adopted. Overall, a certain consensus prevails on different time periods, but as the fifth generation, i.e. those born after 2000, is emerging, upcoming research may again suggest different definitions (Purhonen, 2007). Table 2.10.1. below gives examples of various birth years, resonating with the ambiguity of the general discussion on generations.

Source	Age in 2020	Birth years
Anderson et al., 2017	21 to 38	1982 to 1999
Arsenault, 2004	20 to 39	1981 to 2000
Bennett et al., 2012	20 to 41	1979 to 2000
Cennamo and Gardner, 2008	up to 40	1980–
DeVaney, 2015	20 to 40	1980 to 2000
Gong et al., 2018	20 to 40	1980 to 2000
Kilber et al., 2014	20 to 39	1981 to 2000
Kupperschmidt, 2006	20 to 39	1981 to 2000
Kultalahti and Viitala, 2014	20 to 38	1982 to 2000
Kultalahti and Viitala, 2015	25 to 42	1978 to 1995
Meister and Willyerd, 2010	23 to 43	1977 to 1997
Mellanen and Mellanen, 2020	20 to 40	1980 to 2000
Siltala, 2013	25 to 40	1980 to 1995
Smith and Galbraith, 2012	20 to 39	1981 to 2000
Smola and Sutton, 2002	26 to 42	1978 to 1995
Stewart et al., 2017	25 to 39	1981 to 1995
Weber and Urick, 2017	20 to 40	1980 to 2000
Wong et al., 2008	20 to 38	1982 to 2000
Zilka, 2016	34 to 42	1978 to 1986

Table 2.10.1. Various definitions of the millennial generation.

As the table shows, there is ambiguity in the definitions of millennials. However, the majority define millennials as those born between 1981 and 2000. Furthermore, while some prefer to define the millennials based on age, other prefer to use birth years. For the purpose of this study, we define millennial Finns as those born between 1982 and 2000 (Wong et al., 2008).

Besides looking at the years of birth or age, it is also important to understand more about what constitutes a generation. Popular literature suggests that there are intrinsic differences between generations and in their motivational drivers, but there is also research contradicting this (Wong et al., 2008; Weber and Urick, 2017). Parry and Urwin (2011) state

that empirical evidence of generational differences is problematic, and the evidence is at best mixed. Lyons et al. (2012), who examined career patterns between different generations, noted that differences existed to some extent, but they were not as widespread as the popular literature suggests. However, Smola and Sutton (2002) argue that generational differences do exist and that the differences in values change over time within generational groups as a result of societal environment and, to a lesser degree, the maturation process of individuals. From a somewhat different perspective, Weber and Urick (2017) offer various alternatives to the age-based approach, such as maturity-based approach (individuals are considered to belong to a certain generation when they experience a same formative event together, such as revolutions or wars), or identity-based approach (individuals belong to a certain generation if they feel alignment with its prototypical traits) and conclude that studies of generational phenomena at the workplace are largely inconclusive as regards whether there are indeed differences between generations (2017).

Arsenault (2004) investigated the validity of an overall discussion about generational differences and whether there are true generational differences that result in challenges to leaders in businesses. Arsenault (2004) was looking to validate differences mainly between baby boomers (1944–1960) and generation x-ers (1961–1980). Interestingly, Arsenault's discussion about general character differences between baby boomers and generation x-ers does not differ much from the discussion some 15 years later, for example by Anderson et al. (2017): they both argued for differences and validated this position through research.

Based on the above, the concept of generation seems both easy and challenging to understand. We understand it in terms of family very easily. It refers to child, parent, grandparent and sometimes even a great grandparent who are all alive at the same time. Beutell and Wittig-Berman's (2008) study of generational differences within family found that generational cohorts within the family had different roles and work expectations. The current political and public discussion also recognizes how the concept of family is changing, challenged and evolving, especially in the western societies, unless strictly governed by religious doctrines.

However, as noted by Weber and Urick (2017) and Purhonen (2007), among others, the entire concept of generations seems to be challenged and not easily understood and recognized, especially at the workplace. No matter how unified processes an organisation has, the values and traits of the generations are still present. For example, the millennials and younger generations have been greatly influenced by leaps in technology, social media,

connectivity and online sharing. These leaps have affected their whole social behaviour, and society has shifted towards more open, active and shared communication. Therefore, it seems fair to assume that the millennials are different from baby boomers and generation x-ers. For example, DeVaney (2015) argues that millennials are radically more diverse than previous generations and notes that in the United States, 47 percent of millennials represent minorities, whereas the same percentage within baby boomers is 27 percent and among generation x-ers 37 percent.

This is an interesting discussion which can also be compared with the Finnish culture, where public opinion deems that urban millennials, i.e. millennials living in larger cities in Finland, are more open, more accepting, less racist and more global and pro-European than previous generations. They are said to demand meaningfulness from the work they do and the products they use. Support for the discussion above can be found in one of Finland's largest professional marketing journals, where millennials' consumer habits and overall values were described with the sentence "be meaningful or die" (Markkinointi & Mainonta, 2017). The article states that in the world desired by millennials, women and men have equal pay, animals do not suffer, green energy prevails and artificial intelligence provides safety for pedestrians. This could be interpreted as the millennials wanting to live in a more accepting and more open atmosphere, and it seems that the Finnish media and also the politicians support this movement. This is a good example of the public discourse based on stereotypes rather than statistical evidence, as noted by Weber and Urick (2017).

Deal et al. (2010) discuss how younger generations have been exposed to technology more than previous generations, which helps them to leverage those skills in a much more efficient manner. As the speed of technological development and evolution is increasing at an unprecedented pace (Singularity University, 2019), so are the differences between current and future generations. Where today 40-year olds might find challenges with using computer and smart phone applications, younger generations are literate in their use. For example, in Finland, the Ministry of Education added coding to the elementary school teaching programme in 2016 (Yle, 2015). Arsenault (2004) concludes that generational differences are a valid and legitimate diversity issue, which requires understanding, recognition and a valid response and behaviour from organisations in order to lead the organisation effectively and successfully. This makes it evident why it is important to explore and investigate millennial Finns in the coaching environment, while being aware of the stereotypes and risks related to overly simplistic concept of generations and Millennials.

Purhonen (2007) concludes that the concept of generation is problematic and often political by nature, while Rudolph et al. (2018) wish to remove generational myths and raise arguments against the more traditional generation discussion, which they call problematic. For example, the awareness of belonging to a generation differs between people and even generations, and Purhonen (2007) argues that, for example, those born in Finland between 1945 and 1950 share a lot more intense understanding and feeling of belonging to a generational group, whereas older and especially younger people do not share this intense sense of a generation. This approach is very similar to those referred to as "identity-based approach" by Weber and Urick (2017). Purhonen continues to note that research providing support for the concept of generation is sometimes focused on issues that are traumatic and thus create a bond between people as traumas leave a precise memory point on the bearer. This line of thought reminds of Weber and Urick's "maturity-based approach (2007). Rudolph et al. (2018) also discuss the problem of age and how "dangerous" it is to presume that category membership determines individual attributes. Purhonen (2007) also raises the problem that the issue of gender has not been addressed in the general discussion on generations. Purhonen refers to the discussion of generations at the beginning of the last century and notes that at that time, people with lower income and lower status in society, such as women, were considered secondary in value. Purhonen argues that due to this thinking, the western cultures tend to define generations in overtly masculine terms. It is interesting to compare Purhonen's arguments with Hofstede's (2001) categorisation of feminine and masculine cultures, where Finns represent a feminine culture and the United States and the United Kingdom masculine cultures. In accordance with this line of thought, it may be hypothesized that the Finnish definition of generation would reflect more the feminine features, and therefore, the Western definitions of generation might not be well suited to the Finnish context.

The United States and the United Kingdom may represent the countries where many of the original definitions of generations have come from (Meister and Willyerd, 2010). Interestingly, Yogamalar and Samuel (2016) compared what they call the western context and Indian context generation definitions and the events that define them. Whereas the accepted definitions in western countries rely on issues and events that occurred in the west or were carried out by western nations, such as the Vietnam War and the Iraq War, the Indian definitions lack these events. Yogamalar and Samuel (2016) also compared generational differences between the United States and China and concluded that national context and culture had an impact on the generational values.

Kultalahti and Viitala (2014 and 2015) studied millennial Finns and what motivates them at the workplace: flexible working hours and good community spirit serve to motivate while, on the other hand, staying too long at the same workplace serves to de-motivate. These values speak about the financial wellbeing of millennial Finns, where work is almost a certainty and financial wellbeing is more or less guaranteed. Millennial Finns enter the work life mostly without debt, as only 25 percent of Finnish university students need a student loan. Students get government subsidies for their studies and housing. In 2019, 25 percent of the students who had taken a loan had government guarantee, and the average loan was 1,540 euros per student (Kela, 2020). In comparison, the accumulation of student loans in the United States was 1.4 trillion US dollars (CNBC, 2020). In addition, for the 2019 fiscal year, the outstanding student loans of 15 million US millennials aged 24–34 amounted to 497.6 billion US dollars (Forbes, 2020). Such major financial issues must have a profound impact on the values of millennials and on how they define and form their culturally-based generation and generational cohort. Besides financial issues, there are many other cultural and national factors that play a role, such as health care, cost of living and living standards, safety, freedom, level of hate speech and political climate.

Purhonen (2007) also analyses the difficulty in seeing to the future and how the current age groups identify themselves with possible generational groups and how strong or weak that identification is. While Parry and Urwin (2011) discuss the issues of cohort within the generation, Purhonen (2007) states that the cohort is a more technical definition and should be used to refer to a group within the generation and not be confused with the definition of generation. The idea of generational cohort is discussed below in more detail.

2.10.2   Generational Cohort

Whereas generation can be defined as an identifiable group that shares birth, age, location and significant life events at a critical development stage (Kupperschmidt, 2000:66), generational cohort is a narrower concept. Mannheim (1952) states that individuals cannot be members of the same generation simply because they share a year of birth and calls for more robust conceptualizations, such as those that incorporate identities or maturity, instead of just age-based understandings. Likewise, Macky et al. (2008) state that there are more variances and differences within a generation than between generations. Literature also talks about cohorts as an alternative definition for generations, but some authors use the terms cohort and generation interchangeably (Parry and Urwin, 2011). Hernaus and Vokic (2014) use the term "generational cohort" as generic combining terminology.

It has been suggested that a generational cohort survives by maintaining a collective memory of its origins, struggles, historical and political events and its leading characters and ideologists (Parry and Urwin, 2011). The literature seems to propose that cohorts are presumed to exhibit differences in outcomes due to shared experiences, although it seems that generations must exhibit such differences in order to be considered as such (Parry and Urwin, 2011). This is the difference between a cohort and generation (Parry and Urwin, 2011).

For this study, it is paramount to define a generational cohort that is both real and also researchable. Parry and Urwin (2011) discuss the problematic nature of the generation categorization in research if the categorization is taken from a predefined category, as in that case the values, attitudes and behaviours are not always transferable and therefore, results must be interpreted carefully. This would support a deeper, more thorough definition of the generational cohort, which would be more accurate to the location, culture and values present among the millennial Finns using executive coaching in Helsinki. Accordingly, Parry and Urwin (2011) encourage future research to focus on minority, gender and national groups within cohorts, making the observations more accurate and building empirical knowledge on more subtle generational definitions.

In this study, the generational cohort is easily understood by the environment and culture in which the research is conducted. The natural setting of this study is Helsinki, and the millennials who are using or have an opportunity to use executive coaching, are mostly in a middle or higher managerial position or work as specialists in their field. Such positions most likely require a higher level of education. Based on the above, this study defines the cohort investigated as millennial Finns born between 1982 and 2000, who have been raised and educated within the Finnish culture, utilize executive coaching services for personal development and most likely have an academic degree and work in a managerial or specialist position. It is to be noted that in keeping with the viewpoints expressed by Mannheim (1952), Parry and Urwin (2011) and Weber and Urick (2017), the concept of generational cohort of millennials adopted in this study takes into account more features than just age and, therefore, aims to avoid the dangers of stereotype highlighted by these scholars.

This definition captures the essence of the characteristics of millennial Finns investigated in this study and separates them from other Finnish millennials who do not possess the same characteristics. Due to differences in salary, training and work environment, people falling outside the above definition would most likely have distinct differences in values, daily

life habits and, to a certain extent, in culture. For the purpose of this study, the unit of analysis is defined as follows:

UNIT OF ANALYSIS

Millennial generational
cohort representative

Has been raised and educated
within the Finnish culture

Born between 1982 and 2000

Academic degree
and
works in a managerial or specialist position
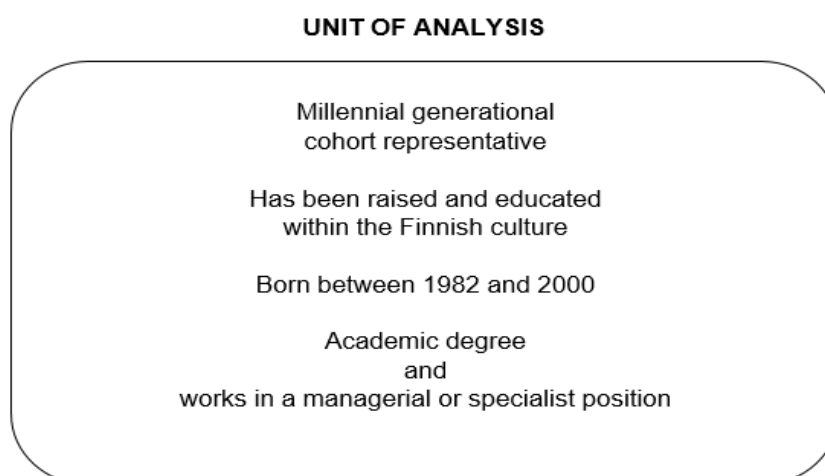
Figure 2.10.2. Unit of analysis.

The main conclusions of the literature review above include the ambiguity in defining millennials by their age group or birth year. Clearly, any definitions can be justified and as such must be accepted as valid. Additionally, the overall discussion on what defines a generation, whether previous, present or future, is also challenging. The popular literature, media and research have adopted various views. What should be added to this are again the cultural and national distinctions. For example, children and teenagers growing up during the Second World War have had very different experiences that have affected their and their children's generational cohort. An example is provided by Sweden and Finland, neighbouring countries, with similar egalitarian, individual and family-oriented values, similar ideas on how society works and a respect for the rule of law. However, Sweden was never in the war, and Swedish children never saw air bombings, death or famine, whereas in Finland life was the opposite. Massive amounts of people were sacrificed to defend the bombarded country and there was a shortage of everything. A similar example today would be the children in the war-torn city of Aleppo in Syria and those on the other side of the border in the beach destination of Antalya in Turkey.

When defining a generation, one should understand the blindness that can be associated with overly easy assumptions which do not take into account individual, cultural, national or other factors. These may have an immediate or future impact on values, comprehension of social norms and other life and society factors associated with a generation. Thus, all

discussions of generational cohorts must be conducted with care and taking into account all relevant limitations.

2.10.3   Characteristics of Generations

As already stated above, there are various challenges related to definitions of generations. For example, Hansen and Leuty (2012) note that many findings related to generational differences are contradictory and that age is a difficult factor which has not been carefully studied. However, they point out that research suggests that there are underlying generational differences that "belong" to the generation and are not biased by age. Some of these differences can be categorized by a major theme, such as defining a major invention in the period. While this section looks at the common characteristics of millennials, it is important to remember that these are hypotheses and assumptions and that when preparing this study, the author has made efforts to avoid overtly simplistic definitions of generations or millennials in order to ensure trustworthiness of the study.

There are four generations currently working in the workplace: baby boomers, generation x-ers, millennials and generation z-ers (Culpin et al. 2015). Baby boomers born between 1943 and 1960 (Parry and Urwin, 2011) represent the most mature generation.

Weston (2001) describes millennials as people who have an inner sense that the individual has the possibility to make a difference in the world. They are passionate about teamwork, they also have the "me" persona, and they want their contribution to the team to be noticed. Public recognition of accomplishment is valued. Baby boomers have a strong desire to be career oriented and success drives them. Baby boomers also appreciate lifelong learning and the new possibilities that education can provide. The youngest generation, generation z, has also entered the workplace. Generation z-ers are aged between 16 to 22 years (Henley, 2020) or born in 1995–2010 (Seemiller and Grace, 2017). To understand generation z-ers, Seemiller and Grace (2017) discuss from the American cultural perspective how this generation is shaped by technology, violence, mass shootings, volatile economy, cyber bullying, digital identity thefts and climate worries. They have also learned to cope and live with these issues. Despite the uncertainties and dark world outlook, generation z-ers display the belief that they can change the world and they have a "we" attitude, instead of solely focusing on themselves.

Generation x-ers, the generation that preceded millennials, had mobile phones, while millennials have Google and Facebook (Meister and Willyerd 2010). Meister and Willyerd (2010) also define some other broad traits: generation x is characterized by eclecticism,

self-reliance, free agents, work-life balance and independence, whereas millennials' characteristics include community service, cyber literacy, tolerance, diversity and confidence. Happiness for millennials, according to Zilca (2016), comes from self-improvement, stress reduction, and taking care of one's mental and psychical well-being. According to Zilca (2016), millennials are mostly secular and they do not seem to mention close relationships either with family or friends as something that they would appreciate.

McKinsey (2020) defines the characteristics of all four generations in the workplace as described in Table 2.10.3 (a) below:

	Baby boomer	Generation X	Generation Y (millennial)	Generation Z
Context	• Post-war • Dictatorship and repression in Brazil	• Political transition • Capitalism and meritocracy dominate	• Globalization • Economic stability • Emergence of internet	• Mobility and multiple realities • Social networks • Digital natives
Behaviour	• Idealism • Revolutionary • Collectivist	• Materialistic • Competitive • Individualistic	• Globalist • Questioning • Oriented to self	• Undefined ID • "Communaholic" • "Dialoguer" • Realistic
Consumption	• Ideology • Vinyl and movies	• Status • Brands and cars • Luxury articles	• Experience • Festivals and travel • Flagships	• Uniqueness • Unlimited • Ethical

Table 2.10.3 (a). Characteristics of four generations at the workplace (McKinsey, 2020).

However, in a key piece of Finnish sociological literature, Siltala (2013) attaches the following characteristics to Finns representing generation x-ers and millennials:

Generation X	Millennials
• Cynical • Distrusting • Search for safety • Neo-conservative • Traditional values • Based on facts • Distrusting towards relationships • Emotionally distant and disconnected • Self-destructive (where the self-destructive nature is explained by the need to perform decisions alone and under pressure).	• Trusting idealist • Self-confident individual • Ethic who beliefs in community • Trusting own experiences • Openness • Truthfulness • Social tolerance • Sharing of feelings • Team player • Not possessing leader capabilities

Table 2.10.3 (b). Characteristics of Finns representing generation x-ers and millennials (Siltala, 2013).

As the two above tables illustrate, the definitions of the generations include cultural dimensions and differences. For example, McKinsey's report is made from a North and South American perspective, as shown by the mention related to Brazil's situation, while Siltala's study relates to Finns. In Siltala's definition, millennials are characterised as "team players", whereas McKinsey defines them as "oriented to self". This contrast brings out again the ambiguities related to the characteristics of various generations, and also the impact of cultural differences.

DeVaney (2015) notes that millennials wish to make for a good fit in a good team. Likewise, Bennett et al. (2012) highlight that millennials are keen to teamwork and favour non-hierarchical organization structures, which in their study brought challenges to some more traditionally organized and managed organizations, but also opportunities for those adopting perhaps even more efficient working habits. However, it seems that the younger generations are prepared to leave the organisation if the work does not provide opportunities for freedom, work-life balance and autonomy, and they put faith in themselves (Cennamo and Gardner, 2008; Harrison et al., 2017). Furthermore, Hansen and Leuty (2012) indicate that millennials place more importance on social values. Bennett et al. (2012) mention social networking in their study and note how millennials, within the current workforce, are best equipped to utilize the opportunities provided by social networking in the digital age and are fluent and open in social media.

Cennamo and Gardner (2008) identify that millennials value freedom-related items more than generation x-ers and that younger generations place more importance on work status than older ones. Millennials are driven by their work environment and are likely to be optimistic and enjoy collective action with a highly social attitude (Smola and Sutton, 2002). The optimistic nature of millennials was however disputed in a later study by Wong et al. (2008). Their results showed that millennials are less optimistic than previous generations. This was explained by the fact that millennials had seen how the expectations and dreams of previous generations had not been attained and therefore they were also more worried about their own future.

An interesting discussion has been going on for a long time on the work ethics and motivation of millennials when compared with previous generations. De Hauw and De Vos (2010) examined how the recession in western economies since 2008 has made millennials change or compromise some of their work-related values, such as work-life balance. According to their study, millennials are ready to work more than they had previously planned. This however does not mean they would be comparable to generation x-ers (Parry

and Urwin, 2011), for example. De Hauw and De Vos (2010) indicated that millennials still have very high expectations of career and of what they have to do in their work, training and personal development, and their expectations in terms of financial compensation also remain high. They concluded that millennials are highly influenced by individual variables, optimism and careerism.

In turn, Smith and Galbraith (2012) discovered in their study on recruiting, retaining and motivating millennials that 88 percent of baby boomers and generation x-ers felt that people of those generations were keener on and more attached to their work. More interestingly, the same study asked the same question from millennials, and the result was that 90 percent felt the same way. In the same study, millennials felt that their generation was lazy (28 percent), self-centred (54 percent) and entitled (71 percent). Furthermore, 46 percent felt that millennials were being viewed by older generations in a negative manner, while only 22 percent said that they felt that older generations see them "somewhat positively". However, when these same questions were asked from the older generations, the results were much lower (9 percent, 20 percent and 49 percent in same order). It should be noted that this study was carried out in the United States and that local cultural factors may play a part. However, as Smith and Galbraith (2012) discuss, these feelings, impressions and valuations of the millennials do get carried to their workplace, and thus they affect how they perceive themselves as part of the work community.

As a summary, the characteristics of the four generations with respect to work life could be described as follows: baby boomers live to work, generation x-ers work to live, millennials seek work-life balance and generation z-ers seek ethical working environment and mobility. The discussion on the characteristics of millennials is disputable to certain extent, but clear underlying characteristics are present. However, one must also take into consideration the point in time when the surveys were made. For example, studies conducted during and after the financial crisis of 2008 may provide different views. The birth period of millennials extends from 1982 to 2000, i.e. over a period of almost two decades. Yet, it must be noted that it is a similar time period by length to other generation definitions. And as the previous generation periods, this period has likewise been under considerable change and confusion. People born as millennials, as in any other generation, continue to evolve, positively and negatively, as time passes, and this evolution is usually much more influenced by the living surroundings, daily life and culture. Of course, there are major local and global events that shape everyone, which can be, as Purhonen (2007) stated, traumas. However, subtle individual evolution takes place and occurs at the individual level and within the own cohort.

In the case of Finns, topics and events that have recently occupied the Finnish public discussion include the possibility of war after the annexation of Crimea by the neighbouring Russia, which occurred in 2014, data privacy (Lapin Kansa, 2020), public health care, stronger European Union after Brexit, the American presidency and Trump, the rise of populist politics, the rise of the ultra-right, global warming (Yle, 2020), the continuing rise of social injustice and our economic well-being/recession (Government Communications Department, 2020) and twisted artificial intelligence (Tekniikka&Talous, 2020). Lately, the COVID-19 crisis with its multitude of subtopics, including data privacy issues in analysing and controlling the spread of infections and the overall human rights and individual rights issues associated with the confinement and quarantine restrictions have dominated the Finnish public discussion (Yle, 2020). While the question whether these could be called traumatic events probably depends on very individual aspects, it can be justifiably argued that many of these issues have affected and still affect the thinking of many people in Finland. As a summary for the purpose of this study, it is important to understand the cohort of the millennial Finns we are interested in.

2.10.4   Coaching for Millennials

As discussed earlier, there are obstacles for millennial Finns to obtaining professional coaching services from their organisations in the extent they might require. Furthermore, certain companies have opted to provide group coaching, which is widely used in businesses and other organisations with positive results, to staff segments (Ward et al., 2014). In addition, manager-as-coach services are offered in organisations. A study by Kultalahti (2015) investigated the millennials' perceptions towards manager-as-coach practices. The results support the same findings raised by this study regarding the importance of relationship. Kultalahti (2015) quotes her investigation informant by paraphrasing "know me" (Kultalahti, 2015:77), which is stated by a millennial to her coaching manager. Knowing can be associated with openness as "knowing someone" is openness between two people. As also discussed in this study, it seems that openness is one key notion that the millennials are attached to and value. The building material for a relationship requires authenticity as well as a presence, enough time, i.e. not over a coffee break at work, and a dyad of people who are both motivated to have the relationship. Millennials tend to enjoy events and social gatherings that can act as platforms for relationship building, which would allow one to conclude that they know how to build relationships to some effect. Interestingly, Shrivastava et al. (2017) looked at three generations, i.e. baby boomers, generation x-ers and millennials co-working in the Finnish

workplace. They concluded that each generation had its own preferred working style that integrated with the leadership styles and that the leaders needed to identify generational differences in order to develop trust. They also argued that the attitude towards work was noticeably different and that affected the building of the relationship and trust. As is evident in their enjoyment of social activities and relationships, millennials consider openness an asset (Zopiatis et al., 2012). Nevertheless, in this discussion openness should not be confused with individuality. Retention of individuality is highly valued by millennials (Zopiatis et al., 2012). Individuality in connection with relationships could be translated into openness, as one's personal traits and behaviour should be evident i.e. openly on display and present while the relationship is forming and maturing. However, recent academic research provides clear evidence on how coaching millennials provides clear benefits for the organizations to retain and engage their millennial professionals by cultivating the employer-employee relationship through the alignment of psychological contract (Solomon and Van Coller-Peter, 2019).

2.11 Summary of Literature Review

The literature review offered many viewpoints on coaching, millennial generation and the Finnish culture.

2.11.1   Key domains of the literature review

In the following, the key domains are summarised and the overlapping areas are brought together. Figure 2.11.1 below shows the key domains of the literature review and their overlapping areas.
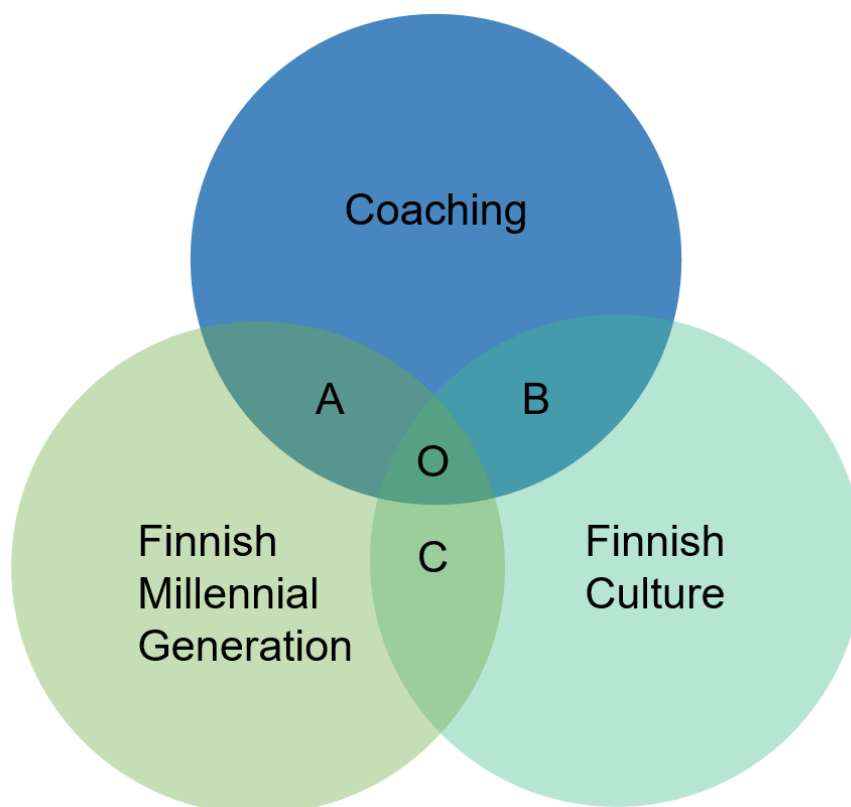
Figure 2.11.1. Overlapping areas of the literature review.

Coaching

Coaching definitions started to gain form two decades ago, and Kilburg's definition (2009) became popular and was used by practitioners and academia. Several other definitions were suggested thereafter, however the definition of De Haan and Duckworth (2012) was chosen for this study. This definition describes how elements from psychology are present in coaching, and this position has been supported by several authors, e.g. Gibbes (2007), Kilburg (2009), Garvey (2010) and Joo et al. (2012). Coaching is usually provided by a professional coach, or sometimes in organisations the manager is trained to perform the coaching (Joo et al., 2012). The literature review took a broad outlook on the coaching practice and theory, and as described by Lancer et al. (2016), there are various theoretical approaches to coaching.

The two key aspects of the literature review were coaching relationship and trust. As stated by Boyce et al. (2010), coaching relationship is essential and needed for building trust and common belief as well as achieving outcomes. Relationship is widely discussed in the literature by many authors who emphasise its importance,

e.g. Sperry (1993), Tobias (1996), Stern (2004), Gyllensten and Palmer (2007), Laske (2007), Armsby and Fillery-Travis (2009), Baron and Morin (2009), Kilburg (2009), Ladyshewsky (2009), Munro (2009), Meister and Willyerd (2010), Ensher and Murphy (2011), De Haan and Duckworth (2012), Joo et al. (2012), Passmore (2012), Grant (2013a) and Patti et al., (2015).

Trust within the coaching relationship is also widely discussed in literature and raised by many as its essential part, for example by Kampa-Kokesch and Anderson (2001), Stern (2004), Jones and Spooner (2006), De Haan (2013), Gyllensten and Palmer (2007), Boyce et al. (2010), Ladyshewsky (2010) and Grant (2013). In addition to trust, the literature raises issues such as age (Ensher and Murphy, 2011), gender, similarity vs. dissimilarity (Bozer et al., 2015), openness (Whitmore, 2009; Boyce et al., 2010; Collins 2012; Zopiatis et al., 2012), coaching skills (Baron et al., 2011) as possible factors contributing to the coaching relationship.

Finnish Millennial Generation

In the literature, the Millennial generation is described as trusting, self-confident, open, socially tolerant, team player, community believer, ethical, and not having leadership capabilities (Siltala, 2013). However, their behaviour is also described as self-oriented, questioning and globalist (McKinsey, 2020). Millennials have many expectations for work life in terms of career, work tasks, training and personal development, while their expectations in terms of financial compensation remain high (De Hauw and De Vos, 2010). The literature also shows that the concepts of generations and millennials are problematic (Purhonen, 2007) and that it is not clear whether the millennials' characteristics are related to age, identity or maturity (Weber and Urick 2017; Parry and Urwin 2011).

Finnish Culture

Finland is a collectivist society and Finns have strong uncertainty avoidance index, a collectivist approach (Hofstede, 2001) and high uncertainty avoidance index (House et al., 2004). Finns value trust and honesty, and Finland is one of the least corrupted societies in the world (Statistics Finland, 2020). A Finn often says that "trust must be earned", however Finns share a basic general feeling of trust towards one another (Statistics Finland, 2020). Finns lack social openness, i.e. Finns are private people, dislike small talk and openness and value personal space and

privacy (BBC, 2020). Silent moments among people and within a conversation are not taken negatively but are natural to Finns (InfoFinland, 2020). In addition, it is not common among Finns to show feelings openly (InfoFinland, 2020).

A: Overlap between Coaching and Finnish Millennial Generation

There have not been academic studies on coaching millennial Finns, and therefore this overlap is very interesting. This question is also made relevant by the fact that it is likely that coaching as a tool for self-development will be offered to millennial Finns. As also noted in the literature review, academically educated millennials have career goals and aspirations for personal success, and thus they are expected to utilize coaching if it is offered to them.

B: Overlap between Coaching and Finnish Culture

Based on the literature review, it is easy to see that requirements for an effective coaching relationship and typical traits of Finnish culture are in conflict: while openness is required in coaching, the Finnish culture appreciates privacy and silence. On the other hand, the literature review has shown that trust is essential for the coaching relationship. Against this background, the relevant question is whether Finns are ready to trust the coach to a degree that allows for self-exploration and personal development.

C: Overlap between Millennial Generation and Finnish Culture

Millennial Finns have been the subject to only a few academic studies (Kultalahti and Viitala, 2014). However, millennial Finns are a popular subject in non-academic periodicals and books (Mellanen and Mellanen, 2020). Based on limited number of studies, it seems that genuine desire to study millennial Finns is lacking among Finnish academics.

O: Overlap between Coaching, Millennial Generation and Finnish Culture

Peculiarities of the Finnish culture (quietness, difficulties in openness and in expressing feelings) and characteristics of millennials (open, socially tolerant, community players) seem contradictory and complementary. As evidenced in the literature review, coaching requires a good relationship, trust and openness. However, the literature does not provide answers on how these elements, i.e.

coaching, the Finnish culture and millennial Finns co-exist or support or undermine each other.

2.11.2   Conceptual framework

The literature review provided evidence to support the conceptual framework which brings together the network of interlinked concepts that combine to provide a comprehensive understanding of a phenomenon (Jabareen, 2009). As Miles and Huberman (1994) state, the conceptual framework lays out the key factors, constructs, or variables and presumes relationships among them (Miles and Huberman, 1994). The coach and the coachee, both defined in Figure 2.11.2 below, have been discussed in the literature review. Furthermore, in the middle of Figure 2.11.2 is the event itself, i.e. the coaching which takes form of a coaching contract:
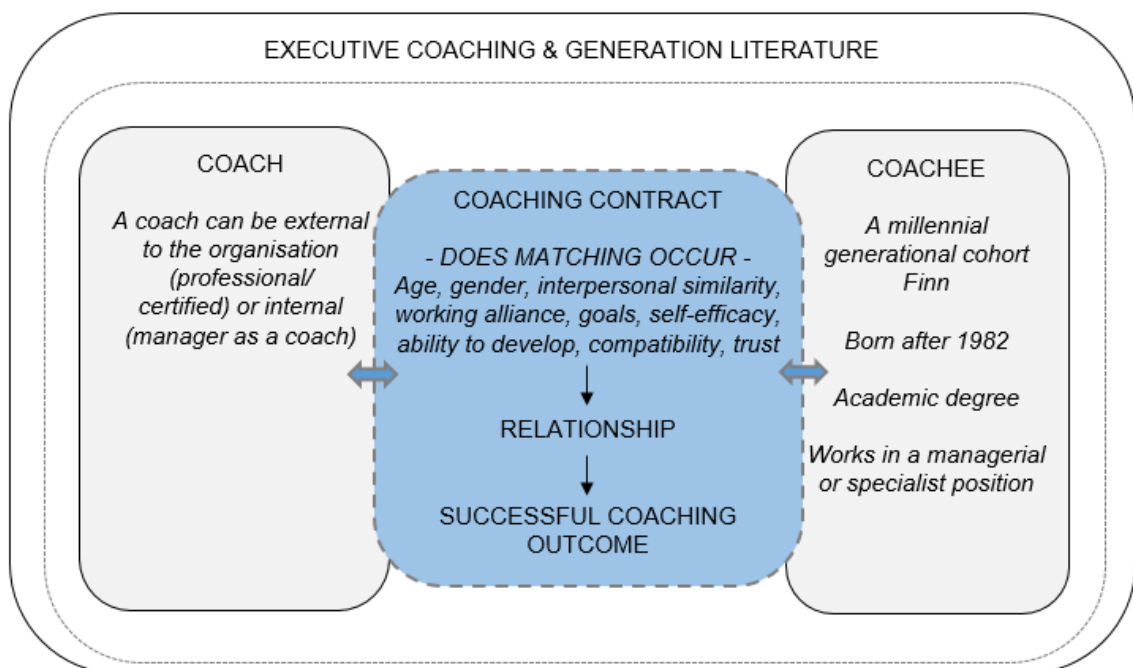
Figure 2.11.2. Conceptual framework.

The literature review brought up interesting questions in relation to the research question ("How to create conditions for a successful coaching relationship between a coach and a millennial Finn?"). It brought to light several aspects worthy of deeper investigation in this research. How is the coaching dyad formulated in Finland? What facilitates, supports, and nurtures a successful working coaching relationship? How is this all understood and addressed in the Finnish culture and in the context of millennial Finn coachees? How is the

coaching industry working in Finland in general and in relation to a millennial Finn? The fact that there are no doctorate-level studies on coaching of millennial Finns supported the motivation to conduct this study.

The process was long and was conducted with interest, fascination and academic rigour. The researcher attempted to present the results in as unbiased and honest a manner as possible.

It became evident already during the research journey that the body of knowledge is growing and evolving. Furthermore, it is not always growing in the assumed direction, but conflicting results may emerge, which require more investigation. This literature review attempted to build an "ecosystem" of the literature, i.e. a complex network or interconnected pieces of information. It is vital to look at it with wide horizon, not only to at something that looks attractive but to look far and near and without prejudice. This manner of observing, learning and analysing increases complexity, which means that it can be challenging to draw clear conclusions.

The literature review provided the foundation for the interview protocol and the overall foundation of this study. The challenge was evaluating how to take the evolving literature into account in the study. This was done in a reflective manner during the process. Thus, the overall knowledge on the subject area increased, but without re-directing or manipulating this research and its natural progression.

The coaching research is moving at a fast pace, as discussed earlier. This research journey took several years as intended and as the doctorate program was designed, which meant that the literature reviewed at beginning of the journey also commanded a revisit. The revisit also provided an opportunity to connect some of the latest studies with the previously covered analysis. Through reflection, the following chapters provide the linkage between the analysis and literature.

3 Methodology

3.1 Introduction

As stated earlier, this study aims to answer the following question: "How to create conditions for a successful coaching relationship between a coach and a millennial Finn?"

This chapter describes the ontological and epistemological considerations underpinning the study, the theoretical perspective as well as the methodology and methods chosen, together with justifications for the choices made.

In more detail, the theoretical and methodological underpinnings of the study could be described as a four-step process as shown in Figure 3.1 below (adapted from Crotty, 1998). These steps will be discussed in the following.
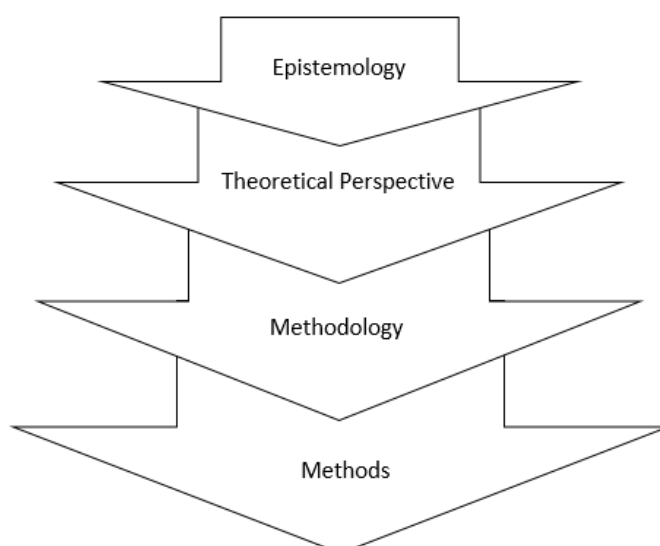
Figure 3.1. The four key elements of the research process (adapted from Crotty, 1998).

3.1.1 Ontology and Epistemology

Ontology is concerned with 'what is' and explores the nature of existence and the structure of reality (Crotty, 1998). The ontological position examines whether the social world is regarded as something external to social actors or as something that people are in the process of fashioning (Bell et al., 2019). Two main contrasting ontological standpoints are

objectivism and *subjectivism* (Bell et al. 2019). Objectivism implies that social phenomena confront us as external facts beyond our reach or influence and have an objective reality independent of our role as an observer (Bell et al., 2019). Objectivist ontology holds that meaning and meaningful reality exist regardless of any consciousness and experience. An objectivist ontology acknowledges a reality independent of the senses that is accessible to the researcher's tools and theoretical speculations and argues that the real world is independent from us and exists 'out there' and is made of structures and objects that have identifiable cause and effect relationships (King and Horrocks, 2010; Miles and Huberman 1994, Crotty, 1998). On the contrary, *subjectivism* implies that our knowledge comes from interaction in the social world, in other words, social phenomena are created from the perceptions of social actors. For a subjectivist, entities are socially constructed products: labels that individuals use in order to make sense of their experiences (Bell et al., 2019).

The second step to consider in research is the epistemological standpoint, i.e. how do we know what we know or what counts as sound knowledge. The ontological approach serves as the background for the epistemological approach: a certain epistemology is underpinned by a certain ontology. Epistemology is a key factor in any research and will determine how it is conducted (Cassell and Symon, 2004; King and Horrocks 2010; Bell et al. 2019). It tells the researcher's position on what is and what should be regarded as acceptable knowledge production (Miles and Huberman,1994; Crotty, 1998; Blaikie, 2007; Bell et al., 2019). Therefore, epistemology is the theory of knowledge, and it follows logically from ontology, the understanding of what reality is (Bell et al., 2019). The main epistemological standpoints are *positivism* and *interpretivism* (or *social constructionism*).

Positivism holds that the appropriate way to gather data is to observe phenomena directly and measure them with surveys and other instruments. In other words, when adopted in social sciences, positivism attempts to conduct research with the same rules and procedures as natural sciences, while adopting a deductive logic. Positivists gather data to test hypotheses and use them to explain social phenomena (Bell et al., 2019).

In accordance with interpretivism and social constructionism, social reality is regarded as the product of its habitants, a world that is interpreted by the meanings that the participants produce and reproduce together, as a necessary part of their everyday activities (Blaikie 2010:99). Interpretivism and social constructionism seek to *understand* human behaviour instead of explaining it based on quantitative results in the manner of positivism (Bell et al., 2019). Interpretivism requires the scientist to grasp the subjective meaning of social action: it attempts to understand and not to explain social phenomena. Interpretivism and social

constructionism are concerned with the "how" and "why" of social action (Bell et al., 2019), and the researcher is expected to grasp the subjective meaning of social action.

It rejects generic direct explanations and, instead, maintains a viewpoint that the world is diverse and unstructured (Miles and Huberman, 1994; King and Horrocks, 2010). Considering the exploratory and novel character of the research question, this choice seemed justified. The researcher also felt that the relative novelty of the field of executive coaching supported this choice as allowing the study more flexibility than objectivism and positivism.

Social constructionism invites the researcher to consider the ways in which social reality is an ongoing accomplishment of social actors rather than something external to them (Bell et al., 2019). The discourse refers to the way stories, statements and the way the interviewee talks will produce a particular version of events (King and Horrocks, 2010). Language has a strong meaning in social constructionism, and language constructs a particular version of reality (King and Horrocks, 2010). In accordance with social constructionist/interpretivist epistemology, social reality is an ongoing accomplishment of social actors rather than something external to them (Bell et al., 2019): meaning is not discovered but constructed, and for a social constructionist, subjects and objects emerge as partners in the generation of meaning (Crotty, 1998). In addition, the social constructionist viewpoint holds that every text, or every interview, has an indefinite number of possible interpretations, and no one of these interpretations can be seem as superior to others (Cassell and Symon, 2004).

3.1.2 Theoretical Perspective

The theoretical perspective describes the philosophical stance that lies behind the chosen methodology. It provides the context for the research process, while grounding its logic and criteria (Crotty, 1998). One key element of any study is the assumptions embedded in the research approach, and in order to justify such assumptions, the theoretical perspective of the study must be explained in detail.

This study investigates the coach-coachee relationship, which results from interaction between two people. In keeping with subjectivist ontology, the study adopts the approach that nothing is ready, there is no ready reality, but the coaching relationship is a product of people engaging between each other. In addition, in accordance with social constructionist/interpretivist epistemology, the way in which people come to know about the coach-coachee relationship is through their social interaction in the real world.

Taking into account the suggested exploratory nature of the intended research, the relative newness of academic approach to coaching, and the aim to understand interpretations of those involved in the coaching relationship and its outcome, the subjectivist ontology and social constructionist epistemology seemed justified.

3.1.3 Qualitative and Inductive Approach

One of the key choices that had to be made was between qualitative and quantitative approach. According to Cassell and Symon (2004), qualitative methods have achieved increased prominence in the academic community since the 1990s. Qualitative methodology is nowadays well approved and accepted in organizational research, since it is able to discover hidden motivations and values and, through this, gain a deeper understanding on the research subject. Cassell and Symon (2004) also argue that qualitative epistemological perspectives bring out a promise of new insights by adopting a critical stance on accepted practices. However, qualitative studies have dominated coaching research, while the amount of quantitative studies has increased. Granted, the dominance of qualitative studies might result from the relatively young age of the discipline and also from lack of resources, since quantitative studies require a large amount of data which is often only available to large institutions. Still, taking into account the epistemological and ontological underpinnings of this study, a qualitative approach was chosen.

The next choice had to be made between inductive and deductive approach. In inductive research, theory and generalisations are built based on a large amount of data obtained from few sources (Hair et al., 2011). In other words, the gathered data are analysed inductively to offer insights into the research subject and to build a theory, instead of testing prior hypotheses deductively (Creswell, 2009). The logic of inductive research strategy is described in Figure 3.1.3 below (adapted from Blaikie 2010:84):

Aim	To establish universal generalizations to be used as pattern explanations
Start	Accumulate observations or data
Finish	Produce generalizations
Explain	Use the "laws" as patterns to further observations

Figure 3.1.3. Logic for inductive research (adapted from Blaikie, 2010: 84).

In the inductive method, the research moves from individual to general and generalizations are drawn from true statements (Blaikie, 2010). When an inductive stance is adopted, the research will result in a theory, which explains the studied phenomenon. In keeping with the interpretivist and social constructionist viewpoint adopted for this study, inductive research strategy was deemed appropriate. It also seemed the natural choice, since exploratory research design leans more towards qualitative techniques, although it is possible to use quantitative approaches as well (Hair et al., 2011). Due to the nature of the subject, qualitative technique was chosen after analysing and focusing on the research subject and goal, where the "relationship", "matching" and "perceptions and understandings of relationships" were explored. The nature of the research question was a further reason for selecting an inductive, exploratory, qualitative approach: to elicit rich exploratory data on a subject which is as yet little known.

3.1.4 Methodology

Choice of methodology is the rationale behind the choice of methods: it will impact this choice and link the methods to desired outcomes (Crotty, 1998). Methods of any study should reflect the methodological assumptions, which in turn should follow first from the ontological and second from the epistemological assumptions. Therefore, there must be a clear coherence between these choices. In addition, as emphasized by Saunders and Rojon (2014), when exploring a complex subject such as coaching, it is particularly important to articulate the methods well.

The first choice as regards methodology was made between quantitative and qualitative approach. A qualitative choice was easy to make as it seemed natural, reflecting the

subjectivist and interpretivist/social constructionist approaches that were adopted due to the nature of the research question. Qualitative methods also usually imply the inductive approach, and in keeping with the interpretivist/social constructionist position, in which meaning is constructed in interaction between human actors, the study was begun with no clear hypotheses, but instead being framed around a central research question. Thus, the focus of the study was on generation of theory (through induction) instead of testing previous theories (through deduction). When the choice for a qualitative study was made, the next step was to decide on the protocol for analysis. The chosen analysis methodology was framework analysis, which is a sub-category of qualitative thematic analysis. The framework analysis will be described in more detail in section 5.1.6.

3.1.5 Methods

The methods chosen to gather the data were two kinds of interviews: focus groups and in-depth, semi-structured interviews. This choice was made while taking into account the ontological (subjectivist) and epistemological (interpretivist/social constructionist) perspectives and also the preference for a qualitative study. When arranging both types of interviews, care was taken to create a relaxed atmosphere and to facilitate free flow of information in order to ensure richness of data. The practical arrangements related to the focus groups and the semi-structured, in-depth interviews are described in detail in section 3.6.

3.1.6 Practical Considerations and Values

In any study, practical considerations are also significant, since they often dictate how the study must be conducted. Practical considerations may include the limitations affecting the study, such as obtaining access to informants, such as interviewees, time constraints and the researcher's capabilities. In addition, it is possible and even likely that there are large differences in the interviewees' experiences, which is only natural for qualitative research. However, in keeping with the key principles of qualitative research, disharmonies and discrepancies in the interviewees' views ensure the richness and thickness of data and enhance its trustworthiness.

One practical consideration was also the geographical scope of the study. For example, attention was paid to the fact that coaching is a relatively new concept in the Finnish business landscape. In addition, it was also taken into consideration that the Finnish coaching industry is located mainly in the Helsinki metropolitan area.

Since this study followed subjectivist ontology and interpretivist/social constructionist epistemology, it was expected and accepted that the personal values of both the interviewer and the interviewees would have an impact on the study. However, in qualitative research it is important that the study displays reflexivity, which means that the researcher must be open about the hopes, aims, expectations and attitudes he is displaying (Bryman, 2012). Along the research journey, the researcher ensured that such personal reflections were recorded and included in the analysis in a transparent and consistent manner.

Values refer to the feelings or beliefs of the researcher, and it is a fact that many points in the research, such as the choice of the research area, the formulation of the research question, the choice of methods and the analysis and interpretation of data, are impacted by such values. In general, there is growing recognition that it is not feasible to totally eradicate these values from academic research (Bell et al. 2019). On the contrary, interpretivist/social constructionist epistemology holds that the researcher is an active member in the meaning-making and engages with the people being studied, developing equal and emancipatory relationships with them (Bell et al., 2019).

The value of a qualitative study does not lie in its objectivity but in its trustworthiness. In order to ensure a good level of this, these value factors were recognised, discussed and addressed throughout the study. In other words, the underlying values affecting the research process were recognized, addressed and managed, and their possible influence was made clear to the readers (Bell et al., 2019). In accordance with the social constructionist/interpretivist epistemology, knowledge comes from interaction in the social world and the researcher is closely involved in the interaction (Cassell and Symon, 2004), and this a central tenet and an accepted fact of this study.

3.2 Research Design

A research design sets out to answer three basic questions: "what will be studied, why it will be studied and how it will be studied" (Blaikie, 2010), and it provides a framework for the collection and analysis of data as well as reflects decisions about the priority being given to a range of dimensions of the research process (such as causality and generalization) (Bryman, 2012). While research design may seem similar to research methods, it is important to keep these two concepts separate, since research method simply refers to a technique for collecting data (Bryman, 2012). Research design provides a clear structure, a plan and an overall strategy of investigation in order to provide answers to the research question. Figure 3.2 below illustrates the research design of the study.
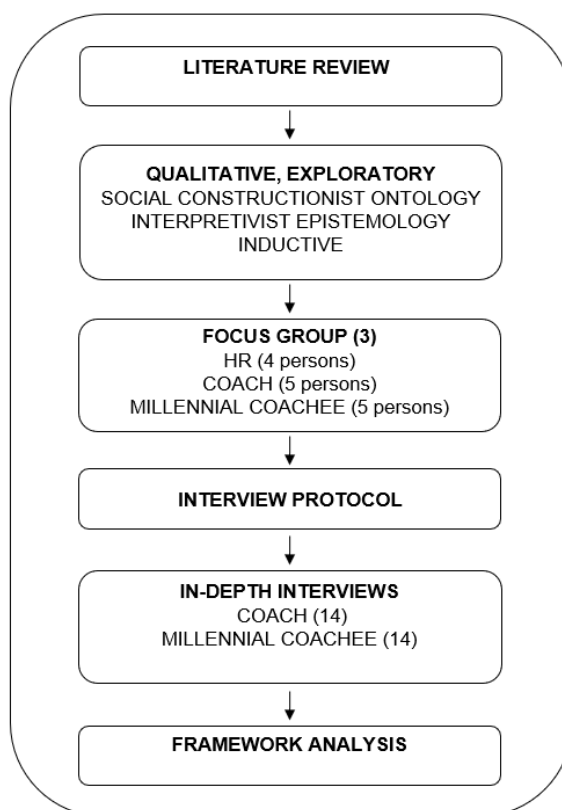
Figure 3.2. Research design of the study.

According to Figure 3.2 above, the literature review provided the foundation for the study. It elicited the key themes, ideas and concepts that were then developed further. The literature review also revealed new research questions, i.e. questions that had not been answered fully or convincingly in previous studies.

The next step in the research process was assembling the three focus groups with HR directors, coaches and coachees, which were used to refine the key themes found in the literature review. The focus groups served as the primary tool for data collection, providing the key material for the preparation of the interview protocol, which was then used in the semi-structured, in-depth interviews of coaches and coachees. After the transcription of the interviews, the study proceeded to the framework analysis through indexing of key themes.

3.3 Research Sample

Discussions of research in qualitative research often focus on a concept called "purposive sampling" (Bell et al., 2019). When conducting purposive sampling, the researcher does not seek participants on a random basis but aims to find informants that are as relevant as possible for the research question. This of course means that this kind of sampling does not

allow generalisation of the results to the entire population. Another challenging question is the sample size. In qualitative research, there are no rules on which sample size will be sufficient. On the other hand, the size should allow for data or theoretical saturation to occur, but on the other hand, a too large sample may produce so much material that it cannot be studied effectively. In sum, what is critical is that whatever the sample size, data or theoretical saturation is justified and explained and that any generalisations made are not inappropriate (Bell et al., 2019).

The above principles were kept in mind when designing the research sample for this study. To begin with, the three focus groups gathered for the study consisted of certified coaches, coachees representing millennial Finns and HR directors. The desired sample size was five informants for each session. This aim was achieved with respect to focus groups of coaches and millennial Finns, but not for the HR director's focus group, in which one informant had to cancel.

The HR directors selected for the focus group had procured coaching services in their organisations or selected coaches for this purpose. The organisations in the sample were large and reputable Finnish corporations and as such were substantial employers in Finland. All participants of the HR directors' focus group were women. This was expected, as most of the Finnish HR directors are women.

The coach focus group consisted of five certified, experienced coaches who had coached millennial Finns. All coaches were highly experienced coaches. They have had a substantial career in coaching, and they have also written coaching-related articles. The coach focus group consisted of four women and one man, reflecting the women-dominated industry in Finland.

The coachee focus group consisted of five participants, who all represented millennial Finns in accordance with the definition adopted in this study (born between 1982 and 2000). The group consisted of four women and one man. They all worked in managerial or specialist positions and held an academic degree.

The sample of semi-structured, in-depth interviews included 28 informants: 14 coaches and 14 coachees. The aim was to include in the sample coaches who had had millennials as customers. Significant challenges were met in finding such coaches, but the aim was eventually achieved with the help of the ICF Finland, businesses and other coach networks.

3.4 Overview of Information Needed

According to Bloomberg and Volpe (2019), information types required to answer a qualitative research question fall into four categories: contextual, demographic, perceptual and theoretical information. The study was started with a comprehensive literature review in order to assess what was already known regarding the topic of the study. Information from the literature review was also used to justify the methodological choices made, obtain elements to build the conceptual framework for the study, provide support for interpretation and analysis and, in conclusion, guide the conclusions and recommendations. This provided the *theoretical information* required. Contextual and demographic information was used in order to build a representative and relevant sample from informants in the Finnish coaching landscape, and finally the focus groups and the interviews provided the relevant perceptual information: the informants' perceptions related to coaching.

3.5 Data Collection

Focus groups and interviews were the two data collection methods used for the study. This choice was made for reasons of validity, reliability and trustworthiness (Bell et al., 2019; Bloomberg and Volpe, 2019) and to develop a deeper understanding of the coaching phenomenon from different perspectives. The researcher felt that combining these two methods would help portray the coaching phenomenon in all its complexity: focus groups would offer a group context, where the informants would perhaps be encouraged to challenge each other, while intimate interviews would offer deeper insights. When choosing the methods, the Finnish consensus-oriented mentality and fast adaptability (Hofstede, 2001) was also a key consideration. This consensus-orientation means that Finns may not be as eager to challenge each other in a focus group session but may instead feel intimidated and choose silence over revealing deeper thoughts. This is why the researcher felt it important that both methods, focus groups and interviews, were included in the data collection phase.

3.5.1 Focus Groups

As noted earlier, the focus group method was employed in this study in order to refine the broad themes and issues that were found in the literature review. The focus group method is a form of group interview in which there are several participants in addition to the moderator/facilitator. The background of focus groups is in the investigation of consumer motives and product preferences, and the first "focus group interviews" took place in the

1950s in this context. However, their popularity has increased and today they are used for a variety of purposes ranging from marketing to politics, and they entered the field of academic research in the 1980s (Steyaert and Bouwen, 2004; Kvale and Brinkmann, 2009). This is in fact not surprising, since studying group contexts, where people meet, talk and work, is probably the most natural method for gathering knowledge about social events and human interaction. Gathering in groups is a natural way for humans to discuss "what is going on and how to make sense of it" (Steyaert and Bouwen, 2004:140). The focus group practitioner is interested in how individuals discuss certain issues as a group: how people respond to each other's views and build up a view out of the interaction (Bell et al., 2019).

This approach brings us very close to the principles of social constructionism and meaning-making, the epistemological viewpoint adopted in this study. The benefit of a focus group is that it gives the opportunity to hear different accounts or voices at the same time on the same phenomenon. It is an opportunity to catch a range of voices in a condensed manner, and the group situations make the differences and similarities between the participants visible in a dynamic way: the group setting reveals the natural complexity and diversity of social life. Another benefit is that the researcher as the moderator is involved in the meaning-making and becomes part of the discussion in a living social context (Steyaert and Bouwen, 2004; Bell et al., 2019). Therefore, the focus group seems as natural choice for this study.

A focus group usually consists of six to ten participants and a moderator, and it is characterised by a non-directive style of interviewing. The moderator or facilitator is expected to guide the group session without being too intrusive (Bell et al., 2019). The primary purpose of the focus group interview is to obtain a large variety of viewpoints on the subject matter (Kvale and Brinkmann, 2009). Focus groups also offer a rich amount of data and are therefore appropriate for data collection (Silverman, 2011a and 2011b). In focus groups, emphasis is put on interaction within the group and joint construction of meaning. Focus groups allow participants' perspectives to be revealed in ways that are different from individual interviews (Bell et al., 2019).

The role of the moderator is to introduce the discussion topics and to facilitate the interchange through creating a permissive atmosphere in which the informants feel comfortable to raise conflicting viewpoints. Due to their nature, focus groups are suitable for exploratory and social constructionist studies, since the lively atmosphere encourages the informants to express emotional viewpoints that would not necessarily be revealed in one-to-one interviews. In addition, in a group atmosphere, the informants may feel more

comfortable to discuss even taboo topics. In a lively atmosphere, informants are also more likely to argue with each other and challenge each other's views. It is, therefore, important that the moderator maintains control of the discussion (Kvale and Brinkmann, 2009; Flick, 2011; Bell et al., 2019), as a lively discussion of several participants may also be challenging to transcribe (Kvale and Brinkmann, 2009).

Focus groups were chosen for this study in order to elicit fresh viewpoints on a subject that was not widely researched. The researcher felt that this choice was a good way to explore this subject and to investigate whether the broad subjects revealed in the literature review also appeared in the chosen context. Since all the participants of the focus groups were Finnish, this was also a good method to examine the Finnish dimension of the research question.

3.5.2 Interviews

Interviewing is undoubtedly the most widely used method of qualitative data collection in research (King and Horrocks, 2010). It requires subjective interpretation from the interviewer, but on the other hand also allows the interviewer and interviewee to create a state of rapport where deep knowledge and understanding on the research subject can be obtained (King, 2004; Kvale and Brinkmann, 2009; King and Horrocks, 2010; Hair et al., 2011). There are several different types of interviews, such as focus groups, unstructured interviews, semi-structured interviews, intensive interviews, in-depth interviews, focused interviews, group interviews, oral history interviews and life history interviews (Bell et al. 2019). These can be carried out to investigate different types of research questions, and this variety makes interviews one of the most flexible methods available (Cassell and Symon, 2004). The two interview types selected for this study were focus groups and semi-structured in-depth interviews.

Individual semi-structured in-depth interviews are a suitable means of eliciting information: they are a powerful tool when the focus of inquiry is narrow and the interviewees represent a clearly defined group with an already known context (Crabtree and Miller, 1999). The goal of the individual semi-structured interview is to create themes and narratives (Crabtree and Miller, 1999). Thus, performing individual semi-structured interviews provided a platform for exploring and understanding the coach-coachee relationship. The interview process can also hold inside *probing*, which allows the interviewer to elicit greater detail of information from the interviewees (King, 2004; King and Horrocks, 2010). Probes were used in this research, as shown in the interview protocol in Appendix B.

In order to be successful, the research topic must be seen from the perspective of the interviewee (Cassell and Symon, 2004), and whilst performing the interviewing process, subjective views of the researcher will be brought to analysis.

The interviews were designed to elicit as rich information as possible. The interview protocol and the interview questions were designed to ensure free flow of information in the form of real-life narratives or concrete examples from the informants' lives and experiences. Open-ended questions were preferred in the protocol, in the vein of "Please describe, based on your own experiences, what are the qualities of a good coach". Kvale and Brinkmann (2009) describe this kind of research interview as a "semi-structured life world interview", with the purpose of "obtaining descriptions of the life world of the interviewee in order to describe the meaning of the described phenomena" (Kvale and Brinkmann; 2009:3). They also see interviewing as "social production of knowledge", a description which is in perfect harmony with the social constructionist approach adopted in this study. The process of knowing through interviews is thus an intersubjective and social process in which the interviewer and the interviewee co-construct knowledge (Kvale and Brinkmann, 2009).

The success of the interview is also largely dependent on the relationship, i.e. building rapport between the interviewer and the interviewee (Kvale and Brinkmann, 2009; King and Horrocks, 2010). Selection of the time and the place of the interview are important factors that have an impact on the establishment of good rapport.

3.6 Data Analysis

After gathering the data through the in-depth interviews, the next step in the research process was the qualitative data analysis. The principles of relativist/interpretivist ontology and social constructionist epistemology that were chosen for this study were also followed in the data analysis section. These principles were also evident in the manner how the data were organised, analysed and interpreted, in order to build a theory in an inductive manner.

There has been a multitude of different approaches applied to qualitative data analysis, such as ethnographic accounts, life histories, narrative analysis, content analysis, conversation analysis, discourse analysis, grounded theory and thematic analysis, to name just a few (Ritchie et al., 2014). This multitude of approaches reflects the fact that unlike in the field of quantitative data analysis, there are no rigid and well-specified rules. In fact, variation of methods in qualitative data analysis reflects the principle of family resemblance: many methods share various similar features and can thus be classified in various ways.

Basically, the underlying principle of these various traditions is that they treat and organise data in different manner (Ritchie et al., 2014).

In general, the data analysis is an interesting and challenging part of any qualitative research. As Ritchie et al. argue, "it requires a mix and systematic searching, a blend of inspiration and diligent detection" (2014:270). However, as Bloomberg and Volpe note (2019), this part of the research process often make researchers feel overwhelmed, and it does not help that there is a lack of agreed-on approaches for analysing qualitative material. In similar vein, Ritchie et al. (2014) deplore that in the tradition of qualitative research, the analysis stage has largely been neglected in the descriptions of research methods, and it has appeared that the discoveries fall from evidence in a haphazard manner. However, as the data analysis is a critical stage of any qualitative process, it is important that analysis process is described in detail and is well justified. This is by no means and easy task. As Ritchie et al. (2014) argue, descriptions of data analysis have become more detailed, but it is still the case that such descriptions concentrate more on the "management" of data than on the intellectual processes involved.

According to Ritchie et al. (2014), the two key processes in qualitative data analysis are data management and abstraction and interpretation. They go on to describe the data analysis process as follows: in data management, raw data are reviewed, labelled and sorted, while in abstraction and interpretation, key dimensions of the data are identified, categories are developed and the range and diversity of each phenomenon is mapped. To conclude, links between categories and patterns in the data are mapped. Bloomberg and Volpe summarize this process as "transforming raw data into meaningful findings" and "bringing order, structure and meaning to the masses of data collected" (2019:231).

The first step in making the data "manageable" is familiarisation with the data. The researcher immerses himself with the data, gains an overview of the content and identifies the subjects of interest. Thereafter, "labels" (or "codes", "concepts", "categories" and "themes") are developed in order to organise the data. The following steps include reviewing data extracts, summarising and displaying the data, and describing and explaining the findings, the ultimate aim being building a theory based on the findings. Miles and Huberman describe this analysis process graphically: "Just naming and classifying what is out there is usually not enough. We need to understand the patterns, the recurrences, the *whys*" (1994:67). While human behaviour is not governed by laws in the way that physical world is, nor it is chaotic. Thus, the aim of the qualitative data analysis is to expose such regularities in human behaviour and explain them. Bloomberg and Volpe concur with this,

arguing that in qualitative data analysis, the researcher attempts to "summarize all the collected data in a dependable and accurate manner" (2019:231).

These traditional steps of qualitative data analysis were also followed in this study. Typically for a qualitative study, the key challenge throughout the data collection and analysis was the sheer amount of raw data. The formal process of data analysis began by transcribing the interviews verbatim. Thereafter, the transcriptions were read and re-read until common themes slowly started to appear. As the process of indexing the transcripts proceeded, new themes emerged while some of the previous themes were merged. At the same time, some of the themes started to seem irrelevant and were abandoned.

The indexing process fragmented the interviews into separate categories, while the analysis phase pieced these elements back together to reconstruct an integrated interpretation. Overall, the aim of the researcher was to produce a cluster of themes that are linked closely together. It must also be taken into account that typically qualitative data analysis does not follow a rigid path but is iterative by nature. According to Ritchie et al. (2014:292), there needs to be an "iterative movement between the original data and the conceptualisation, abstraction and interpretation derived from them". It is also good to bear in mind that in fact, the data analysis stage cannot be rigidly separate from the entire research journey. Bloomberg and Volpe (2019) emphasize that while there are stages that could be formally described as the data analysis, in fact the analysis is ongoing and iterative part of the research process.

In accordance with this iterative principle, the linkages and interrelationships between various themes in this study were studied in an iterative manner, and a graphic illustration of these relationships was produced in the form of a diagram. Steps in this analysis process were not separate but interlocked. Finally, the findings made in the analysis were developed into conclusions and recommendations for future research.

3.6.1 Notes, Transcripts and Translation

Since the beginning of the study, the researcher adopted an exploratory approach to inquiry and in accordance with qualitative principles, took a habit of writing notes to obtain material for future research. This same approach was also followed during the three focus group sessions, and these notes were used in preparing the interview protocol.

All focus groups and in-depth interviews were conducted in Finnish, which was the informants' mother language. This decision was made in order to ensure that the informants were as free as possible to express themselves in their native language. This method is not

uncommon in Finland. Nowadays, many dissertations in Finnish universities, even if the interviews are made in Finnish, are written in English to support their wider availability for English-speaking audiences. Lately, Aalto University Executive Education DBA graduate Pauliina Airaksinen-Aminoff (2018) made interviews in Finnish and had them translated to English for her English-language DBA. Likewise, Kultalahti (2015) gathered her material from Facebook in Finnish and wrote her dissertation in English. In addition, Professor Henrikki Tikkanen from Aalto University, who has been a lead instructor for more than 20 graduate students, confirmed that interviewing in Finnish and translating into English is the current practice, further emphasizing the importance of the original mother language and expression for the purpose of qualitative research.

Thus, Finnish language was chosen as many Finns have a limited skill of English language.

All focus groups and interviews were recorded with the permission of the informants. The interviews were transcribed in full in Finnish by the researcher. Transcription was made with as much accuracy as possible by including even non-verbal expressions, such as laugh, pauses and interruptions (Bell et al., 2019). Non-verbal expressions, such as laughter, were included in the transcripts in parentheses. For confidentiality purposes, all names and personal data were redacted to ensure that informants cannot be recognised from the transcription. Each of the informants were assigned separate files, and all these files were named and numbered.

In keeping with the principles of the social constructionist perspective, the transcription is also a part of the research and, therefore, it was important that the researcher performed this work himself. As Bloomberg and Volpe note (2019), transcribing your own data is a method of immersing yourself in the data and becoming familiar with it. This same knowledge would not be achieved by reading transcriptions made by someone else. Furthermore, when listening to the tapes and making the transcriptions, the most relevant themes and topics already started to appear, which gave the analysis phase a good start.

In the analysis phase, key passages of the transcriptions were then translated into English, while trying to keep the translation as close to the original Finnish language as possible. In this work, maintaining the originality of the message was given priority over grammatical correctness. The translations were made by the researcher but validated by an experienced professional translator.

3.7 Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations (Remenyi et al., 2011) were of critical importance to the researcher, and the ethical process was undertaken in accordance with the ethics guidelines of the University of Reading. All informants in the focus groups and interviews were given a written form, which explained the study's purpose, how their anonymity would be protected and how the data would be stored and eventually destroyed. The information sheet and the consent form is provided in Appendix D. It was emphasised that participation in the study was completely voluntary, and that the participant was free to decline to answer and stop the process at any time. All participants signed these forms. Secondly, the informants' rights and interests were considered as critical when making choices regarding the reporting and dissemination of data. All names and personal data were redacted from the transcripts, and all transcription files were named with numbers instead of personal names. Furthermore, all focus groups and interviews were conducted in closed conference rooms with no access to outsiders. Cautionary measures were also taken to secure the storage of all research-related data. All electronic data were stored in a secure cloud and all paper-format data were stored in closed premises.

3.8 Issues of Trustworthiness

Instead of reliability and validity, which are key issues in quantitative research, qualitative research design is concerned with trustworthiness. However, trustworthiness must be measured differently from quantitative research (Bloomberg and Volpe, 2019). Trustworthiness in qualitative research may be further broken down in *credibility* (how believable are the findings?), *dependability* (are the findings likely to apply at other times?) *transferability* (do the findings apply in other contexts?), and *confirmability* (has the researcher allowed his or her values to intrude in the research?). Qualitative research may also be assessed by asking what kind of contribution the study makes to the literature within its field (Bryman, 2012).

Credibility involves consideration of the interrelationship between the research design components: the study's purpose, theoretical perspective, research question and methods. To enhance the credibility of this study, the researcher selected methods that supported the novel and exploratory nature of the research question. The research was designed as an iterative process that developed in various stages. Firstly, when gathering relevant literature, academic literature was supplemented by relevant practitioner literature. Further, the findings made in the literature review were used as broad themes in the focus groups,

and the results of the focus groups were in turn refined in the interview protocol, which guided the interviews. The data were gathered with great care, and massive amount of raw speech was transcribed verbatim in order to ensure richness of data. Furthermore, the Finnish background of the informants was considered as a bias potentially affecting the findings. After the analysis phase, new literature published since the original literature review was reviewed.

Dependability examines whether the findings are consistent and dependable with the data collected (Bloomberg and Volpe, 2019). The findings were presented as they occurred and any inconsistencies, such as opposing views, were included in the findings. For example, the research procedures were documented in detail and the indexing of the transcriptions was consistent throughout the research. Further, in order to convince the reader of the correctness of the findings, various original passages from the transcribed material were included in the analysis in connection with the findings made.

Confirmability corresponds to objectivity in quantitative research. Even though this study recognizes that qualitative research cannot be totally objective and always carries an amount of research bias, an attempt was made to make the researcher's thinking as transparent as possible.

Transferability refers to whether the results of this study could be transferred to another context. This study attempted to tackle this issue through providing as much contextual information on the Finnish dimension as possible and through always being mindful that the findings made might be caused by the Finnish context and hence might not be generalizable to other parts of the world. In addition, the researcher was also very aware of the fact that coaching is a relatively young phenomenon in the Finnish business landscape.

3.9 Limitations

3.9.1 Methodology

Every research has its limitations, and various issues must be considered to ensure the trustworthiness of the results and their use. As noted earlier, most studies conducted during the last decade have been qualitative. In many cases, small sample size is mentioned as one typical characteristic of qualitative studies (Passmore and Gibbes, 2007; Kilburg, 2009), together with the subjective nature and potential bias on the part of the researcher and the risk of subjective interpretation.

Since 2000, there have been some interesting quantitative or mixed method studies that have attempted to increase the objectivity of the evidence by increasing sample sizes and adopting a more generalizable methodology, e.g. on the impact of coaching. Such studies have also managed to analyse the outcomes of the studies from different perspectives due to more versatile methodology. Examples of recent quantitative studies on the subject include Lord's quantitative ex post fact design study comparing coaching with more traditional learning and their impact on learning transfer (Lord 2010), Franklin and Doran's (2009) double-blind random control trial, which showed that the coaching model and content have an impact on objective performance as evaluated in a blind assessment, and a study by Kombarakaran et al. (2008) on the effectiveness of coaching, which employed both quantitative and qualitative data (mixed method).

3.9.2 Concept of Millennial Generation

This study set out to examine whether a separate millennial generational cohort exists. This attempt was motivated by the thinking that the millennial generation as such is too vague and elusive a concept and that any attempts to define this cohort by years would be challenging.

The concept of the millennial cohort adopted in this study was based on the extensive literature review conducted prior to the data collection. This definition was later supported to some extent by recent research discovered during the second literature review. However, this literature also suggested that generational definitions based on biological years may be too restrictive, as individuals within any age group possess various and differing values. This study called for understanding the individual within the group, or smaller grouping within a large group. Therefore, it is important to be aware that in the millennial cohort, there might be individual traits that this study has not identified. To conclude, very fine-tuned definitions of cohort might not hold true when reflected against the individuals and their respective values and beliefs. This limitation must be considered when considering the wider applicability of this study.

3.9.3 Sample Size

The sample of this study was defined at the early stages of the project. In accordance with the qualitative stance of this study, the relevance of informants was a more important objective than the sample size. As noted earlier, due to the immaturity of the Finnish coaching landscape, getting access to millennial coachees proved challenging. For the same reason, the sample necessarily represents first movers, and the results could be

different if the coaching industry were more mature. In fact, the study might have benefitted from a larger sample when it comes to coachees. Similarly, it could be argued that the consensus-oriented Finnish mentality also affects the coaching industry, and it might be that results from interviewing coaches from another country could have been more diverse.

3.9.4 Self-bias

The researcher has been aware of the risk of self-bias from the beginning of the research journey and transparently spoken about it in colloquia. However, the data management has been peer-reviewed and the data reduction has been conducted according to methodology standards.

The researcher's skills have evolved throughout the DBA journey. Interview skills, such as listening and being present have been trained and improved. In addition, data analysis and the entire research journey provided a good opportunity to develop patience, resilience, care and respect for due process.

3.10 Preparing the Interview Protocol

The construction of the interview protocol was first roughly formed on the information and knowledge gained from the literature review and then adjusted based on the results gained from the focus groups. Figure 3.10 (a) below describes its evolution:
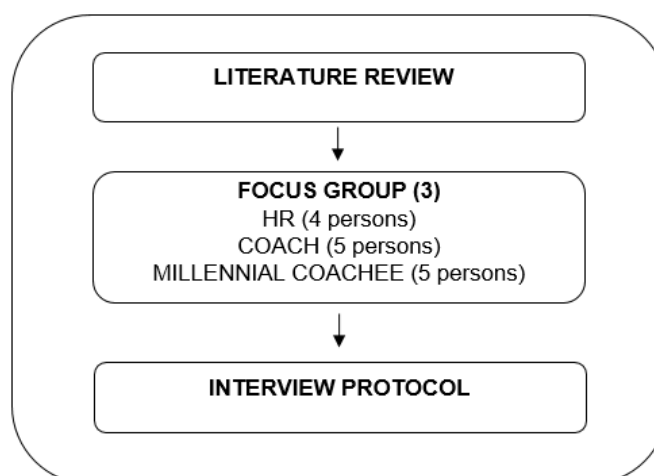
Figure 3.10 (a). Evolution of the interview protocol.

The literature review provides the foundation for the research. At the time when the study was commenced, the goal was to demonstrate the level of current knowledge together with possible gaps. The literature review was extensive and thorough. The results were

presented to peers in various colloquia. The focus of the research was steered towards the coaching relationship, matching and the Finnish dimension involving millennial Finns as coachees. There was also a need to understand the Finnish dimension not observed in the literature. However, there are in fact no doctorate-level coaching studies in Finland that would explore the coaching relationship within the Finnish context or the millennial dimension. Therefore, a decision was made to explore these topics by means of Finnish focus groups. Furthermore, the researcher decided to focus the study on Finnish certified coaches and their millennial coachees, who constituted the key informants of the study.

In order to fully explore the topics that surfaced from the literature review, three focus group sessions were arranged in Finland. One group consisted of HR professional from prestigious Finnish companies to provide insight on the coaching field. The other two focus groups consisted of Finnish professional coaches and Finnish millennial coachees.

The following Figure 3.10 (b) provides an overview of the key topics and concepts and relevant literature related to the focus groups. These key concepts started to surface at the beginning of the research journey and were refined later along the journey.

Executive Coaching	Matching	Millennial Finns	Relationship
Purpose of using executive coaching: self-awareness or development and learning Goal setting	Gender and other perceived similarities Professional background	Flexible time structures Systematic and individual development procedures	Level of relationship developed during coaching: trust Relationship in connection with a successful coaching outcome
Joo (2012), Grant (2013), Sonesh at al. (2015), Bozer et al. (2015)	*Gray & Goregaokar (2010), Collins (2012), Patti et al. (2015), Kombarakaran et al. (2008), Bozer et al. (2015), Boyce, Jackson & Neal (2010), Laske (2007), De Haan et al. (2013)*	*Kultalahti & Viitala (2014), Parry & Urwin (2011), Purhonen (2007), Smola & Sutton (2002), Wong et al. (2008)*	*Collins C. E. (2012), Grant (2013), Sonesh et al. (2015), Joo et al. (2012), Bozer et al. (2015), Simon (2009), Baron & Morin (2009), Boyce, Jackson & Neal (2010), Gyllensten & Palmer (2007)*

Figure 3.10 (b). Overview of the themes.

3.10.1   Interview Protocol Questions

The interview protocol questions were based on the literature except in those cases where focus group results were taken into consideration in preparing the questions. A physical interview protocol (see Appendix B) was used during the in-depth interviews to document responses and to guide the interview. The interview protocol was prepared first in English and then translated into Finnish for the purpose of the interviews. The interview protocol helped to cover the investigated areas and assisted in probing (King and Horrocks, 2010; Cassel and Symon, 2004). In accordance with subjectivist ontology and social constructionist/interpretive epistemology, the research questions encouraged the interviewees to answer with concrete real-life examples, rather than with abstracted

generalities, and the focus was to elicit action sequences and specific situations from the world of the interviewee, with a low degree of structure imposed by the interviewer to their narrative (Cassel and Symon, 2004). Action sequences refer to the stories told by interviewees and the order of which they unfolded. Furthermore, the questions were formatted in everyday and not in theoretical language, in order to elicit spontaneous answers (Kvale and Brinkmann, 2009). For example, a question such as "*Could you describe your experiences of executive coaching?"* ensured that the interviewees shared their concrete experiences and not their opinions.

The interview protocol also included various probing questions in order to elaborate, clarify or to complete the answer (King and Horrocks, 2010), such as: *Could you tell in more depth about your coach? Could you tell more about your coaching relationship? What did you expect from your coach? What did you expect from your coaching relationship? Can you give an example?* However, care was taken to use the probing questions sparingly and only when considered necessary, since too many probing questions may distress the interviewee and take time away from other important topics (King and Horrocks, 2010) Silence was used too, since sometimes a mere silence from the interviewer after the interviewee has answered can provide more information (Cassel and Symon 2004). In keeping with the social constructionist view, the interviewee was an active contributor to the research and, therefore, the responses she/he provided adjusted the course of the interview (Cassel and Symon, 2004).

The in-depth interviews were carried out during a period of over 36 months, a much longer time than originally anticipated. However, this duration had no impact on the results or on the overall research, since the interviews were not linked to time and the study did not examine any events linked to time. The stretched timetable of the interviews was caused by scheduling challenges due to life events as well as challenges in having access to good candidates for interviews. This search process also gave much knowledge of the Finnish coaching industry, which is located mainly in the Helsinki area. Many external parties, including ICF Finland, helped and advertised the research in order to have as many coaches and coachees to volunteer to the interviews as possible. This was not a challenge when it came to the coaches: the research certainly benefitted from having the opportunity to interview some of the best coaches in Finland, many holding trustee positions at ICF and other coaching associations.

However, the number of millennial clients was a surprise, even for the coaches themselves, when they started to calculate how many of their clients were within the millennial generation

age definition. In most cases, the coach had only had a few millennials as a customer. Still, it is important to note that all coaches within this interview had actually coached millennials. A few coaches had had several millennial clients, but never similar client amounts as from previous generations. Many of the coaches said: "I thought my clientele was actually younger". In general, most of the coaching clients are represented by a majority of other generations than millennials. This finding is in line with what was discovered during the focus groups: millennials have limited access to professional coaching in the Finnish business culture. This further explains the discovery made in the millennial focus group on how they felt about their coaching experience and, in turn, how the millennials coached by an ICF-certified or other professional coach felt about the coaching relationship. This discovery highlights the difference in how the coachee experiences coaching and its successfulness when carried out by a professional or by a non-professional coach. This finding was also further investigated in the data analysis.

The respondents of the in-depth interviews consisted of fourteen coaches, who were all women, which demonstrates to which extent the coaching industry in Finland is dominated by women. All were mature adults from the age of 40 upwards. They had various business backgrounds but all had practised coaching for some time. Among the interviewed coachees, there were six men and eight women aged between 22 and 34. All worked in managerial or specialist positions and had an academic degree.

3.11 Summary

Chapter 3 provided an overview of this study's methodology. It provided a description and justification for the epistemological and ontological underpinnings of the study and described the various steps taken in selecting the methodology, methods and research design. Chapter 3 also showed the interrelationships between the literature review, the focus groups and the interview protocol employed in the interviews. To conclude, ethical considerations and limitations of the study were described. Chapter 4 explores in more detail the focus group sessions and the findings that were made.

4 Focus Groups

Chapters 4 and 5 bring forward the analysis and discussion from the focus groups (chapter 4) and in-depth interviews (chapter 5). In Chapter 6, the findings from the focus groups and in-depth interviews are contrasted with the related literature.

4.1 Outline of the Focus Group Sessions

This chapter discusses the focus group sessions and their outcome both on the focus group level and then as a summary of all groups. Thereafter, the results are considered in order to formulate the interview protocol based on the literature review.

The structure of the three focus group sessions was identical. Table 4.1 below outlines the structure, basic content and the way in which the focus group sessions were conducted.

Activity	Focus Groups
1 . Welcome and introduction	To let the people say hello and create an atmosphere of casual easiness.
2. Mini presentation	Presenting Henley Business School, the research and researcher, introduction to ethics process, introduction how the focus group is planned to work: free speech, free turns, free discussion, free opinions – what outcomes come may come and main four themes are discussed freely and openly.
3. Ethical forms	Reading and signing ethical forms.
4. Recording starts	
5. "Coaching"	Someone starts the discussion and it freely continues until it seems the group is satisfied with their discussion and/or conclusion.
	Different points are written on large sheets of paper and placed around the room walls. Colouring, underlining, crossing over, adding, reduction occurs. Discussion reflects on its own content and pushes forward.
6. "Generations / millennials"	Above repeated.
7. "Matching"	Above repeated.
8. "Relationship"	Above repeated.
9. Summary	Reflecting on the discussion. Any discoveries.
10. End recording	
11. Thank you	

Table 4.1. Overview of the focus group process.

4.2 Coach Focus Group

The coach focus group consisted of four women and one man. They were all experienced in the field of coaching and had practiced coaching for some time. They were all mature adults from the age around 40 upwards. The coaches were certified by the International Coaching Federation (ICF), save for one coach, who held a certification from a local coaching school.

The focus group saw the coaching process in a very homogeneous, uniform way: what coaching does and which are the important factors resulting in a successful coaching experience. It is typical for the Finnish culture that unified opinion is valued. However, the focus group's unified view was most likely due to their coaching experience, shared coaching values and standards within the coaching profession. As coaching is a relatively new profession in Finland, when compared with western coaching markets, such as the United States and the United Kingdom, there are not that many experienced coaches in Finland. Perhaps due to this, the ICF's standards and the code of practice are regarded highly. Nevertheless, this focus group offered valuable insights into the coaches' common code of conduct in Finland, and this same homogeneity became evident later in the in-depth interviews with the coaches.

4.2.1 Coach Focus Group: Presentation of Findings

In the following, the different focus group themes, which were also presented in Table 4.1 above ("coaching", "generations/millennials", "matching", "coaching relationship") are discussed, together with related conclusions.

Positive impact of coaching

The discussion on coaching confirmed that coaching works and that the coaching industry in Finland is growing. The coaches were not aware of any Finnish thesis-level studies into coaching. It was felt that coaching has a positive impact on the coachees' careers, and in some cases, the impact extended to personal life. "Sometimes you start with one issue and it leads to another and then you are dealing with all kinds of issues", was a comment by one participant, which also led to a short discussion on how challenging it is sometimes for the coaches to draw the line between business executive coaching and life coaching. This finding confirms that made in the literature review, according to which the boundaries between coaching and psychotherapy have recently become more blurred (Senior, 2007; Baron and Morin, 2009; Smither, 2011).

However, everyone felt comfortable in these situations and they had the required skills to steer the coaching so that it stayed within the agreed scope. One coach pointed out that she sometimes referred coachees to someone else and said "you have here some issues I would recommend you work with".

Feedback from coaching

The feedback from coachees and their organisations had been positive and made the coaches feel happy. The positive impact of coaching on the clients' work life had been rewarding for the coaches. As one coach stated, "when I see that "aha", when light-bulb lights up, I am so happy". Recurring customers from large corporations were considered a positive sign of success.

In comparison to the positive feedback from clients and organisations, the amount of funds that businesses allocate to coaching was discussed briefly. There was some discussion on the general familiarity of coaching, while it was felt that perhaps that would change in the future when more Finnish research into coaching becomes available. In general, that was also the reason why so many were interested in this research. However, the general view was that businesses had limited budgets to procure coaching. In some cases, the "manager as a coach" was felt as the "wrong way" to save costs.

Generations and Millennials

The discussion on millennial coachees yielded some interesting information on this customer segment. The discussions revealed the low numbers of millennial coachees in general. For example, one of the coaches had only coached one millennial. This situation results from the fact that while coachee clients often represent the most senior-level employees in an organisation, millennials are not yet present at these levels and, therefore, are not offered coaching. This also revealed the lack of budget in the HR for offering professional coaching services to all levels in the organisation. This discussion was interesting, as all coaches had good thoughts on millennials and were interested in this customer segment. In general, the informants seemed to confirm many of the characteristics attached to millennials in the literature (Siltala, 2013; McKinsey, 2020). The main observations from the session were as follows:

- Millennials are inspiring.
- They look at issues with more open eyes.
- They question issues more openly.
- They are freer to do what they want.

The discussion addressed the current situation where the work environment is under immense transformation (Meister and Willyerd, 2020). One key influencing factor in many work organisations is that generational differences provide both challenges and opportunities. The co-existence, i.e. different generations working together at the same workplace with possibly different values and ethics, can be a challenge (Kultalahti and Viitala, 2014). The strengths and benefits brought by this co-existence may not be so clear at collective level, but may be more visible at the individual level, where individuals may benefit from each other.

The focus group discussed the above issue and how coaching the millennials had provided an insight into their passions, visions and way of thinking. The millennials were keen to learn and were looking for experiences to learn from. As one coach stated, "they are so interested and ready to try new things", while comparing millennials with other clients.

The coaches saw millennials as "looking at issues with open eyes". The coaches stated that this was an opportunity for the organisations, but on the other hand also an issue that frustrates millennials, should they feel that things are stagnated and there is no development. "They question" and "they express" were two characteristics that the focus groups discussed in relation to the millennials. The coaches reflected on how their generation, in their forties and fifties, displayed a more "stay calm and steady onwards" mentality, whereas millennials seemed much freer to try new things and to go after what they wanted.

Overall, the coaches had a very positive image of millennial Finns. When describing their characteristics, the coaches used such as words as "open", "enthusiastic", "daring", "engaging" and "free spirited". The coaches noted that there were many similarities with other generations and that individual differences stood out the most. The coachees shared a common view on such issues as "work-life balance", "finding a place in the organisation" and "motivational/personal development". However, these are the subject areas that the coaching intervention often works on, and they are the same with any generation. In addition, the question remains whether these traits are associated with the millennial generation as such or whether they are traits associated with youth in general, and as noted in the literature review, the entire concept of generation is not very clear-cut (Purhonen, 2007).

Matching

Coach-coachee matching appeared to be managed in a very generic manner. However, everyone seemed to share this practice and was content with it. In addition, there was a collective idea that matching does not require complicated methods.

Introductory meeting

Either a face-to-face meeting or, in some cases, a telephone or Skype introductory session seemed to be a shared and common practice. Since the size of the executive coaching market is limited in Finland, especially when it comes to those who pay fair market price for the services, the consensus seemed to be that the introductory session usually results in selecting that coachee, and coaches are usually content with all of their clients. There was an open discussion about negative coaching customer experiences, but they were a rarity and mostly associated with clients who should have chosen therapy instead of coaching.

The focus group shared the view that "you know immediately how well you fit". When observing the discussion, it was easy to notice how "unusual" Finns these coaches were. They were open, smiling, contributing and listening, which is not typical for the introverted Finnish culture. It can be imagined that in the Finnish cultural atmosphere, this kind of open and genuine behaviour must feel very welcoming. Another point of view in the discussion was that coaching does not require a perfect fit between the coach and the coachee. Interestingly, the literature review reached the same conclusion. For example, Collins (2012) argued that the overall evidence for matching was partial and mixed. The coaches were also interested in finding out whether matching could be carried out in a more professional manner and whether it would be beneficial to have an established process for matching.

Relationship

Interestingly, the coaches were unanimous on this subject. They all echoed that "trust" and "professional coaching practice" is essential to reach a successful coaching outcome, which in turn is built around the coaching relationship. This result was not surprising, since it supported the finding made in various studies covered in the literature review (Gyllensten and Palmer, 2007; Baron and Morin, 2009; O'Broin and Palmer, 2010). With "professional coaching practice" they meant that the coaches had passed a training and followed its guidelines.

Trust

The coaches agreed that trust was an essential element of the coaching relationship. This finding was not surprising, since it was already noted in the literature review that trust is the most important element of the coaching relationship (Kampa-Kokesch and Anderson, 2001; Bluckert, 2005; Jones and Spooner, 2006; Sun et al., 2013; Stern, 2004; Gyllensten and Palmer, 2007). However, the coaches were more divided on the subject on how trust is established. Some of the coaches said that "trust starts immediately", while some said that "trust is built". There was also some discussion on whether millennial coachees build trust in the same way as others. Another question was that since millennials seem to be more open and more expressive about themselves and their feelings, is trust that essential in the formation of the relationship? This finding was all the more interesting when taking into account the typical characteristics of the Finnish culture, where "openness" is often challenging. In this respect, the results from the coach focus group highlighted the role of "openness" and "trust" when coaching millennial Finns. Based on this focus group session, it was decided that trust and openness would be included as separate themes in the interview protocol and that special attention would be paid to the possible impact of millennials' traits on the establishment of trust. It was also decided to explore whether openness supports the establishment of trust or the other way round.

Summary

In summary, the coach focus group brought forwards the coaches' feeling of unity and their pride towards the practice and the profession. In the field notes, the researcher wrote a comment "is this all too good to be true". In general, the focus group seemed to support the themes originally found in the literature, e.g. "trust", "matching" and "relationship".

However, based on this focus group, it seems that matching only occurred to a very small extent. This is not surprising, since the coaching industry in Finland is small and undeveloped. At best, the coachee was given two alternatives and the selection was made based on either a phone discussion or a trial session. Notably, it seemed that the coachee almost always selected the first alternative offered. It is evident that such minimal selection possibilities have an impact on this study's research question, and this fact was also taken into account in the preparation of the interview protocol.

4.3 HR Focus Group

The HR focus group consisted of four HR directors from well-known Finnish private or listed companies as well as one large public company. All participants were women in their forties

and fifties. All had a career in HR management and had been in leadership positions for some time. As they represented various industries, they provided a good cross-section of the Finnish business landscape.

The HR professionals' practices in relation to the procurement and quality control of coaching varied significantly. Only one had demanded that the coaching intervention should be supervised. Only one had a clear and sufficient budget to procure coaching services internally. Instead, many were faced with severe budget limitations and strict rules on what kind of coaching was to be given to which level of personnel.

4.3.1 HR Focus Group: Presentation of Findings

Coaching

Everyone in the HR professionals' focus group was satisfied with coaching as an intervention and development tool. There was consensus on its far-reaching benefits, especially in the Finnish business culture. The HR professionals made an open reference to poor internal communication and weak emotional leadership as typical traits of the Finnish business management culture. These features may be contrasted with those mentioned in the literature review, such as uncertainty avoidance and collectivism (Hofstede, 2001). In this landscape, the coaching performed by a professional coach offers another platform for the coached individuals and groups. Key observations from the focus group were as follows:

- Coaching works.
- Group coaching is preferred.
- Coaching is costly.

As discussed above, there was a solid agreement that coaching works and brings benefits. The HR focus group was very keen to discuss the overall cost, the structures to be followed when offering internal coaching, and to whom it should be offered. Many considered coaching as a very expensive method and, therefore, thought that it could only be offered to the most valuable individuals in the company. There was a discussion on the benefits of group coaching. For one HR professional, group coaching was the only financially viable and accepted option, even though she represented a high-end professional IT services company with high profitability. For this HR professional, the unit cost of coaching per an individual employee would have been too high to win the management's approval.

Generations and Millennials

Millennials represented to HR professionals both a promise for the future and a challenge. Many millennials have not advanced in their careers the same way as previous generations, since the 2008 financial crisis and austerity in spending have slowed down progress towards senior positions. Due to these circumstances, millennials are often professionals or middle managers in their respective organisations. The key findings based on the HR professionals' focus group were as follows:

- Millennials are not loyal.
- Millennials are self-oriented – free time and life experience oriented.
- They lack career orientation.
- They are open.

There was even some discussion on why a millennial would "deserve" an individual coach, as previous generations did not have one and are not able to have one now either, due to austerity. These comments were reminiscent of the discussion within the Finnish business society on the modest level of human resource management in some companies in Finland and how Finland is lagging behind western standards in this field. It seemed evident from the HR professionals' focus group that even though coaching was used by all major companies, this was done sparingly. Furthermore, the results from the HR focus group also suggested that some coaching standards in Finland are lagging behind when compared to other western countries.

Matching

Discussion on matching echoed that of the coach focus group. Most HR professionals noted that a short introductory meeting was held between the coachee and the potential coach. Notably, only two companies offered two options for the coachee to choose from, and this choice was only available to the most valuable executives of the company, who were eligible to receive professional executive coaching. This scarcity of choices suggests that genuine matching is in fact not taking place. For example, Collins (2012) argued that for matching to take place properly, a choice from at least three coaches should be offered.

Introductory meeting

Based on the discussion in the HR professionals' focus group, the introductory meeting was the established method for managing matching. However, there was some discussion and reflection on what could be done if financial and other resources were available: coaching could be offered to more people, and there could be more alternative coaches to choose from. In the HR professionals' view, the current "take it or leave it" mentality with respect to

coaches did not leave a lot of choice. In fact, there was only one case in which the coachee had proposed a coach, who was then chosen. Overall, the view of the HR professionals was very unified: this is how it works, and it is good enough.

Relationship

The HR professionals' focus group reflected on whether there were differences in the coaching relationship between group coaching and individual coaching. They considered that the formulation of relationship in group coaching is more trivial than in individual coaching. However, there was an agreement that in all cases, the relationship is important and plays a key role. There was an interesting discussion on the challenges in forming a strong bond with millennials, as they were seen as "disloyal" and "self-motivated" at the workplace. It was considered that these characteristics perhaps hindered forming a strong bond with the millennial. On the other hand, it was also mentioned that in the worst-case scenario, the millennial forms an extremely good relationship with the coach and uses the coaching to pursue her/his own development without attachment to the company's vision of her/his development. In this case, coaching could be counterproductive from the company's perspective. This discussion reflects the challenge the HR professionals have in understanding and connecting with their millennial workers, who are seen as a vital resource, but in some way uncontrollable. To conclude, the HR professionals thought that a good relationship was vital and beneficial for coaching, but it was not understood how it could be obtained. In this regard, the HR professionals concurred with the finding made in the literature review: albeit there is the consensus that relationship is critical, it is far from clear how it is established.

Summary

Overall, the HR professionals' focus group confirmed that coaching offered in Finland is limited due to tight budgets. Furthermore, in some cases it is hierarchical: the best service is provided for the most senior-level and most valuable employees. The focus group also proved that the values that some millennials appreciate in the workplace, for example life-work balance instead of work-life balance, are not always supported by the organisation's management. Whereas organisations see coaching and other training as an investment in people and expect loyalty and perseverance in turn, the attitude towards workplace loyalty is somewhat relaxed. This kind of contradiction in expectations and expected behaviour may result in a situation in which management is reluctant to allocate financial resources for millennials' coaching. As one participant noted, team coaching is the only affordable and reasonable option for people, who say they will go surfing and keep a sabbatical, instead of

committing to a project and earning overtime pay. To conclude, the HR professionals' focus group supported the notion raised by the millennials' focus group: the amount of coaching services currently offered to millennial Finns is rather small.

4.4 Millennial Coachee Focus Group

The five millennials in the focus group shared a similar background: a managerial or specialist position and an academic degree. The group consisted of four women and one man, who were all under 30 years old at the time of the focus group. The small size of Finland and its capital Helsinki was evident in the focus group, as many of the coachees had same friends or had attended the same university (University of Helsinki or Helsinki School of Economics).

The discussion at this focus group was fluent and open, and thoughts were shared freely. The views on various themes were unified, but a notion that "we are not treated well enough" surfaced in connection with some of the discussion points. At a later stage, this issue was raised by one participant who clearly stated that the quality of coaches is not at the level it could be and that since the coachees were not in vice president positions, HR departments or superiors were not willing to finance coaching provided by external coaches.

Instead, they used in most cases coaches provided by the organisation and pre-selected by HR. One coachee raised an issue that was discussed in detail. She thought that "in her view, the coach should be interested in her case". This coachee clearly felt that the coach was working for the organisation to push an agenda and that her role was to adapt to what she was being told. The others in the focus group agreed with this statement. The focus group had a shared view of mistrust towards coaching offered by companies, and they argued that the coaches in fact lacked knowledge and motivation to support them in their personal development.

One focus group member shared an experience of having hired a professional coach after being displeased with the one offered by her workplace. In her view, this contract provided her a platform of self-development and growth, and she subsequently left her employer and was now working in a higher position and enjoying her career. All in all, these millennials seemed content but also wished more from their coaching. In their view, the companies' investments in coaching were not sufficient at their career level or did not produce the outcome they had hoped for.

The notion that a coach was not "interested" in the coachee, was striking and since this view was shared or mentioned by the other focus groups, Being interested in the coachee

also related to being at service and having presence in the coaching session. The lack of these elements brought up by the coachee focus group was surprising and therefore required a more detailed investigation. It was decided that these issues should be investigated more closely in the in-depth interviews and included in the interview protocol.

Interestingly, Kultalahti's study on millennial Finns (2015) and their experiences in regard to being coached in the work environment by their manager reflects the same ideas. The concept, with exactly the same wording "of being interested", appears in the comments, and most informants in her study highlighted its importance. The concept of "interest" raised in the millennials' focus group highlighted same feelings and experiences. However, as one focus group member told, when millennials were coached by a professional coach, the results were overwhelmingly positive and the feeling of "interest" was clear and natural.

4.4.1 Millennial Focus Group: Presentation of Findings

Coaching

The millennials in their focus group were enthusiastic about coaching and eagerly shared their experiences and feelings. All the participants were highly educated and career-oriented and, therefore, aware of various personal development tools. The millennials provided interesting views on the interest that their employers showed towards providing coaching, and on the quality of coaching.

Quality of coaches and manager-as-coach

The millennials thought that the coaching they had often received was not of good quality. This subject was discussed intensively, and it elicited comments such as "the seniors get the good ones" or "they don't invest in us". One female participant said that when she could not get professional coaching from her workplace, she hired her own coach and subsequently left for another company. Everyone in the focus group shared the view that companies do not provide professional coaching to millennials.

The manager-as-coach approach received negative comments. One millennial stated that "not interested in me, would be nice if a coach is interested in me" and received support and shared experiences from other participants. There was a genuine feeling in the focus group that their coaches were not truly interested in them or their career or development, and the same applied to their employers. The results confirmed the finding made in the literature review, according to which managers should have both a personal ability and appropriate training to act as coaches.

Generations and Millennials

The millennials did not feel that they were that different from other people. They rather felt that times were different and that their career prospects were challenging and dire. At the time of the focus groups, the European Union was still facing austerity measures, as were many businesses. This sentiment reflected on the future views of the millennials, who saw their future as burdened with decades-long mortgages. Poor career prospects had forced them to be more flexible, and they were ready to move on, should better opportunities appear.

Characteristics of millennials

The millennials reflected on their traits and list the following as typical for them: openness, acceptance, freedom, liberality and digitality. However, they also saw that some of these traits were transferring to other generations. The discussion in the focus group addressed the strengths of the tiny population of Finland and the smallness of the business environment, which in turn brings out fast adaptability to change. As such, Finland has become more open, liberal and more accepting in many ways, so this is also as a generic evolution issue. As to the typical features of the Finnish business culture, such as silos, poor management communication and management, the millennials considered them more as relics from the past. However, instead of them being definitions from the previous generations, the millennials considered these as typical characteristics of the Finnish business. Once again, the results from this focus group seemed to concur with the findings made in the literature review with respect to Finnish characteristics (House et al., 2004; Hofstede, 2001).

Lack of opportunities

The millennials felt that that they lacked the opportunities and chances that the previous generations had. The businesses do not grow and new positions do not open with the same speed as a decade ago, and many positions are already filled with experts from the previous generations.

Matching

The idea of matching was not very familiar to the millennials, as their experiences of coaching were limited: more or less, the coach given to them was the only choice. It was evident that in the case of this focus group, matching hardly happened at all or it was carried

out during the introductory meeting. In practice, the informants could not say or agree that there had ever been a choice available.

Relationship

The millennials listed openness and emotional closeness as key components in the coaching relationship. Interestingly, since some of the coaching experiences had been negative, the relationship building either had not begun or had not evolved to a fruitful level.

Importance of interest

There was an agreement within the millennial focus group that many coaching experiences had left them with the feeling that the focus was not on the individual but more on gaining something for the organisation. This was considered a very one-sided approach. On a similar note, one of the participants shared her story. She had first had a coach provided by her company but decided to switch to a personally acquired coach, who offered a positive, life-changing experience. To conclude, the millennials shared the view that the lack of coach's interest in the coachee was one of the problems that deteriorated the coaching experience. Therefore, the researcher decided that interest in the coachee should be included as one key topic in the interview protocol.

4.5 Summary and Reflection of Focus Groups

The three focus groups studied, coaches, millennial coachees and HR professionals, expressed similar, divided and even conflicting views depending on the subject area. It also appeared that all focus groups did not share the significance of some subjects.

The focus groups provided meaningful information and insights on how coaching was viewed by the three main parties usually involved in the coaching contract: the coach, coachee and HR professional. While basic standards of a coaching relationship seemed to be shared by all, millennial coachees raised the problem that coaches were not interested in them. Rather, millennials felt that it was a process towards an undefined goal, without "openness" and "interest" in them. This feeling could derive from the fact that organisations do not assign the "most professional or the best coach" to millennials. This meant that the coaching that most of them had experienced was not of the highest standard. Further, in some cases the coaching had been given by a manager who apparently was not interested in this role. This finding encouraged the researcher to find for the in-depth interviews millennials who had been coached by certified coaches, in order to see whether their experiences differed from the results gained at the focus group. Would the coachee

interviews elicit similar thoughts on the coaching relationship? Would they feel that they had not received full satisfaction from coaching?

In turn, the HR professionals felt they had done their work and served the organisation well. The coaches in turn were proud of their services and results and constituted in this sense a very unified group. Finally, the millennial coachees felt they had got something out of coaching but could have gained more. However, the millennials felt that from the organisation's perspective, they were not always considered to be worthy of the investment that coaching required.

The results from the focus groups are interesting. Even though there is a general understanding that the coaching relationship is important and that matching counts, it seems that in Finland actual matching between coaches and coachees is non-existent. Moreover, while the HR professionals understand the value of coaching, professional coaches are not offered to millennials due to limited financial resources and the fact that they have not advanced sufficiently high in the hierarchy of the organisation. Based on these observations, the protocol of the in-depth interviews was adjusted to appropriately cover the issues raised in the focus groups.

5 Presentation of Interview Findings

As stated earlier, all Finnish-language material obtained in the in-depth interviews was first transcribed in Finnish, i.e. in the original language spoken, which resulted a vast amount of text. Already at the time of the transcription, the researcher was alert to the content and began, based on the themes that were first raised through the literature review and then refined in the focus groups, identifying recurring patterns or themes that would cut through the data. In accordance with the qualitative and exploratory approach adopted for this study, these themes were first determined based on the research problem and relevant research literature, and then inductively determined based on the interviews. In other words, the researcher attempted to build a general theory and hypotheses based on empirical results.

This chapter briefly introduces the respective themes that arose from the analysis, such as "trust", "openness", or "coaching skills". After the introduction, the themes are followed by English translations of interesting and illustrative passages from the interviews that highlight an interesting aspect of the respective theme. The findings of the analysis are then summarised in Chapter 6.

In order to guarantee the richness of data and in keeping with the principles of qualitative research, the exploratory nature of the study and its social constructionist epistemology and subjectivist ontology (see Chapter 3, "Methodology"), the intention was to present the excerpts as naturally as possible and in their original format, without any modifications or corrections. In keeping with the epistemological approach adopted for this study, the intention was to provide a rich context for the key content of the example in order to support the understanding and to provide the reader with an idea of the thinking behind the excerpt. While the excerpts are sometimes long, the researcher felt that this was justified in order to ensure the richness of the narrative and give ample space to bring forth the informants' real-life experiences.

It is a typical challenge in a qualitative study to present a satisfactory number of relevant excerpts from such a large amount of relatively messy data. In selecting the excerpts, the researcher attempted to respect the transparency guidelines of this study and to provide the reader access to the data at the maximum level. Therefore, Chapter 5 endeavours to present the examples as they appeared when originally stated and with enough surrounding narrative, so that the excerpts illustrate the themes powerfully and in a satisfactory manner. In accordance with the social constructionist view, the aim is to understand the informants' world and actions, rather than trying to explain it.

5.1.1 Introduction to Analysis: Analytic Hierarchy

The following section describes how the data gathered from the interviews were analysed with the help of Ritchie et al.'s (2003) model of analytic hierarchy.

The analytic hierarchy refers to a process through which qualitative findings are built from original data. In order to understand the analytic hierarchy, focus must be not only on the tools to be used in the analysis, but also on the conceptual and intellectual process in which the researcher is engaged (Ritchie et al., 2003). In the following sections, the steps forming this hierarchy will be analysed one by one, based on Ritchie et al.'s work (2003 and 2014). The three main components of the analytic hierarchy are described in Figure 5.1.1 below (based on Ritchie et al., 2003):
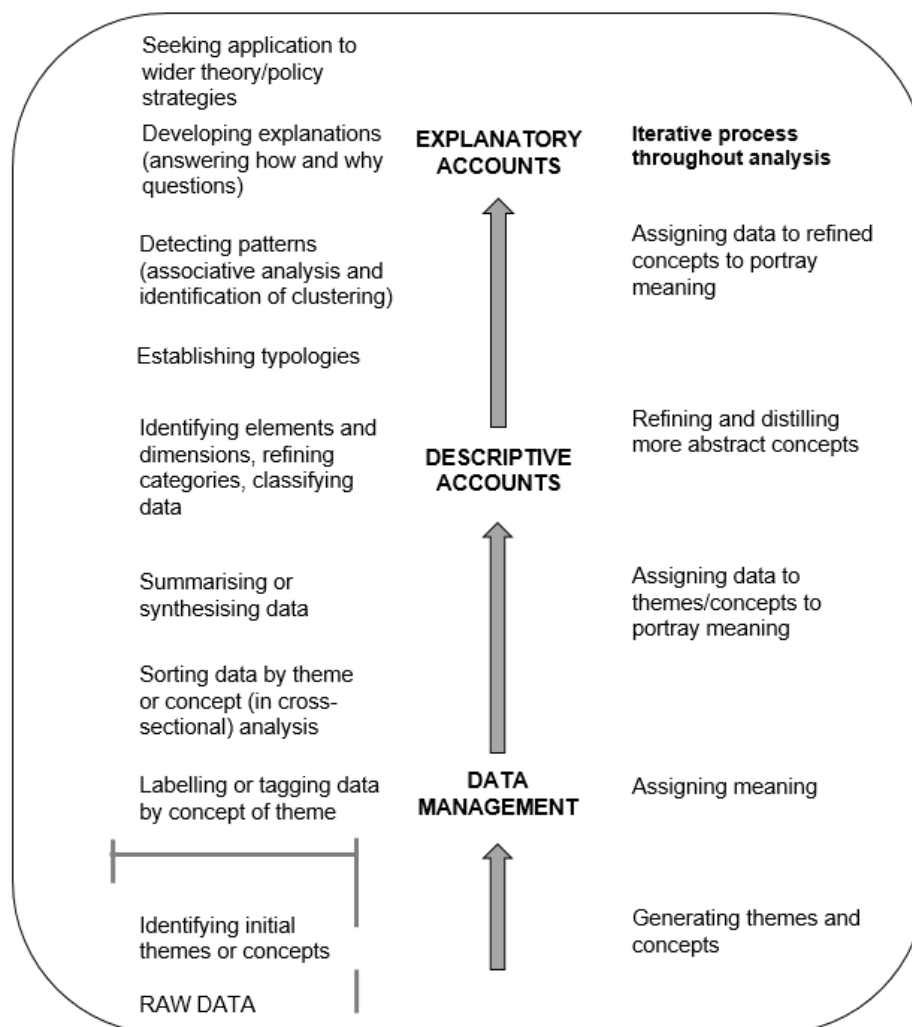

Figure 5.1.1. Three components of the analytic hierarchy (based on Ritchie et al., 2003).

These three components are data management, descriptive accounts and explanatory accounts. Movements between these components are iterative and continuous, allowing for an analysis of the qualitative data at hand with a cross-sectional "code and retrieve" method, based on interpretations of meaning (Ritchie et al., 2003). This is also the approach adopted in this study. The analytic hierarchy helps the researcher to be aware of what she/he is doing at the moment. Ritchie et al. (2003) argue that at the beginning of the process, the researcher should stay close to the interviewees' own language and accounts, while theoretical concepts or theories should only appear at a later stage. The analysis made in this study followed these guidelines and moved onwards gradually and iteratively between data management, descriptive accounts and explanatory accounts.

5.1.2 Data Management

The analysis started with data management. As is typical for a qualitative study, this part is usually challenging for the researcher, as a large amount of raw data should be sorted out so that the logical analysis may begin. At the outset, the data may seem messy and fractured, and the aim of data management is to label the data in a more interpretative way. However, it should be kept in mind that in a qualitative study, indexing is performed in order to manage the data, rather than to facilitate enumeration. For this reason, there is no right or wrong way to index the data, and the objective is not to produce a consistently and perfectly categorised set of data but rather a meaningful account that addresses the key aspects of the research question and allows the reader to grasp how the themes were developed during the study (Ritchie et al., 2014).

5.1.3 Coding vs. Indexing

At the data management stage, the analysis begins with the familiarisation and subsequent labelling and sorting of data. As regards relevant terminology, this study will refer to this initial labelling and sorting as "indexing", not "coding". Traditionally, qualitative research has used the term "coding" in a very broad sense. This is understandable, since basically, coding refers to the way in which researchers "continually label and re-label their data throughout the analytical process" (Ritchie et al., 2014:277), while indexing and sorting refer to the "initial organisation of the data under key themes by which it can then be sorted and interrogated" (Ritchie et al., 2014:292).

According to Saldaña (2013), code is "most often a word or short phrase that symbolically assigns a summative, salient, essence-capturing, and/or evocative attribute for a portion of language-based or visual data" (Saldaña, 2013:3–4). Codes are, in other words, labels that

"assign a symbolic meaning to the descriptive or inferential information compiled during a study" (Miles et al., 2014: 71–72). Therefore, a code is a researcher-generated construct that symbolizes and thus attributes interpreted meaning to each individual datum for later purposes of pattern detection, categorization, theory building, and other analytic processes. In sum, a code represents and captures a datum's primary content and essence (Saldaña, 2013).

However, Ritchie et al. prefer the terms "indexing" and "sorting" to coding, since this term more accurately portrays the status of labels and the way in which they "fit" the data (2014:300). Similarly, Seale (1999) prefers to call these early stages of coding as indexing. According to Seale, indexes act as "signposts to interesting bits of data but do not represent any final argument about their meaning" (1999:154). Ritchie et al. (2014) concur by adding that indexing simply shows which theme or subtheme is being mentioned or referred to within a particular section of the data. The term coding, on the other hand, refers to a process of capturing dimensions or content that has already been more precisely defined and labelled.

This study applied the same approach. Indexing represented the first attempt to manage fractured and messy data, and as the study progressed, the data were gradually labelled in a more interpretive way in order to capture their essential meaning, to describe and explain phenomena and address the central research questions (Ritchie et al., 2014:278).

Original themes in the indexing process were millennial, trust, matching, age, gender, work experience, industry experience, openness, interest, coaching skills, coaching experience, and being at service. As the indexing proceeded, these original themes were adjusted and changed, which is always normal in an indexing process. Some of the themes were merged in the process that followed, some were relabelled and some were adjusted to describe the content more accurately. This step is called the descriptive accounts, which is discussed next.

5.1.4 Descriptive Accounts

The descriptive accounts of the analytic hierarchy consist of unpacking the content and nature of a phenomenon or theme. According to Ritchie et al. (2003), the main task is to display the data in a way that is conceptually pure, make distinctions that are meaningful and provide content that is illuminating. According to Ritchie et al. (2003), descriptive accounts consist of three key steps as indicated below in Figure 5.1.4:

DETECTION
substantive content and
dimensions of a phenomenon
are identified

CATEGORISATION
categories are refined and
descriptive data assigned to
them

CLASSIFICATION
groups of categories are
assigned to 'classes' usually
at a higher level of abstraction
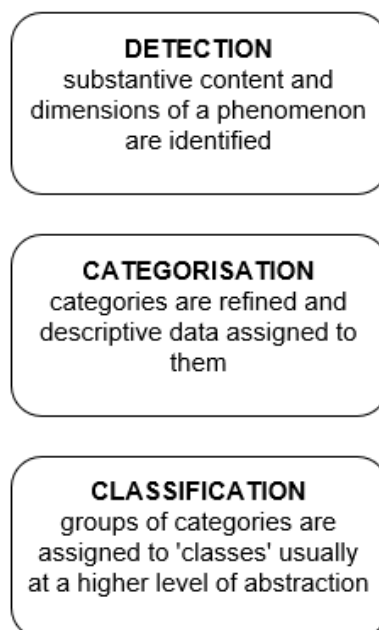
Figure 5.1.4. Descriptive accounts.

The framework analysis, which constitutes the key tool in this study, was used to build the descriptive accounts. In this type of analysis, the framework helps the researcher to define elements and constructs to classify the data at hand and to further refine the relevant categories. At this stage, the framework was employed so that the data within one column in the framework were read down across various cases, and this helped to understand the range of data that exist (Ritchie et al., 2003). An excerpt of the framework is provided in Table 5.1.6 below.

While performing the descriptive analysis, the researcher first detects the content and then moves on to more and more refined and abstract stages in categorising and classifying the data. Descriptive accounts at first stay close to the original data, and care is taken to avoid over-interpretation in order to clearly show the initial elements underlying the analysis. As Ritchie et al. describe (2003), during descriptive analysis, the analyst attempts to understand "what is happening" within a single subtopic. Each piece of data is then further studied by assigning a description to it, and higher-level categories start to already emerge at this stage (Ritchie et al., 2003).

Categorisation is the next step in descriptive accounts, and at this stage the researcher moves beyond the original text and starts to interpret the data in a more conceptual way. However, the connection between the original data and the categorisation taking place should remain visible so that the elements can be seen and, if necessary, revisited. Based

on this analysis, the categories are further refined: they might be grouped together, one category might subsume another, entirely new categories might emerge or certain categories might start to look out of place. Furthermore, categories in descriptive analysis are never fixed but continually questioned and refined and, after this process, they become more and more summative, abstract and theoretical and move further away from the language and forms of presentation of the original contributors. All in all, descriptive accounts constitute a lengthy process that is not complete until all the data have been inspected and a decision has been made on where they should belong.

5.1.5 Explanatory Accounts

The explanatory accounts represent the final segment of the analytic hierarchy where explanations are developed and questions of "how" and "why" are answered. They tend to be developed at later or higher stages of analysis when most of the descriptive and typological work has been undertaken (Ritchie et al. 2003). Explanatory accounts derive from finding patterns of associations within the data and then attempting to explain why such patterns occur or building explanations from other evidence or interrogations of the data. Ritchie et al. (2003:261) specify various sources for explanatory accounts, such as using explicit reasons and accounts; inferring an underlying logic; using 'common sense'; developing explanatory concepts; drawing on other empirical studies; or using theoretical frameworks. Explanatory accounts are the stage at which the data are interrogated in different ways to further understand what is causing or influencing phenomena to occur (Ritchie et al. 2003).

When building explanatory accounts for this study, the framework was also used to find out how different pieces of data fit together to explore links, connections and explanatory routes. At the final stage of explanatory accounts, it was considered whether the evidence gathered from the data had some wider application.

5.1.6 Framework Analysis

The data collection process was described in detail in the previous sections. It included detailed description of how the data were collected, how the interviewer reflected on the data collection, how the vast amount of data was managed, i.e. reduced and analysed, and how the data were displayed by means of the framework analysis (Ritchie et al., 2003 and 2014).

In this study, the data were analysed using a particular data management tool, a "framework". This tool was developed in the 1980s at NetCen Social Research, and it is now widely used by qualitative researchers in a range of substantive fields (Ritchie et al., 2014). The framework supports key steps in the data management process, including indexing and sorting, as described above. However, the framework helps to summarize and display the data. In the framework, data excerpts are gathered in one large document in a table format. Every participant is allocated a row, while each column represents a separate theme. The matrix-based format allows the researcher to move back and forth between different levels of abstraction without losing sight of the raw data. The framework also facilitates both cross-case and within-case analyses.

Table 5.1.6 below provides an excerpt of the framework prepared for this study. The original transcripts were in Finnish and all the data management and reduction was conducted in Finnish. Therefore, only selected parts of the transcriptions were translated to English for the purpose of this study. The framework was constructed so that the informants were presented in horizontal columns, while the themes (such as trust and openness) appeared in vertical columns. The strength of the framework is that it gives a broad view of all relevant passages in the data and facilitates contrasting and comparing between informants and themes. A detailed presentation of the framework is provided in Appendix E.

Trust	Openness	Relationship	Similarity vs. Dissimilarity
"I think it is some kind of mutual understanding or this is surely related to trust in the way that you are able to talk about your own issues"	*"that if you get during our meeting a feeling that you cannot be here open and honest and say out loud such things that you find difficult to admit even to yourself so then I might not be the right coach, I do offer people that escape"*	*"well of course that both want to be there (laughs) both, so that the coachee is not reluctant but, on the contrary is excited and willing to come there and of course same goes with the coach"*	*"I think coaching relationship is good when there is enough similarity, sufficiently dissimilarity, not so that everything fits in perfectly, because it gives it a nice different perspective which makes the coaching work possibly more fruitful"*
"well trust at least so I do not need to think what will follow if I say this"	*"and you yourself have that kind of certainty as a coach that I did not have, I was kind of totally naked there, I did not have any hidden agendas here and well we discussed it very openly and I think that I was able to support him very well in the thought process that he went through there"*	*"well commitment is important in that sense that when we know that at the first or second coaching meeting we create the foundation so then it is the third time or something when we can begin to assume that there will be results so that we don't give up too early, commitment in that sense then the other important thing is trust so that there is a confidential dialogue and cooperative relationship "*	*"well I think it is just this in fact when you start to think about it what I just said so in a way there it is the ability to build a safe atmosphere so that safe environment will build itself faster if you are similar, if you are similar (…) it will happen faster but then again the challenging, the other side, bringing up those different perspectives, that might be more natural if you are different"*

Table 5.1.6. Excerpt of the framework.

As can be seen above, the statements from the transcripts sometimes provided clear indications on the relevant theme, while at other times describing the theme in a more abstract way. This meant that instead of single words, wider contexts in the interviews were examined to provide detailed descriptions of the specific situations and action sequences, in accordance with the interview method chosen for the study. Long passages taken from the Finnish language transcriptions ensured richness of data with full narratives, background and nuances. In accordance with the social constructionist approach chosen for the study, the objective of the analysis was not to explain the actions of the informants but to understand them, and this purpose justified the inclusion of the narratives. However, in the final display of the framework, only the key passage of the narrative was presented, but the original wordings as such were not changed in any way.

5.1.6.1 Steps of the Framework Analysis

The following section describes in detail various steps included in building the framework.

In accordance with the social constructionist approach, the researcher is an integral part of the research process and the gathered data, and therefore, it is always preferable that the transcriptions are prepared by the researcher himself. The transcription, even though made verbatim, is itself considered an interpretation of the speech. It is to be noted that this is by no means a handicap but a normal characteristic of social constructionism.

In addition, the transcription by the researcher made the data speak loudly and constantly to the researcher. The word "loudness" means that the nuances and the subtle, direct and purposeful expressions by the informants were "heard" and that the messages and stories they were telling were listened to carefully. The word "constantly" on the other hand means that thanks to profound immersion into the raw data, the messages and narratives of the informant continued to echo in the mind of the researcher. In sum, thanks to the manual transcription by the researcher, the data spoke "loudly and constantly" to the researcher and, therefore, gave the researcher a good start for the task of sense-making.

5.1.6.2 Indexing

After the transcriptions, the first step was the indexing of the data. At the level of individual informants, indexing seemed at first easy, but when more informants were put together, the process became more complicated. For example, there were considerable differences in the informants' narratives. Some informants, especially the coaches, spoke at length and their narratives were rich and long, whereas the coachees were more reserved in their input

and sometimes gave short answers instead of narratives surrounding their experiences. However, this was not considered a handicap since in accordance with the principles of qualitative research, the aim was not to gather a representative but a purposeful sample.

The approach selected for indexing was again very hand-craft type. First, all transcriptions were printed out and read carefully from the beginning to the end. At the same time, initial markings were made to the printouts as a pre-step for the themes. This was again a rich experience, as each interview included several shorter stories. Likewise, some of the stories were not very clear-cut but were rather reflections that the informant wanted to express in relation to some topic or reflections on what she/he had been thinking at that moment. At certain moments, it felt like several smaller themes bundled together. In sum, the first reading seemed both simple and easy. Various themes started to appear, but it was not yet clear how intertwined they really were. However, with iterations, simplicity disappeared and managing the data became more laboursome.

The work continued to accumulate when an attempt was made to reduce these large pieces of narrative to smaller and more focused passages. For example, it was sometimes challenging to discern the underlying key theme in a long narrative, since it was common that several themes were present in a single narrative. It was also common that various themes, such as trust and openness, intertwined in many examples and thus, a single passage was placed under more than just one theme. Similarly, the "coaching relationship" appeared as an overarching theme that entailed various sub-themes and ingredients, such as "trust" and "openness". This meant that, for example, one single passage could be placed under "trust", "openness" and, in addition, under the overarching theme of "coaching relationship". However, since the aim of the framework analysis was not to place all the material in neat categories, there was no problem in placing the same passage under several themes. Likewise, it was not felt problematic that all informants were not equally represented in the quoted passages. For example, as noted earlier, the responses from the coaches were richer than those of the coachees and, therefore, they are overrepresented in the quotes. Along the way, it became clear that some of the original themes did not dominate in the transcriptions, while other themes that were not originally included started to appear. This was the case, for example, with the theme of millennials, which ended up having little significance. Similarly, based on the interviews, themes of gender and working life experience were not as prominent as was expected based on the literature review.

There were some challenges as some of the informants were so vivid in their storytelling that they went from one issue to the next and sometimes answered to several questions

with one reflective story. However, when asked about the subject again, they had the opportunity to reflect on their story and fortify their standing, which made the story more comprehensible and gave additional clarity. However, understandably this made indexing and sorting more difficult, since the answers were located unevenly in various sections of the narrative. In addition, since the purpose of the interviews was to elicit rich narratives, it was obvious that single-word answers did not shed light on the questions at hand in a meaningful way.

5.1.6.3 Sense making – building the framework

Following the indexing, the next step in the process was the sense-making. One exercise in the sense-making process was to gather all transcriptions in a large room so that it was easier to visualize and conceptualize the differences and similarities within the data. This was an especially useful exercise as regards visibility, but at the same time it provided the researcher a guarantee that the immersion into and reflection on the data were working and that there was indeed a holistic process going on. After this, the relevant passages were cut out from the transcriptions and transferred to one large excel document. This was relatively easy task as the transcriptions were easy to manage and the excel was a flexible tool.

This is where the framework demonstrated its usefulness and robustness as it pushed the process onwards with transparency and logical thought. Transparency here meant that the framework allowed for easy reading and comparing between themes and with informants and provided great transparency to the process, which increased logical thinking of the researcher. The framework also came alive along with many iterations and revealed the content and relevance of various themes.

The framework brought to light the relative weight of each theme, when compared to other themes, and thus prepared the terrain for the analysis phase. Even though this was not a quantitative analysis, the framework showed very clearly which of the themes elicited vivid and spontaneous narratives or powerful and confident statements from all informants (such as "trust" and "openness") and, on the other hand, which did not result in any significant insights, even when helped with probes (such as "gender" or "industry experience"). When the initial passages were gathered in the framework, certain repetitions also became clearer and, therefore, it was decided to combine certain themes together or to abandon certain themes altogether. It was also at this point that the researcher began to think that about the

complicated relationship between the themes of "trust" and "openness", especially their reciprocity.

An additional benefit of the framework was the duration of the process. A lengthy and iterative process helped to avoid eagerness of the researched and provided certainty and maturity to the process. In addition, when the framework started to build up, an external professional was consulted on the themes, content and process. This was a particularly useful exercise as it provided additional transparency and a checkpoint for the researcher on the work being carried out.

5.1.6.4 Conclusion

The iterations included in the framework gave the process depth and reliability. Along the iterations, indexing and sorting became more demanding but also more precise as the large amount of the data started to compress. The word "compress" here means that sometimes a long sentence may at first glance tell various small stories, which can be called ideas or suggestions, but with iterations and reflections, the faint nuances become more connected to wider and more conceptual meanings. In other words, this is an integral part of the "sense-making", which in turn is an important step in any qualitative research. It is hard to say how many iterations are needed, but re-reading of the material always improves the understanding and reveals new insights in the researcher. It is also wise and practical to take a break and disassociate from the process for a while and to return and see if previous work still feels correct of whether it needs adjusting. However, it is typical for qualitative research that this work, in particular the immersion in the data, is something that the researcher must do by himself. Therefore, it is vital that there are also reflection and sufficient pauses in the process. While this naturally increases the time required by the data analysis, it is the researcher's experience that the process benefits from time, patience and perseverance, resulting in better results.

5.2 Themes

In accordance with the social constructionist approach, the themes were not based on literature review or *a priori* ideas but were the produce of first steps of the analysis (for data management and descriptive accounts, see section 5.1.4). As noted earlier, these themes arose from the analysis of the focus groups and the interviews through an iterative process. During the first steps of raw data management, the material seemed messy, but following several iterations, the themes started to take shape and received their final form. The themes are as follows:

- Trust

- Openness

- Relationship

- Similarity vs. Dissimilarity

- Age

- Gender

- Industry experience

- Millennial generation

- Coaching skills

- Presence

- Interest

- Being at service

In the following section, each theme is presented with illustrative and relevant passages taken from the transcriptions. The number at the beginning of the passage denotes the respective informant. Deleted words or expressions are shown in square brackets […]. To help understanding, the topic of the passage is sometimes given in round brackets (…).

5.2.1 Trust

Based on the interviews, "trust" is the key ingredient of a working coaching relationship. In this respect, the interviews clearly confirmed the findings of the literature review on the importance of trust (Gyllensten and Palmer 2007; De Haan and Duckworth, 2012). When inquired about the most important thing in a working coaching relationship, the overwhelming majority of the interviewees stated trust:

(0042)

> *trust of course I think it is somehow the alpha and omega in everything*

(0037)

> *trust (...) if we think about results trust is the most important thing in the relationship*

(0049)

> *(trust) has an immense significance I am sure that we would not have achieved so good results or those deep waters without trust, it is the basis of everything*

It is also interesting that several of the interviewed coaches mention that in terms of a working coaching relationship, trust is more important than for example personal traits (such as similarity or dissimilarity with the coachee) and, therefore, success in building trust does not depend on the coach's personality. The trust is "at the core" of the relationship, and without trust, the coachee will only be a "shell":

(0026)

> *I do not think that personal traits count it is perhaps more a question of whether you have the trust to do that team or group coaching (…) I think that at the end of the day certainly trust would be at the core*

(0040)

> *well it is the basis it is the starting point, if you don't have trust you won't be able to proceed or then you will only talk on the surface level of something not so relevant or the human being is somehow a shell*

Trust is also mentioned as a key feature facilitating the coaching session. For example, when trust is there, shorter coaching sessions will be sufficient:

(0026)

> *our relationship became stronger and we got that kind of trust so that we do not need to talk for an hour, twenty minutes is sufficient for us*

Similarly, the following coachee even states that trust is more important than "what the coach knows". In other words, knowledge or coaching skills cannot replace trust or compensate lack of trust:

(0052)

> *would I gain any benefit from changing the coach I don't think so because I believe that the trust with the other human being is much more important than what the coach knows or is able to do*

Many of the coachees also think that without trust, coaching remains a technical exercise with no real impact on the coachee. It is certainly possible to conduct coaching without total trust, but in the following example, the coach deems that it will remain unsatisfactory:

> *(0031)*
>
> > *so that the coach does not just take it as a given and appreciation and trust must be established right from the start if it is not established or it cannot be established a lot is going to be missing*

Without trust, there can be no real relationship. If trust is lacking, the coachee cannot be "at ease" or "himself/herself" and cannot express him/herself freely and without fear, which is critical in a working coaching relationship. The coachee must feel that he or she can talk about all issues that are relevant without fearing any consequences. The interview data contains a multitude of passages with this same idea. The following three passages serve as examples:

> *(0038)*
>
> > *I think that absolutely first there must be trust because I go into depths so quickly so if you don't trust me so I would imagine that I would hear sooner that I don't want to talk about this issue*
>
> *(0037)*
>
> > *I would say that it is important that the client feels that he can trust that he feels so that this person is on his side and that the trust right away or very quickly can be on such a level that there is absolutely no need for the client to think what he can say to this person*
>
> *(0039)*
>
> > *trust is really important I think that it will be a bit waste of time if there is no trust and if you cannot speak about the issues that really move you*

Many of the interviewees also mention the fact that within an atmosphere of trust, the coachee can be "naked" and "present" with all his merits and faults, or "ups and downs":

> *(0043)*
>
> > *you must be able to create an atmosphere of trust (...) even if you don't have anything to hide but within atmosphere of trust, I mean that you succeed in*

> *creating an atmosphere where the employee may act as a human being and*
> *bring up his ups and downs*

Likewise, as the following example shows, if trust is established, the coachee is able to speak more freely and, in turn, this immediately impacts the coach's ability to "ask the right questions":

(0052)

> *that kind of trust that you can speak because it was what I myself realised*
> *that if I don't tell those things that I have in mind what is important if I cannot*
> *tell those issues to the person she won't necessarily be able to ask me the*
> *right questions*

The theme of "openness" is discussed separately under the following section. However, many of the interviewees state that trust is a necessary condition for openness or has an "immense impact" on it. Based on majority of the interviewees, it seems that "trust" must come first, and "openness" will follow:

(0052)

> *the openness results from talking about the issues as they are and there*
> *cannot be openness without trust*

(0042)

> *trust has an immense impact on openness so how openly you are able and*
> *dare to discuss and share things about you*

(0049)

> *the trust made it so that I felt that I could be one hundred percent open and*
> *tell everything*

(0050)

> *absolutely I think that perhaps trust allows for openness and being critical,*
> *trust perhaps interacts with openness in other ways too*

While above it was stated that "trust" is a necessary condition for "openness", for some interviewees it seems that it is the other way round. In the following examples, the interviewees state that being open about yourself, for example mentioning your faults and failures, will facilitate the establishment of trust:

(0039)

> *the main issue is the human being but when you tell something about yourself and your own background I think this will arouse trust*

(0048)

> *and the trust may be also grows when the coach shares from his own career path or life something more personal and also dares to talk about those failures*

Another concept that facilitates the atmosphere of trust is the coach's interest in the coachee.

(0049)

> *well I think it is important that you are interested (...) I don't know how else the trust would be established if not, I think that trust will not be established in a clinical atmosphere*

The establishment of trust also results in other concepts that are beneficial to the strengthening of a working coaching relationship. One of these is "safe atmosphere", which was also brought up in the literature review (De Haan and Duckworth, 2012). "Safety" and "trust" are thus closely connected, in the same way as "trust" and "openness":

(0025)

> *the first word that comes into mind is the ability to build a safe atmosphere whatever the means, through listening and presence and appreciation*

(0048)

> *you had right from the beginning a safe feeling to be coached, that is immensely important and through that feeling of safety, there would be trust*

What then are critical factors in establishing trust? Based on the interviews, it seems that they are a combination of various traits and actions. In the following example, the coach mentions that in addition to the coach's "business background, references and credibility", it will be the "attitude" and "energy" that are critical factors in establishing trust, and trust is established "in the situation":

(0035)

> *(trust) is established through me having the business background, I have the references, I have the evidence, in a way I already have the credibility, you think hey this girl knows what she is doing, but then actually it really is established only in the situation when you face the person what is your attitude what is your energy*

On a similar note, the following example underlines the impact of a face-to face meeting on the ability to build the trust:

(0027)

> *(…) I think that it is most critical that the coach and the coachee meet in person before the process begins (…) and you must establish some kind of personal connection there so it often happens that I personally go or want to meet the people who are interested in purchasing my services*

Some interviewees are of the opinion that trust is established right at the beginning of the relationship and, thus, the first minutes of the first meeting are critical in terms of building trust, and the first impression is what counts: trust must be established "right from the start" and during "the first ten minutes", and confidentiality must be clear "at the first meeting":

(0035)

> *it is the first ten minutes that's how much time you have*

(0039)

> *I think it is at the beginning it is really important, so if it does not start to build up for real so I think that is the most important stage*

(0050)

> *I think trust is absolutely the first thing and think that it must be clear at the very first meeting that these are confidential discussions because then it opens the possibility to discuss anything*

The importance of the first session in the establishment of trust was also underlined in the following comment by a coachee:

(0052)

> *the coach said that it is good to have this kind of session to find out whether you can trust the other person so that you are able to go things through openly*

Conversely, some interviewees state that trust is normally not established in the beginning but will grow later in the process. It might be argued that this feature varies depending on the individual: some people are in this sense 'faster' than others, and with some people, trust is established more quickly, while others need more time to build the courage to approach the coach openly. The following coach states that even a chosen coach has to "earn the trust":

(0025)

> *I notice that in fact trust only comes let's say after two or three months, it is only at that date that they truly have the courage to be open even though they have chosen me and they have been given the choice so even then I have had to earn that trust*

On a similar note, the following coach states that between similar persons, trust is established quicker. This interesting theme will be looked at in more detail under section 5.2.4 ("Similarity vs. Dissimilarity").

(0040)

> *when the other one is completely opposite I think it will take more time to establish trust*

The following passage shows interestingly that when trust is there, the coachee will also feel free to stop the process anytime or speak out in case he or she feels that that you "are not at the core" or that something is missing. Therefore, in an atmosphere of trust, there is a shared responsibility for the success of the coaching: it is certainly not enough for the coachee to just listen passively to the coach's instructions, but the coach and the coachee should contribute to the establishment of trust through being open, thus building the relationship through mutual effort. As suggested in the literature review, such co-generation on meaning by the coach and the coachee serves as a building block for their collaborative relationship (Stelter, 2014). In the following passage, the coach refers to this nicely as obeying the "rules of the game".

(0027)

> *trust (...) and that you have confirmed the rules of the game for the process,*
> *somehow established the trust through the process, that you agree together*
> *on the rules of the game, you emphasize that this is confidential*

The following example describes interestingly how "growing trust" allows for the coaching to approach goals and discuss issues that are "dramatically critical" and "totally different from the original goals" set for the coaching. Thus, trust in the relationship becomes a transformative motor and brings flexibility to the coaching process:

(0027)

> *when we went ahead and the trust grew it could be that the discussion took*
> *us to a matter which was totally different from the goal that we had set at the*
> *beginning and it might be an issue that was, from the viewpoint of his total*
> *well-being and life, something dramatically critical*

Similarly, the following coach states that where trust is present, dramatic and total changes are possible and the entire coaching experience will be much more useful:

(0040)

> *(...) when you have developed a deep trusting relationship with somebody*
> *and this is the most terrific side to coaching, is that you can somehow be a*
> *part of a bigger change for that person*

(0040)

> *when he in principle thought so let's see how this will be but then when we*
> *got into a trusting conversation so his mindset changed totally and he felt*
> *that there were immense benefits for him*

In sum, it can be said that trust is a critical key ingredient of a working coaching relationship. Without trust, the coachee cannot feel comfortable and coaching will remain a technical exercise with no real discoveries or insights. The evidence from the interviews for the importance of trust in the relationship is overwhelming: it was mentioned by nearly all of the interviewees. In addition, when a probe relating to trust was made (such as "what about trust?"), no one of the interviewees stated that it had little importance or was irrelevant.

5.2.2 **Openness**

Openness is another key ingredient of a working coaching relationship (Boyce et al., 2010), and it has also been mentioned as an asset particularly appreciated by millennials (Zopiatis et al., 2012). The interviews confirm the view presented in the literature. In addition, openness has an interesting and close relationship with trust. Various interviewees see openness as "the condition for trust" or "the other side of trust". On the other hand, trust also facilitates openness: it is easy to be open towards a trusted person, and there can be no openness without trust. The following examples describe the role of openness:

> *(0026)*

>> *perhaps openness is the other side of the courage so that you are open to things, open dialogue, that is the other side of trust so that you are also able to discuss difficult issues*

> *(0038)*

>> *I think openness is in a certain manner a condition for establishment of trust, a condition for that you can show that you have compassion, openness is also about talking, through openness you in a way also have the opportunity to discuss a matter which should be clearer in terms of ethics*

> *(0052)*

>> *I think that (openness) is something you have to earn and openness will follow when you talk about issues as they are, and there can be no openness without trust*

Many interviewees point out that openness is critical because in coaching, the coachee must also be able to discuss difficult issues and problems. Without openness, coaching will become superficial and remain a technical exercise. Many interviewees also point out that openness will help the coachee to do his job properly and reach the best possible results:

> *(0042)*

>> *well trust has an enormous impact on the openness and on how openly you are able and dare to discuss and share things about you (…) it also probably helps the coach to perform, to reach the best possible end result*

Likewise, several interviewed coachees mention that it is critical for the success of the coaching that the coachee feels that he or she is able to talk about the key issues:

(0037)

> *I think that the most important thing is that you are honest to yourself and able to talk about those issues in which you want to develop and which you can influence and you must not think that, well this is something I do not dare to talk about, because that won't help you*

For the following coachee, openness also denotes respect and appreciation:

(0035)

> *I think that openness is respect, it in fact means that you appreciate this other human being as a human being and if you can't be totally open in the relationship so you end up discussing so superficial issues that it will not be worthwhile to pay lots of money for that*

Likewise, the interviewees often underline that if the coachee is not able to speak openly about all his issues and reveal the entire background to the coach, it will be challenging for the coach to know how to ask the right questions:

(0052)

> *but if you think, what can I tell, if you can't tell the whole thing where it comes from you are a little bit in a half-way state so that you will not give proper answers, then it might be challenging for the coach to try to find out why did he say this and try to dig it out*

Openness is also connected to the ability to create a safe atmosphere, where the coachee can be totally "naked with all his faults" and is also able to express such views as criticism towards his workplace and work community:

(0025)

> *I really think it is the safe atmosphere and the very fact that you manage, in one way or other, to create a space in which I could be open with all my faults and good and bad characteristics*

(0042)

> *(when thinking about openness) when thinking about working life, it went deeper, you were able to analyse your own workplace and work community more openly and deeply and somehow safely and critically so there was no danger that someone would get offended by it*

In the following example, the interviewee very clearly states that if you cannot be open in a coaching relationship, the coach needs to be changed:

(0025)

> *that if you get during our meeting a feeling that you cannot be here open and honest and say out loud such things that you find difficult to admit even to yourself so then I might not be the right coach, I do offer people that escape*

Similarly, the following coach points out that "acting with caution" and "speaking vaguely" may result in a less fruitful coaching process:

(0027)

> *a good coaching relationship requires that the client opens himself and speaks honestly about his issues since if he somehow starts acting with caution and just speaks vaguely the coaching process cannot be as fruitful as it could be, at its best*

The following example describes very vividly how important it is that the relationship is so open that absolutely everything can be discussed, even difficult issues, "all the life circles". Many of the interviewees seem to think that a person is a whole, and it also seems that for these coachees, the barrier between executive coaching and life coaching has become blurred. In terms of openness, it is also worth to note that many issues that at first sight do not seem to be related with coaching may in fact be very relevant in advancing the goals set for coaching.

(0037)

> *if you are a bit doors closed or the client feels that this is an issue we can't talk about and those are the issues that the client is very much thinking about so in that case it won't proceed (…) it is one of coaching's basic principles that a human being is a whole so that you have there everything all the life circles*

The following example shows clearly that if the client is not ready to be open and feels that he cannot be totally open in the relationship, the coach cannot force the client to go there, even if it might prove interesting. In other words, openness cannot be forced and this would in fact be against the ethics of a good coach:

(0027)

> *it can be that the individual does not want to open certain doors, he is not ready, the coaching process can only proceed so far as the client at that point and at that situation has resources for, even though there could be something important to be discovered here, but if the client is not ready to go there, so then you just don't go there*

Interestingly, the following example underlines the fact that coaching happens between two human beings who are open to each other: this coach thinks that it helps to build trust if the coach also tells something about himself. The following is also an example of openness being a condition and ingredient of trust. Trust is established, when "two human beings are present":

(0031)

> *if you have a coachee and you coach him and ask questions about him in the beginning, I think that it is also fair that you tell something about yourself and are open (…) there must be two human beings present and that is when trust is established*

Therefore, in order to build a working relationship, the coach must also be totally "naked" and with no hidden agenda, and the discussions must be open. It is not enough that only the coachee is open, the same is required from the coach:

(0034)

> *I was kind of totally naked there, I did not have any hidden agendas here and well we discussed it very openly and I think that I was able to support him very well in the thought process that he went through there*

In a somewhat different tone, in the following passage the coach states that if the coachee does not have the capacity or resources to be open, the coach and the coachee can "work on openness". This passage firmly sees trust as the key ingredient for openness:

(0035)

> *it can be in the beginning if the person is really reserved or in a way trusts but is maybe reserved, maybe so that he does not really know how to talk about feelings or put these thoughts down into words, but when the trust is at the bottom you can work on openness*

As noted in the literature review, Finns have a collectivist and consensus-oriented mindset (Hofstede, 2001), which means that Finns often choose silence over revealing deeper thoughts. Therefore, openness is a challenge in the Finnish society. Likewise, in the following passage, the coach states that these managers are not even "open to themselves". Thus, it might be that in international comparisons, coaches with older Finnish clients must work harder to get their clients to assume an open mind-set in order to get genuine results.

(0035)

> *there are lots of these 55-year old men who have been for thirty years in management so it is really not the first thing that they are used to doing that you can speak freely, they are not even used to being open to themselves let alone to a strange person, so it is totally ok that you come and learn it there*

On the other hand, when asked about millennials, many of the interviewees said that they are more willing to be open towards the coach and also accustomed to reflect on themselves, making them an ideal target group for coaching:

(0026)

> *they belong to that age group so that the ability to reflect is incredible so I have to say that something must have happened in this school world after a fifty-year old has been at school because they really have the ability to reflect upon their doings*

Interestingly, openness can also be hindered by personal traits. In the following example, the coach mentions that it will be impossible to be open if the coach resembles your "old school bully". As is the case with similarity and dissimilarity, the interviewed coaches seem divided on the question whether it is required or even possible for a skilled coach to somehow adapt oneself so that the coachee will forget these negative images and act openly so that trust may be established. The following coach seems to think that this is not possible and that in this case, the coach needs to be changed:

(0025)

> *even if we were totally similar which, basically, should mean that this should be totally ok and then we meet for the first time and the client notices that I remind him of his old school bully and he cannot possibly be open and might*

> *not even be able to explain in words that the reason is that my traits are similar to those of his bully so it won't work*

To conclude, the data show that openness is a key ingredient in a working coaching relationship. It is very closely connected to the concept of trust. Without total trust, the coachee cannot act openly, which will affect the quality of the coaching. It also may be relevant to note that none of the interviewees thought that openness would not be important or that it would suffice if the coachee were open while the coachee would remain reserved and cautious about his own experiences or feelings. In other words, many of the interviewees saw that in a working coaching relationship, there needs to be an equality of trust and openness between "two human beings".

5.2.3 Relationship

As suggested by the literature review, a good, close and evolving relationship between the coach and the coachee is critical for successful coaching. This issue has be discussed in the literature extensively (Laske, 2007; Boyce et al., 2009; Kilburg, 2009; Ladyshewsky, 2009; De Haan and Duckworth, 2012; Joo et al., 2012; Grant 2013a; Patti et al., 2015). The coaching relationship is a result of a mutual effort: both parties must cooperate and share the feeling that "this will become a good and working relationship":

> *(0027)*

> *it is important that we both share the feeling that this will become a good cooperative relationship and, if it feels based on this meeting that something is not quite right it is better for the client that I recommend some other option*

As already stated above and in the literature review, "trust" and "safe atmosphere" are critical ingredients in a working coaching relationship. In the following passage, the interviewed coachee also mentions the fact that the coach and the coachee share the same understanding on what they are about to do:

> *(0051)*

> *it is important that you have trust and both share the same understanding on what they are about to do and that that is a safe meeting and that the coachee can feel that this situation is for him and this is not a job interview or something where you should try to show your competence*

Similarly, it is critical that both parties are willing to build the relationship and eager and ready to contribute to it:

131

(0031)

> *well of course that both want to be there (laughs), the coachee is not reluctant but, on the contrary is excited and willing to come there and of course same goes with the coach*

Based on the interviews, the coaching relationship is an evolving process. As the following passage shows, in a good relationship that is based on mutual trust, openness and commitment, the preliminary targets set for the coaching may change and, as the coaching proceeds, entirely new and more challenging goals may emerge:

(0025)

> *when the relationship deepens and trust grows, it might be that the target that first seemed small suddenly becomes much bigger, so you need to have a possibility to continue the relationship*

It is an interesting question whether a very professional coach with excellent coaching skills would be capable of adapting himself so that when the relationship evolves, a coachee who was reserved at the outset would finally feel at ease. It seems that the interviewees are divided on this: some state that the relationship and trust is established at once, but others believe that they develop with time, perhaps supported by the coach's skills. However, in the following example, the coach is of the opinion that you "should trust the ten minutes" and change the coach if there is a feeling that the coach and the coachee are not "at the same wave-length":

(0035)

> *you should trust the ten minutes, if you as a coachee have the feeling that we are not in the same wave-length, change because it can be quite ok as a coaching process but it will never be brilliant*

However, the following coach thinks that even though the first meeting is important, it is the coach's commitment at the following sessions that will enable the relationship to evolve, supported by trust:

(0026)

> *well commitment is important in that sense that when we know that at the first or second coaching meeting we create the foundation so then it is the third time when we can begin to assume that there will be results so that we*

> *don't give up too early, the other important thing is trust so that there is a*
> *confidential dialogue and cooperative relationship*

This passage firmly confirms the argument of Boyce et al. (2010), according to which trust, rapport and commitment are the key aspects of the coaching relationship.

5.2.4 Similarity vs. Dissimilarity

The interplay between similarity and dissimilarity of the coach and the coachee is a very interesting one. The issue has been discussed in the literature only to some extent. For example, while Bozer et al. (2015) found that gender similarity had no impact on the effectiveness of coaching, Ianiro et al. (2013) found that coach-coachee similarity in interpersonal dominance and affiliation was an important factor in formulating a successful coaching relationship. In contrast, Boyce et al. (2010) argued that *complementary* managerial and learning styles provided more efficient and effective relationships and thus positive outcomes in the coaching.

The same situation is apparent in the interviews: the interviewees are somewhat divided on the issue. On one hand, similarity is seen as beneficial for the formation of a functioning and close relationship, and if there are similarities, the relationship will be established more quickly. On the other hand, similarity brings with it a risk of the coaching turning into consultation. When the coach and the coachee are too similar in thinking, there is also the risk of lacking new perspectives:

> *(0035)*
>
> > *if the coach is personally very similar to the coachee there are risks because*
> > *I understand you so well that I might no longer be able to question your*
> > *thinking, if you yourself are not super-conscious of what you are doing*

The following coach thinks that prior knowledge about the coachee will result in dangerous assumptions and will make the coach less eager to ask questions:

> *(0025)*
>
> > *perhaps the less we know about the person's background, the better*
> > *coaches we are and that we do not make an error and assume things when*
> > *we in fact should have the patience to ask*

Although similar persons are likely to get along very well, the idea of coaching is that the coachee finds the solutions himself and not based on the coach's advice. The following coach first seems to assess this on a case-by-case basis, depending on the matter:

(0037)

> *this is a wonderful question because on the other hand if you are similar so it is easy for me in a way to adapt myself to the client's experience, if we are different so I am kind of more curious about the difference so I guess it depends on the matter*

Finally, this coach concludes that similarity often becomes a "limiting box" and thus may be harmful for the outcome of coaching:

(0037)

> *I have worked with clients that have a totally different approach from me, so then you have there a certain kind of loose feeling, a certain kind of liberty between us, maybe it is because I am aware or feel that I don't understand the client so well, so if I work with a person who is in some way similar to me (…) it becomes a box in which the client must fit*

The following example brings forth the risk for the coachee: when coached by a person with a similar history, it is natural that the coachee begins to wish that the coach will give him good advice based on his experience:

(0025)

> *that is natural for a human being that if you find in the background something which resonates with your own history it could be that that is the reason why he chooses just this coach, and there is this risk of expectations that now I will have for myself a mentor who tells me how I should deal with these issues*

The following coach thinks that a balanced dosage of similarity and dissimilarity gives the best starting point:

(0038)

> *I think coaching relationship is good when there is enough similarity, sufficiently dissimilarity, not so that everything fits in perfectly, because it gives a nice different perspective which makes the coaching work possibly more fruitful*

Similarity/dissimilarity might relate to various issues, such as mindset, speed or personal traits or the person's type in general. It seems that for the coaches and coachees alike, it is more a question of type than of age or gender:

> *(0031)*
>
>> *maybe it is more a question of type so that you somehow feel that the communication is not artificial but somehow relaxed or easy (…) I think that at the end of the day that might be more decisive*

The following coach cites tempo, i.e. being a slow or fast person, as one of the dimensions, and concludes that coaching between such different types may be challenging:

> *(0027)*
>
>> *I think that a certain kind of similarity, it may be easy and safe to proceed with a same type of person, so for example if the other one has a very slow tempo and I personally, I am quite fast, so slow and reflective types are perhaps challenging for me*

The same coach speaks about challenges due to differences in tempo between the coach and the coachee, which meant that the coach "did not manage to get a grip on him":

> *(0027)*
>
>> *if you have clients with a very different tempo, well I remember one such client who talked and talked and talked but somehow I did not manage to get a grip on him, somehow even though I tried various ways, I do not really know what was the problem so I never really knew whether he did get anything out of it*

According to the following coaches, challenging the coachee will be easier if the coach and the coachee are dissimilar, and challenging questions will appear "naturally":

> *(0025)*
>
>> *a safe environment will build itself faster if you are similar, but then again challenging, the other side, bringing up those different perspectives might be more natural if you are different*

(0026)

> *if you are a person with a very similar personality trust is established very easily and quickly (…) this is an absolute strength, however if you are too similar so am I capable as a coach to bypass my personality and ask those questions and bring up such perspectives that would really challenge him to think issues from a different viewpoint, if I were totally different such questions would come naturally from a different perspective*

Against this background, it is perhaps surprising that many interviewees pointed out that it is often the coachees' wish that the coach would have a somewhat similar background, such as experience from the same industry or from a similar corporate position, which will help to establish a sense of trust. Accordingly, the majority of the interviewed coachees saw similarity as an asset. However, contrary to this, many coaches stated that the coaching processes can be very functional "even if the coach has no understanding of the client" and that "the basic requirement of a coach is to be okay with the fact that you don't know". This paradox is evident in the following passages from the same coach:

(0026)

> *my experience is that coachees or clients in general want that coach has experience from the industry or from coaching same type of persons or persons in similar positions this is what clients wish*

(0026)

> *coaching processes can be very functional with results and impacts even if the coach has no understanding of the client or if for example his natural speed is very different from the client's mindset, dissimilarity opens the client's perspective better than similarity*

The following coach is sceptical about the entire idea of perfect similarity/dissimilarity match and seems to think that it always depends on the type and ad hoc chemistry:

(0027)

> *sometimes the fact that there is enough difference means you are able to give the other person something that he does not have (…) so this is not an ideal profile, how much dissimilarity similarity, how can anyone know what is the optimal combination for just that coaching pair*

However, many interviewees point out that even though it is good that you are not totally similar, interaction may become difficult or burdensome if you have a totally different tempo. In addition, it helps if you have some common "contact points" or "at least have the same language" so that you feel that you are "equal partners":

> *(0031)*
>
>> *but there are certain matters that are important in interaction between people and one of them is rhythm so if you have a person who is very fast, let's say as a coach so the coaching journey might be very burdensome if the coachee is very slow and reflective*
>
> *(0035)*
>
>> *even though I say that it is good that they are different you need to have some contact points (…) so that you have that much in common that there is a feeling that you are like equal partners*

5.2.5 Age

The impact of age difference on the success of the coaching relationship has not been discussed in the literature to any significant extent. However, Ensher and Murphy (2011) discussed age and its impact within the context of mentoring dyad and highlighted the challenges in understanding the other party's expectations. Nonetheless, the irrelevance of the age issue became evident in the interviews. None of the interviewees seemed to attach much importance to the age difference between the coach and the coachee. It is also to be noted that no one of the interviewees brought up the question of age at their own initiative but all occurrences of age were responses to the researcher's separate questions or probes. This suggests that age does not matter:

> *(0026)*
>
>> *I have experienced a group in which the age range was 40 years twelve people and it worked very well, in that group age had no relevance whatsoever*
>
> *(0027)*
>
>> *age will only be a problem if either one feels that it is a problem*

When probed about age preferences in selecting a coach, the following coach stated that only on one rare occasion, she was asked about her age:

(0038)

> *I know that once one client wondered how can you practice career coaching if you are in the final stages of your career, do you have all the means of modern job searching, but not so that it would have been a question of anything else than expertise*

Conversely, the following coach thought that a significant age difference would have an impact and may bring with it the risk of coaching turning into mentoring:

(0031)

> *if for example the coach is clearly older the coachee is twenty or thirty years younger than you so it might very easily result in a clear mentoring position and then you must be very careful that it is a coaching relationship and more equal in that sense*

Instead of age as such, some of the interviewees mention that life experience is more relevant and, thus, age as such does not matter or rather impacts indirectly in the way that older people normally have more life experiences:

(0035)

> *a twenty-year old who has not yet experienced much life so how deep a coach can she be, this is what I maybe doubt a bit but where the line goes so it is not necessarily thirty years or forty years or sixty years it is maybe more that you have experienced life*

(0042)

> *well I would say that for me it was very important that my coach was significantly more experienced and older than me in that sense that she had more life experience and experience from working life in general*

The following coach mentions that similarity of age or, to be more accurate, the same amount of life experience, facilitates the establishment of trust:

(0037)

> *well I think there is this same similarity when I coach a person with approximately same amount of life experience than me so it makes it quicker easier maybe and deepens the trust in certain way (…) and again you easily*

> *get the feeling that we are kind of the same and somehow get to the same wavelength easily*

It is also perhaps not very surprising that the coachees tend to prefer a somewhat older coach as they have more experience, which naturally results in a stronger respect towards and belief in the coach:

(0032)

> *I think that certain respect and belief in the stuff is better when you are a bit older, my coach was roughly fifteen years older than me so I think maybe if someone twenty-five year old coach would come and ask me those questions I guess there would be a different respect*

5.2.6 Gender

As suggested by the literature review, the coach's gender is not the key issue in building a working coaching relationship (Gray and Gorekaokar, 2019; Bozer et al., 2015; Furnham et al., 2012). As was the case with age, not one of the interviewees seemed to attach much importance to gender. Not one of the interviewees brought up the question of gender at their own initiative but all occurrences were responses to the researcher's separate questions or probes. Therefore, there is strong evidence that gender is not relevant:

(0026)

> *well finally it is not a question of gender, I think it is more about the person's other traits*

(0027)

> *well I do not really know I would not say, rather it is a question of type and style, based on my experience*

It is to be noted that instead of the coachees, it is customary that the supervisors or the HR who select the coach wish for a coach of certain gender. In contrast, it seems that for the coaches, gender is not an issue:

(0031)

> *I have not noticed that it would have any significance at least for me but sometimes clients wish that the coach is a man or a woman*

(0031)

> *it is often the case that it is not the coachee who asks for it but for example the supervisor or HR who are coordinating it, so they might say that it might be better for this person if it was a man or a woman and in the background I think there is some kind of assumption of the person's values or attitudes*

There are also a few passages in which a coachee has particularly wished for a coach of a specific gender. The following coach states that in this case, it is better to fulfil the clients' wishes, in order to make the client feel at ease:

(0035)

> *once it happened that this person chose a male coach and I think that for him it was a gender issue, so if it is this kind of issue for the client so it is then better that the client chooses a person with whom he is in sync*

(0038)

> *yes there have been preferences, so if there is, so preferably a women, if there is, so preferably a man*

However, the following coachee warns that fulfilling the wish for a coach of a certain gender may also entail the risk that the coach will not be as curious and starts making assumptions about the coachee, which will then affect the coaching process:

(0037)

> *I think it has less significance than age but, now when I think about it, so it is a bit same thing as with the client being very different as to his approach, so I am more free to be curious about it and do not assume so much and then I will do my work better*

Interestingly, the following example shows that one of the coachees would prefer that there should be a female coach for a female coachee because of "women's status in the working life":

(0042)

> *maybe I would feel that a woman as a coach could be better since I feel a bit that women's status in the working life is still that they are a bit at a weaker position so I believe that only another woman could be a good coach to another woman*

To conclude, the interviews confirmed the position taken in the literature that gender does not matter. In the contrary, a more interesting argument was made that in fact, choosing a coach of a certain gender may limit the curiousness of the coach and, therefore, affect the effectiveness of the coaching relationship.

5.2.7 Industry experience

While the impact of the coach's experience from a the coachee's industry has not been dealt within the coaching literature, it is typical in mentoring that the mentor uses industry experience to guide the mentee (Hawkins and Smith, 2013). However, this theme became evident in the focus group sessions and was therefore included in the interview protocol.

Many of the interviewed coachees saw sufficient working experience a critical criterion in building a successful coaching relationship. The coachees also believe that a vast working experience helps to build the coach's credibility:

> *(0042)*
>
> > *I have set very high targets for myself and I feel that the person who gives me coaching must have enough working experience so that it is credible and she is able to give me visions which genuinely help me in getting forward*

As already became clear with the examples related to similarity/dissimilarity, when choosing the coach, clients often want one with experience from the same industry or from a similar corporate position and therefore tend to check the coach's background prior to selection. Several of the interviewed coaches also thought that this kind of similarity helps to get "quicker to the core" with the client. This becomes very evident in the following passage:

> *(0025)*
>
> > *you often come across the situation that when a client chooses the coach so he wants to check her background (…) if you have on some level lived in that same world than your client, I have succeeded in getting quicker to the core, I have found quicker those, let's say those strong questions which have made the person open up*

It seems that for many coachees, it is important that the coach has similar experience either from the industry or from a similar corporate position. This is actually not surprising as it is part of human nature that similarity supports the building of trust.

(0027)

> *when the coachee assesses that well is this the right guy for me, if you have in mind certain kinds of problems for which you search a coach so in that case I think the coachee appreciates that you have for example worked as a superior*

Many of the coaches are of the opinion that even though you do not need the industry expertise in coaching, it often facilitates or makes it easier and quicker to build a relationship when you are "familiar with the client's world" or you "speak the same language". The following passage describes it graphically when the coach states that even though in theory the coach should be a "tabula rasa", similar experience helps to understand the client's world:

(0027)

> *in coaching there should not be any relevance what is your expertise what is your working experience since a coach is like a tabula rasa but I think it surely helps you to identify with the client's world so that you understand the language the client speaks*

However, the following passages describe in very clear terms the idea that the coaching will be purer and more fruitful if the coach is "stupid", i.e. he does not know *anything* about the client and is in a "no knowing position". Therefore, for these coaches, not knowing is absolutely the better choice, and they deem it better for the success of the coaching:

(0037)

> *well actually it is better for the success of the coaching that the coach does not know anything but then again this is not something that all people know, many people believe that it is a good thing if I have similar experience from that industry, so the clients sometimes have such expectations, but in reality coaching is purer the more stupid the coach is*

(0031)

> *if you have a very similar background it will make the coaching worse (…) because in that situation it is so easy to begin consulting or it happens very easily that you start together dramatizing and saying yeah this is so horrible which is of course unprofessional coaching but it happens*

(0031)

> *well before I somehow thought that it is safer if you understand something about the coachee's business (…) but nowadays a rather think that is safer when you do not know so then you have the opportunity to be in this no knowing position that you ask more genuinely*

It is also very interesting that even though the coaches in general attempt to carefully separate coaching from consulting, certain coaches state that in some situations, it can be very useful to give advice based on their own experiences. In other words, these coaches are of the opinion that it would be a shame if they could not share their experience just because they are acting as a coach and, thus, do not recommend an overly puritan approach in that sense:

(0027)

> *traditionally coach does not give advice and does not say where you should go but you can share from your own experience base if you ask the client's permission for that and it sometimes happens that this kind of practical example from your own experience may be significant for the client*

Interestingly, the following passage reveals that the lack of similar experience from the corporate world might in fact undermine the coach's confidence in himself and thus result in a "mental barrier", affecting the quality of the relationship:

(0027)

> *it is more of a question of how at ease you are there so do you feel that you are in your own area, can you be yourself, can you feel at ease when you talk about these things, if you think that somebody had been let's say a nurse and had not worked for a single day in corporate world, so it can happen that your own mind builds a barrier for you*

Conversely, in the following the coach expresses her concern that should the coach begin to worry whether they *understand* what the client is telling, this may undermine the coaching process because the coach will not be as curious and may instead develop "tunnel vision":

(0037)

> *it does not matter at all in terms of the process whether I understand or not (…) and it might be better that I do not understand because once again I do not assume anything, I do not have a tunnel vision but I can be freely curious*

All in all, the interviewees seem divided on whether similar working experience is good or bad. For example, the following passage shows that it may also hinder the process if you know nothing at all about the industry or do not even share the same language and concepts:

(0035)

> *well if I was coaching in a company and I did not understand their jargon and they use it very much, I would need somehow to cope with the situation so find out how much do I need to understand so that I can support the person (…) sometimes you have to stop and say that hey now I am not sure what you mean*

The following is an exception among the coachees, who usually said that experience from the similar industry is an asset. This is what this coachee answered when asked about significance of similar experience:

(0032)

> *she did not know the industry in such detail but maybe she taught me to make my message clearer and when you think about the results and where is the largest benefit, so I think it is a strength that you do not know the industry but you look at it very neutrally, you look at it as being just another industry*

5.2.8 Generation and Millennials

As was the case with age and gender, it seems that the generation represented by the coachee does not hold any relevance for the formation of the coaching relationship: it is more a question of the individual's personal traits and not those of the generation. This finding is in line with the literature review, which brought forward various challenges related to the entire concept of generations (Purhonen, 2007; Parry and Urwin, 2011; Weber and Urick 2007).

(0025)

> *well I would rather say that it is the human the person the individual which makes the difference, not the year you were born in*

However, there are many traits typically associated with millennials (Smola and Sutton, 2002; Siltala, 2013; Kultalahti and Viitala, 2014), and the interviewees also mentioned

several of these. To begin with, many are of the opinion that the millennials are more reflective and very eager to think about their future:

(0042)

> *people of your own age and especially those highly educated academic people are very much thinking about their own direction and their own significance, their own career, the meaning of life so to speak and it somehow seems that people have this feeling of insufficiency and certain kind on uncertainty of their own expertise*

Some of the interviewees also point out that millennials are not as bound by duties and obligations as the previous generations but rather acting more like free spirits and with a good ability to self-reflect:

(0037)

> *we have learned and inherited different kind of thinking which includes a lot more duties and obligations, the young are much freer than people of my age to think what I want from life or from my working duties*

(0026)

> *they belong to that age group so that the ability to reflect is incredible so I have to say that something must have happened in this school world after a fifty-year old has been at school because they really have the ability to reflect upon their doings*

Related to the same theme, the following coach states that older people with more experiences are "prisoners in a box of their beliefs". However, it is not certain whether this feature has to do with generation or age in general:

(0037)

> *people in their twenties do not expect anything they do not expect so much but I think in certain way respect all experience but cannot somehow specify it but older people who have experience and who are as prisoners in a box of their beliefs might have more expectations or fantasies on what would be good*

The following coachee sees millennials as a very promising target group for coaching: they are more outspoken, more willing to embark on a dialogue and also more interested in developing themselves:

(0026)

> *when these millennials become well a bit more mature they will be a very promising client group for coaching (…) you could think that this dialogue is easier with them so that at the stage when they begin to be interested in developing themselves it is likely that coaching will work very well with them*

In the following passage, the coachee points out that millennials have different values and therefore, they are no longer willing to accept the traditional, austere Finnish management culture and need new approaches:

(0042)

> *many times it would be sufficient for some people that somebody would just say that you have done a damn good job (…) this is maybe a relic from the Finnish management culture which should have already disappeared, this thinking that gratefulness is the poor man's payment (…) today's millennials just don't buy that anymore*

It is also important to note that some differences might not result from the generation as such but rather from other aspects of life, such as culture or education:

(0035)

> *no it depends on education it is not necessarily always the age but the culture of the family in which people have grown, and it may be that this is the reason why it works since I come from a slightly different culture*

However, some coaches state that maybe it is not a question of generational traits: rather such young persons have not yet had the opportunity or strength to reflect upon their choices and this will appear naturally when they mature. In other words, these coaches do not believe in generation as a differing feature: it is more a question of age and experience:

(0027)

> *well the experience that I have from working with younger people so it can be that they have not taken a moment to reflect on what they want and whose dreams they want to fulfil and what is their own stuff so that many of the youngsters that I have met might be a bit after someone else's dreams*

5.2.9 Coaching Skills

An important question in relation to establishing a working coaching relationship is whether coaching skills, i.e. various techniques or methodologies are important or critical in this task. While it has already been noted that coaching skills cannot replace trust, the key feature of a working coaching relationship, or compensate its lack, the question remains whether coaching skills can be used to contribute to an atmosphere conducive to the establishment of trust. For example, is there a technique for coaches for establishing presence, and if so, how should this kind of technique be used to ensure best results? For example, in the literature, asking questions or active listening (Gladis and Gladis, 2015; Lancer et al., 2016), coaching with compassion (Boyatzis et al., 2006) or methods borrowed from the field of psychotherapy (Baron and Morin, 2009) have been referred to as such skills of an able coach.

It seems that techniques as such are relevant and important, but they represent only one ingredient in a working coaching relationship, and they must be used sparingly and wisely and adapted to each client's needs. It also seems that for many coaches, over-emphasizing a certain skill or technique may turn coaching into a mechanical exercise which might prevent adventures into important side paths or undermine the possibilities for spontaneous discoveries on the part of the coachee. While there are certainly many adopted and tested techniques, they might limit thinking and must therefore be used with caution. Another interesting finding is that in general, the coaches seem to be more aware of these techniques than the coachees, and the reason for this might be that experienced coaches use them so subtly that the coachees are not aware of them: a technique is only present in the background and its use is not visible to the coachee or to a layman.

Based on the interviews, the initial impression is that coaches deem that coaching skills are important, but they are surely not enough. First, they must be put into use and only come to life through experience:

> *(0034)*
>
>> *I cannot separate them [coaching skills and experience], you know they come and go always together in a way, in principle you might have studied all the courses and be technically capable but it is in a way only through experience that it realises that you can really act as a coach, utilize what you have learned*

The following coachee emphasizes that skills are critical in turning "coffee table discussions into coaching with real objectives":

(0038)

> *coaching skills is what in my opinion turn coffee table discussions into development with objectives, we can conduct a very fine discussion here at the coffee table and feel that yes this was an excellent discussion but it will not lead anywhere*

On the contrary, the following experienced coach states that even though coaching must be "objective-oriented", it is more important for the coach to "have the patience to explore things" in order to offer the clients the "joy of discovery". Being too rigid in setting targets and following the progress might stifle the process and prevent the discovery of more critical questions:

(0035)

> *in the beginning it was very much like ok what is our objective and how do we get there, it was very objective-oriented and action-oriented, then gradually the more practice and mature you gain in the profession you understand that it is more important to have the patience to explore things, have the patience to offer people the joy of discovery*

However, several of the coaches underline that coaching is not about "technique", "tricks" or a rigid agenda; even though clear targets have been set for the coaching, it seems that for best results, such techniques must be used sparingly and flexibly. Most importantly, there is no use for the technique as such if the coach lacks "heart and sensitivity":

(0031)

> *there is a lot of debate on whether it is a method or what it is and I somehow think of it in a bit broader terms so that I do not think that it is only a trick or a method or a technique, but also a kind of mindset issue too*

(0027)

> *well it is easy to learn technique it is no problem at all but if you do not have the heart and the sensitivity to live in that situation it cannot be, you can perform somehow but in my opinion this is not a coaching performance that would be sufficient for me (…) it is not a question technique*

In the same vein, many of the coaches seem to think that coaching is not a tick-a-box experience and, therefore, it should not be evident for the client if the coach is using a certain technique. Therefore, instead of orthodoxically following a certain rigid agenda, the technique or method must be flexibly adapted to the client's needs:

(0038)

> *when you are not yet an experienced coach you rely on what you have learnt, you comply with certain methods orthodoxically, but an experienced coach is able to use methods without them showing as such, as if here I now have this trick number three in use, so maybe it is a kind of smoother working in which listening skills might have a larger role*

(0025)

> *I think it requires a lot a flexibility that you have genuinely the ability to adapt to the client's needs so that you will not get stuck as a coach to your agenda or even to the client's need even if it is somehow changed or reformulated along the way*

Similarly, the following coach describes how, based on what the coach sees, hears and feels, a "very simple model" evolves during the coaching into something more elaborate, and there might be several "side paths" along the way:

(0027)

> *so deep down you have in mind the target state, but when you are there you do this hundred percent, so what it is then, it is what do you see, what do you hear, what do you feel, well tell me about where you are now and what is here between and then it is, well I think that when I start coaching I have this very simple model in my mind but it evolves and changes and perhaps there will be several side paths*

It also seems that the more experienced the coach, the more relaxed he or she can be in terms of approaching the client. For many of the interviewed coaches, it seems that education and technique provide the necessary background, but these core competencies need to be fine-tuned through wisdom, certainty and confidence acquired through real-life experiences:

(0037)

> *when you have more experience and you train yourself to be really stupid, and then when you notice that the client makes a discovery, you begin to calm down and begin to have confidence in it that I can be stupid in relation to the client, so that I really don't know anything about him, anything else but that that there is an immense potentiality, anything might come from there*

(0038)

> *in the beginning you are very careful, there is much methodology and you use the coaching skills knowingly, you follow the book, and from there on little by little, by relying on your own skills, everybody will discover their own style, you will find what is natural for you as a coach*

What several of the coaches also emphasised was the coach's ability to apply the technique and method according to the needs of each coachee and also to have a variety of methods available, since the same techniques may not function with all coachees:

(0026)

> *coaching skills grow when you are doing coaching and it is important that you have the possibility to practice those skills so that you work upon a model that someone has taught you (…) if you apply a certain model from one year to another you will no longer be a professional coach*

In the discussion on the variety of methods, one interesting issue is whether a coach should be allowed to act, even for a short period, as a mentor or consultant for the coachee, if that is required. For example, the following experienced coach states that it is not "terribly dangerous" if one sometimes also employs other methods, such as mentoring, when such methods turn out to be useful:

(0031)

> *when I got more experienced and had done more coaching hours so I came to see that it is not so terribly dangerous if you sometimes also switch to so-called sister methods of coaching, in some situations it is only good if you put a mentor hat in your head and in some situations you can even consult (…) since in my opinion genuine client situations they are something else than academic tests*

Likewise, in the following passage, the coachee describes the flexibility with which the coach "took the coach's hat off" to offer a piece of advice:

(0032)

> *she just had the guts to go on and on and then maybe at certain points which I felt were important, she said that now I will take the coach's hat off and this will not be coaching and I think that it would be good for you to do this or this way and then she was that well now the coaching continues, for a few times*

The following coach explains that such "temporary coaching" requires solid experience and therefore is not recommended for beginner coaches:

(0035)

> *I don't believe in this black-and-white thinking that coach must never give any advice or hints, I think you can but it requires you are already quite senior in your professional coaching skills so that you can throw them in so that they are only one hint among others*

5.2.10   Presence

While the coach's ability to be present did not surface as a key theme in the literature review, the concept of presence was mentioned in the practitioner literature by Cox et al. (2010), who emphasised that the coach's presence is important to support the client and that the coach needs it to help the client to "hold an uncomfortable level of uncertainty" (2010:222). However, presence became evident in the millennial coachees' focus group and was therefore included in the interview protocol. As the following example shows, the capacity of being present obviously relates to the building of a safe atmosphere through trust and openness:

(0025)

> *the first word that comes into mind is the ability to build a safe atmosphere whatever the means, through listening and presence and appreciation and whatever elements there are*

Therefore, even though present at the situation, the coach must always stay in the background and must not act as a mentor or protagonist in any way and avoid advice-giving. The following passage combines these elements in a very clear manner:

(0026)

> *what is absolutely critical is that you give time and in coaching this relates to being a coach, to how you are present in the coaching session as a coach but at the same time somehow on the side or in the background, so that it is not about me, to any extent*

It may be interesting to note that some of the coaches do not think of "presence" as a coaching skill as such. According to the following coach, presence as such is more critical than coaching skills. Attitude combined with "the ability to be present" is enough:

(0025)

> *if you really must make it entirely naked so I would say that presence is enough so that you are present for the other human being that you have the attitude that you are here for that other person, so I would say that the attitude combined with the ability to be present is enough*

However, one interesting question is whether the impression of "being present" could be achieved through the exercise of various technical skills, such as "active listening" (Lancer et al., 2016) or "attentive listening" (Kline, 1999). For example, the following coach states that the ability to "genuinely listen" is critical, and it can be argued that the ability to listen is a technique that can be developed:

(0035)

> *they are also simply looking for someone who would genuinely listen so that you can speak out your thoughts and then, thanks to this alone, such thoughts already somehow seem a lot clearer or brighter*

The following passage adopts a somewhat different approach, stating that coaching skills are built on presence and a "right kind of attitude of growth":

(0025)

> *this is the foundation on which you develop yourself further when you build the coaching skills, I absolutely do not want to say that you don't need them they absolutely improve the quality of the relationship and the doing but I think that the presence and the growth, a right kind of attitude of growth, when you have that and you build the skills on that, it will be good*

5.2.11 Interest

The importance of the coach's interest towards the coachee was mentioned in the literature review, for example in Kultalahti's study on the millennials' perceptions towards manager-as-coach practices (2015). It also became evident in the millennial coachees' focus group and was therefore included in the interview protocol. Based on the interviews, genuine interest in the coachee is an important feature in developing a working coaching relationship. As was the case with presence, the question remains whether interest should be considered as a technique that can be developed or as a feature of the coach's personality. For the following coaches, it is critical that the coach is genuinely interested in and curious about the client and genuinely cares for him or her:

> *(0037)*
>
> *well it goes without saying that it if the coach is not interested in the client so the coach can leave and start another other career, the coach must be, the coach must be genuinely interested in the client*

> *(0037)*
>
> *if I had to define from my own perspective, so it is, it is curiosity, more than anything it is curiosity about the person's experience and path of life and about where he wants to go*

> *(0042)*
>
> *I think that it really is an essential part of it that you are not only a question automate which only writes things up, but there is a kind of caring element strongly involved in it*

The following coach takes this still a bit further and thinks that if such interest in or appreciation for another human being is lacking, there is no sense in coaching:

> *(0038)*
>
> *if you are not the slightest bit interested in the other person and you don't appreciate him and if your concept of human being is such that you are not interested I think you should not have a coaching relationship in the first place*

Likewise, the following coachee emphasizes that genuine care and interest are critical, and coaching will not be successful if the client senses that these are lacking. Thus, interest is also an important building block of trust:

(0042)

> *I think that it is also very important for me that the coach genuinely cares about me and is genuinely interested in solving with me the issues that trouble me and all in all I think that genuineness honesty are very important for me, I very easily sense if someone is not with me hundred percent*

However, the following examples show that there are also risks involved with interest. For example, the following coach warns that the coach should be interested "in the client" and not in the "client's case" and should not get involved in the matter:

(0035)

> *you have to be in that way interested that you care, that you really and wholeheartedly want that this person to succeed and achieve the things he wants to achieve, but then that you would somehow be interested in this case, so then again I think you should not be because then you go you will get involved in the matter, then you will no longer be there so that you direct the thinking process, then you will start to ask things because you want to know things*

If there is too much personal interest, that combined with the desire to help people may create a situation in which the coach no longer "trusts that the client knows" and this may result in the coaching being turned into consulting and the coach "pushing" thoughts to the client:

(0037)

> *the coach understands a lot and knows a lot and coaches have a very strong desire to help people (…)if the coach cannot trust that the client knows, the coach might have a strong pressure to start telling stuff to the client, instead of being just really stupid and curious, which would be more beneficial to that person*

Based on these examples, the situation seems ambivalent. On one hand, the coach must be interested in the client, but also be very aware of the risks involved in this. One way to put this is to emphasise that the coach does not need to know but must be interested

enough in order to ask. Coaching is not about the coach's interests or desires: it is not about the coach. In fact, "interest" as such is not as critical as the coach's *commitment* to the relationship and care for the client's success. If there is interest, it must be towards the client's success and not towards forwarding the coach's own agenda, or interest for professional reasons, since that might undermine the establishment of trust. This view is also supported in the practitioner literature, for example by Downey (2018), who emphasizes that the coach must express pure interest in the client and avoid bringing any own viewpoints into the coaching equation.

5.2.12 Being at Service

The final skill that became evident in the interviews was the coach's ability to "be at service", "in the background" or with "no ego" or "no own agenda". While the literature review did not discuss this issue separately, this capacity is an important part of the toolkit of a mature coach as suggested by Lancer et al. (2016). In practice, this means that an able and mature coach uses the tools and methods in a way that is almost inconspicuous to the coachee (Lancer et al., 2016). Many of the interviewees mentioned "big ego" as a key feature of a bad coach, whereas the ability to "forget oneself" or to be "in the background" was mentioned as a characteristic of a good and experienced coach.

> *(0035)*
>
>> *well a bad coach has a bloody big ego I think this is surely number one, the coach must have certain kind of humbleness, so it is not about you as a coach, not in the slightest, it is not about what you think or what you like or so, when you do this work you are there only for the client, totally (…)when you are there you must be able to kind of exclude yourself (…) my thoughts and my feelings and my, you know all my precedents and all, to come there empty and be present*

Interestingly, two of the coaches spoke about "creating the client's space", and that will not happen if the coach is not able to leave his ego outside the room. It is not "the coach's show":

> *(0037)*
>
>> *it is my duty to ensure that that space is entirely the client's space that all that happens all choices all reflections all such things, they all take place in*

> *the client's mind and come out from there because I am curious for what*
> *there is in the client's mind*

(0035)

> *I somehow would go back to my ability as a coach to leave my ego outside*
> *the room, ability to create a space where we are only for this person and this*
> *person is able to leave or lower his shields, the ego, and be revealed (…) as*
> *a coach, it is not about me, the person is not telling those issues to me*

(0026)

> *a good coach has good self-knowledge a good coach respects the person*
> *and a good coach is also one who develops himself or goes forward in the*
> *profession and (...)I think the fourth thing would be that a good coach*
> *understands that this is not my show*

The following coach states that being "comfortable with himself" will help the coach to "forget himself" and "swim with the client".

(0027)

> *the most important is that firstly the coach is somehow comfortable with*
> *himself and has that amount of courage and dares to embark on the process*
> *while being totally himself, so in a way in the process you forget yourself you*
> *somehow swim with the client*

Similarly, the following coach emphasizes that desire and ability to be at the coachee's service will help create an atmosphere that "brings the best out in that person":

(0027)

> *somehow a great heart and two ears with which you listen carefully and also*
> *perceive from the client's talk such issues that are said on one hand but also*
> *those that are not said (…) it is not what you want but somehow with your*
> *own doings try to attempt to bring the best out in that other person*

In fact, it is again a very interesting question whether "being at service" could be considered as a separate skill or technique: admittedly, it is more a question of not acting than employing a skill or a technique. "Being at service" means creating an empty space for the coachee and staying in the background, in fact doing less than more and at some points, doing nothing and, as several of the experienced coaches stated, not giving the right answers or telling the coachee what they know or what the coachee should do or wishes to

hear. Along with other coaching skills discussed above, such as "presence" or "interest", "being at service" contributes to the establishment of trust, helps to create a working coaching relationship and, through a safe atmosphere, creates a space where the coachee may experience the "joy of discovery".

5.3 Summary

In the following Figure 5.3 (a), the themes discussed above are repeated with a short summary of the key results from the interviews.

TRUST	Trust appears to be the main component in a successful coaching relationship.
OPENNESS	Openness seems to be a precondition for trust
RELATIONSHIP	Good relationship is needed for a working coaching pair.
SIMILARITY vs. DISSIMILARITY	Interestingly the similarity vs similarity did not gain unified view.
AGE	Age does not weigh heavily if coaching skills are good.
GENDER	For the vast majority, gender had no significance.
INDUSTRY EXPERIENCE	Experience is valued but it is not a prerequisite if skills are good. This view was divided between informants.
GENERATION MILLENNIALS	Millennials are open and eager to evolve and have courage, but still require and expect the same coaching as others.
COACHING SKILLS	Coaching skills are important but openness and trust and relationship are more important. Skills will not help if trust is not present.
PRESENCE	Important but is considered as part of the coaching skills.
INTEREST	Important but is considered as part of the coaching skills.
BEING AT SERVICE	Important but is considered as part of the coaching skills.

Figure 5.3 (a). Themes and key results.

The outcome of the analysis above is presented in Figure 5.3 (b) below, which illustrates the interlinkages of the themes, together with their mutual impacts and hierarchy.
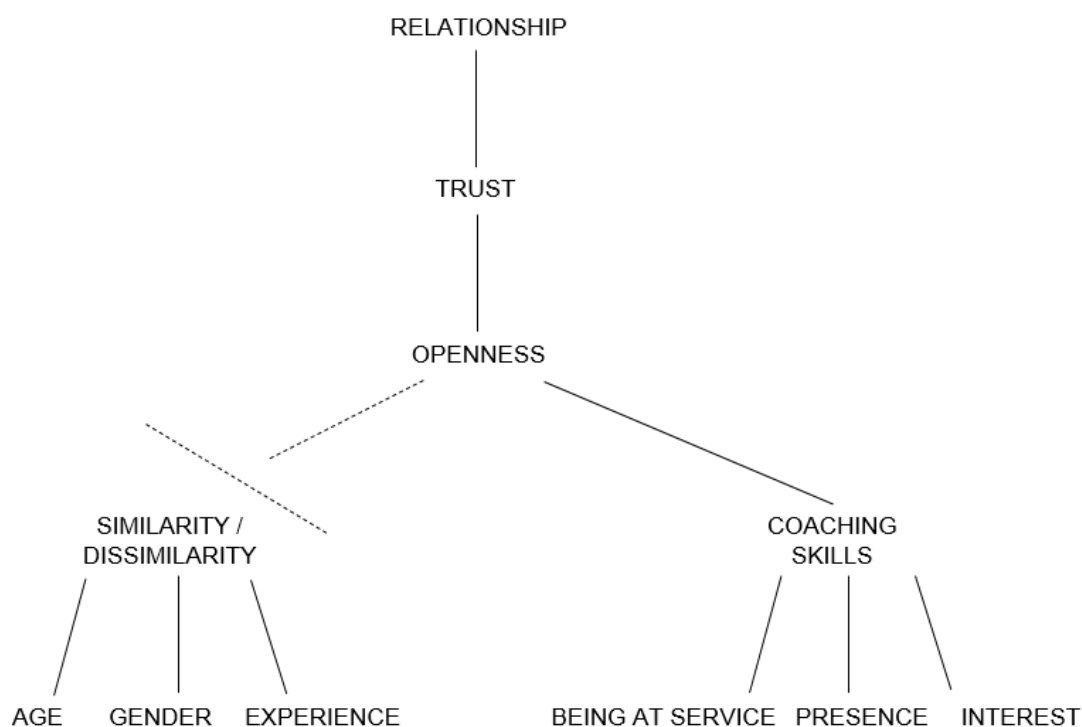
Figure 5.3 (b). Relationships between the themes and the sub-themes.

In the development and building of the coaching relationship trust is the key element, but what is essential, especially in the Finnish cultural dimension, is the openness that provides the entrance to deeper trust. Without openness, the coaching session may remain superficial. It might still work to a certain extent, but openness provides access to deeper truth.

What can also be concluded is that age, gender, profession background, similarity or dissimilarity play little or no role in the effectiveness of the coach-coachee relationship building and that these factors do not assist in building openness. On the other hand, coaching skills, presence and interest, i.e. the characteristics of the coach and the professionalism or experience of the coach, play more important roles. It could be suggested that there is always a basic trust present automatically, like in any social situation, but what is needed for coaching to be effective is openness on behalf of the coachee. This openness is harder to reach as it requires a deeper sense of trust and other elements to be present in the coaching relationship and the coach needs to be able to display and convey them. It could be argued that if the coach does not display correct characteristics to the millennial Finn, openness may be harder to reach or might not be reached at all. These issues are discussed and reflected more closely below in Chapter 6.

6 Analysis and Interpretation

6.1 Introduction

Based on the analytical hierarchy and the explanatory accounts, Chapter 6 introduces the "how" questions and discusses them based on the discoveries made in the data. Furthermore, the discoveries made in the data, i.e. focus groups and the in-depth interviews, are connected to the literature and discussed.

This chapter will also discuss the Finnish dimension in relation to openness and trust and how these factors impact the formulation of the coaching relationship. In addition, the concept of "mature coach" (Lancer et al., 2016) will be discussed and reflected on based on the findings.

6.2 Themes Discussion

Figure 6.2 below provides an overview of the different relationships between the themes and sub-themes identified based on the in-depth interviews and the framework analysis. The most high-level and overarching theme is the relationship between the coach and the coachee. Other themes could be described as forming vital ingredients for the development of a close and developing coaching relationship.
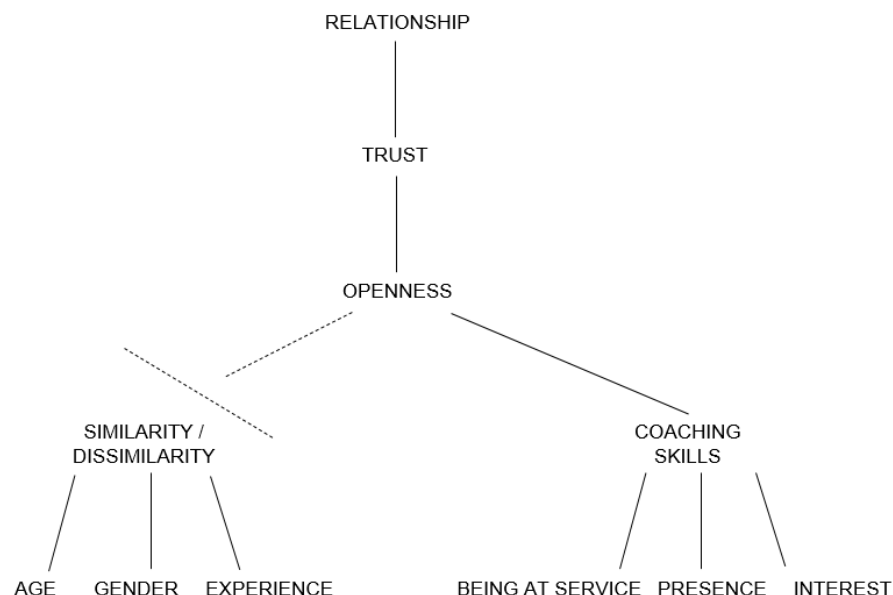

Figure 6.2. Relationships between the themes and the sub-themes.

Moving along the figure, the most critical and most often cited theme is "trust". As noted in the interview analysis, there can be no real relationship without trust. If trust is lacking, the coaching is reduced into a technical exercise with no depth and no real discoveries. However, there can be no "trust" without "openness": both the coach and the coachee must act openly so that trust can be built. As one of the coachees stated, you must be "totally naked, with all your faults". The interrelationships are evident: openness creates a platform for trust, which in turn prepares the terrain for the relationship. This result also confirmed the findings made in various studies covered in the literature review. For example, Gyllensten and Palmer noted that coaching relationship was "dependent on trust and improved by transparency" and described how trust and transparency resulted in a "valuable coaching relationship" (2007:174). Hence, this result from the data analysis was expected.

What then is required for openness? Based on the interviews, it seems that coaching skills are vital, as shown in Figure 6.2. The coaching skills are further divided into "being at service" and "interest" in the coachee. Based on the interviews, it seems that these skills are vital for reaching an open relationship with trust and, therefore, all three are qualities that a good coach should have. A coach who is "at your service", has no own agenda and understands that coaching "is not about the coach", i.e. knows how to exclude himself from the process with self-confidence, will be able to create an open space to support the establishment of trust, and will be present in the coaching situation, for example through good listening. In addition, critical coaching skills also include "interest" in the coachee. This does not mean interest in the coachee for the coach's own benefit but rather pure curiosity for the coachee's development and his or her situation.

On the left side of Figure 6.2, "similarity/dissimilarity" is separated from "openness" with a non-continuous line. "Similarity/dissimilarity" is further divided into subthemes of "age", "gender" and "experience". As seen in the interviews, the coaches seemed to be divided on this point. On one hand, similarity was a factor facilitating the establishment of the relationship. With a similar person, trust was established quicker, which meant that the relationship would become deeper and you would "get to the core" quicker. However, many coaches and coachees thought that being too similar represented a danger which restricted thinking and obstructed introduction of new perspectives. In that sense, being too similar might even counteract openness. Thus, similarity in this sense was not a vital or necessary ingredient for trust to be established, provided that the coach had adequate coaching skills.

To conclude, the hierarchy of themes under the theme of "relationship" could be described as follows: good and professional coaching skills ("being at service" and "interest") will create an open space in which the coachee will feel at ease, relaxed and open. This in turn will establish a sense of trust, which in turn will result in a strong and deep relationship. As for similarities and dissimilarities between the coach and coachee, they are viewed as secondary. This means that even though the coach and the coachee are totally different and have absolutely no shared experiences, there can be openness, trust and a good relationship, provided that the coach is professional and has good coaching skills ("being at service" and "interest"). The importance of the coach's interest towards the coachee and, in particular, towards millennials, became evident in the literature review, for example in Kultalahti's study on the millennials' perceptions towards manager-as-coach practices (2015), while "being at service" was noted, for example, by Downey (2018).

This result is interesting in terms of matching. According to Collins (2012), in order for genuine matching to take place, at least three coach candidates had to be offered for the coachee. The results from this study suggest that if the coaching skills are there, a good and mature coach will be able to create a deep relationship no matter how great the similarities or dissimilarities between the coach and the coachee. However, it must be remembered that in the case of this study, genuine matching did not take place, and the situation could be different if various candidates were offered for the coachee.

6.2.1 Relationship, Trust, Openness and Millennials

The interlinkages of relationship, trust and openness were carefully examined in this study and discussed in the literature review based on the studies by Baron and Morin (2009), Boyce et al. (2010) and De Haan (2016), among other authors. The discussion in the literature review and the findings seem to confirm and support one another. Based on the analysis, trust, relationship and openness are all key factors in a working coaching relationship. Trust seems to be in the centre of it all, since there can be no relationship without trust and, on the other hand, trust both supports and requires openness. According to one interviewee, you "*can't be open without trust, but also on the other hand the openness also supports trust*".

In relation to the coaching relationship, this work set out to understand how matching was carried out in the Finnish coaching culture and what matching meant for the establishment of this relationship. Interestingly, the results indicated that matching was hardly carried out at all and, if it was, it was not done in a professional or organised manner. This was a striking

discovery, but the evidence was clear and strong. The most popular method was a short introductory session, which in most cases led to further coaching meetings and the formulation of the coaching agreement. This brought the need for a discussion on where matching stands in the process where coaching relationship is formulated. Furthermore, an interesting side question is whether the lack of matching is an exclusively Finnish-based phenomenon or something that is currently more commonly present in the western or global coaching industry.

Based on the findings of this research it would indeed appear that matching has little significance and the relationship is built during the initial moments in the coaching process through building of trust and openness. Similarly, De Haan (2016) argues that matching has very little or no impact on the establishment of the coaching relationship. He argues that the overall relationship is the mediator to all other active ingredients and in the end is the key to successful coaching. De Haan (2016) also refers to Boyce et al., (2010), who made similar findings much earlier. The results of this study provide further support that matching has very little effect on the success of coaching. Furthermore, it can be stated that in the Finnish context, matching is not commonly practiced, and that the success of coaching is built on the coaching relationship, with trust and openness as its key facilitators and building blocks.

A hypothesis for the lack of matching could be that practitioner coaches in Finland engaged with individual clients lack the tools and methods to perform professional matching, such as MBTI-personality profile matching. Furthermore, a hypothesis could be made that professional, well-managed matching, for example inside large organisations, could yield benefits. However, Collins (2012) discussed the issue of using MBTI-personality profiles and argued that the overall evidence for matching was "partial and mixed" at best (Collins, 2012:99). In fact, Boyce et al. (2010) suggest that complementary personalities, i.e. not similar to each other, appear to yield more effective coaching relationships. The results of this study on matching and similarity vs. dissimilarity were equally non-conclusive. Arguments both for and against similarity were presented, but they were modest and not significant. It appears that similarity vs. dissimilarity remains a non-decisive factor in the coaching relationship and that matching either may or may not yield benefits to the relationship. It is important to understand that successful coaching relationships may occur between similar and dissimilar people as long as the foundations of the relationship in the form of trust and openness are present.

In the more recent literature, Sammut (2014) discusses how an "authentic relationship" is the "cornerstone" of a working coaching environment and that trust is "paramount" in the coach-coachee relationship. Interestingly, she discusses how "trust is earned" (2014:44). Likewise, this study has shown that a major element in establishing the trust is openness, which was an important theme shared by all the informants. Openness, which was one of the descriptive millennial characteristics mentioned by Siltala (2013), is also strongly present throughout in the data of this study and supported by both coaches and coachees. Openness is also identified as a building block for trust. For example, if the coach senses that the coachee is not telling the whole truth, the coach can challenge the coachee, and in this way, openness helps the trust to grow, and vice versa.

However, while listening to the interviews and looking at the notes from the interviews, it seems that the millennials were "clearer" and more "straightforward" in their expression of how important openness is to them, whereas all informants agreed that openness is a prerequisite and a necessary element of a successful coaching relationship. Based on this study, it does not seem entirely clear whether openness is the requirement for trust or vice versa. While all the interviewees mentioned trust as a key ingredient of a successful coaching relationship, it remained unclear what exactly is meant with this concept. In addition, while the concept of trust has been presented in this study as relatively clear-cut and one-dimensional, the truth may be more multi-faceted and there are several levels of trust. For example, for an individual to fully expose and open up for a discussion of their deepest issues, fears and secrets, exceptional levels of trust are required.

The word "openness" is not used in many studies. For example, De Haan (2016) and Baron and Morin (2009) do not use it at all in their respective papers. However, Boyce et al. (2010) discuss openness, trust and confidence as the key building blocks in matching a credible coach to a client. It is interesting to contemplate why the word "openness" is not that common among key academics in the field who in terms of reliability have a deep and growing understanding of the coaching relationship and its formulation. Could it be that the word "openness" is more incorporated in the concept of trust and, therefore, not always mentioned separately? It might also be suggested that, as a typical Finnish cultural issue, Finns use the word "avoimuus = openness" as a key defining word when it comes to trust and relationships, as "avoimuus" can be a challenging for many Finns, but consequently also a very valued attribute. The concept of openness and trust in the Finnish context is discussed in more detail in section 6.2.3.

Gettman et al.'s (2019) study brought an additional "contracting" dimension to the coaching relationship. The authors concluded that trust and mutual respect, which they called the "bond", relate to contracting in coaching, which in their view is important for the coaching relationship. In their terminology, "contracting" refers to such elements as goal attainment, perception of the coach's skills and the method by which coaching is performed, and these all provide a platform, together with trust and bond, for a successful coaching relationship and outcome. Interestingly, even though this study did not investigate the elements of goal-setting or coaching contracting directly, the importance of coaching skills became evident. In the case of ICF coaches, who represented the majority of the coaches interviewed in this study, ICF's guidelines instruct that goal-setting and contracting are present in the coaching process (ICF Core-Competencies, 2019). In keeping with Gettman et al.'s (2019) findings, this study also showed that trust, bond and coaching expertise are key elements facilitating a successful coaching relationship. While "bond" is a new word in this connection, it seems to constitute a critical part of trust.

A study by Evans (2018), which looked at trust and connection in a mentoring setting, made interesting discoveries where trust was supported by a multitude of different variables, some associated with the personal characteristics of the mentor, some with organisational factors and some with training. Evans raised confidentiality as the key factor in supporting trust. Furthermore, attributes such as empathy, warmth, emotional intelligence, shared passion and openness were also important in supporting trust. Interestingly, Evans concluded that trust was supported by different layers, some to do with the training itself, some with personal characteristics and some with organisational factors.

This study also set out to investigate why the millennials in the millennial focus group had a negative perception regarding the motivation of the coaches. In their case, the coaches were acting as "managers-as-coach". Evans' (2018) study perhaps offers an explanation. According to Evans, in the case where organisation is present in the mentor or coaching contract, the organisation also has a role to play in forming the trust, and the importance of confidentiality increases between the mentor/coach-dyad. Furthermore, the role of openness, together with other sub-attributes, is important to support the trust, but a good question is how far the trust can evolve if the organisational factors do not favour the growth of trust in the relationship. This idea raises the question of suitability of the manager-as-coach practice, when the organisation is not fully aligned to support the trust and the coach/mentor is not personally motivated to be at service for the client and place the client's interests above his/her own (Sammut, 2014).

In the beginning of 2020, a Finnish millennial couple Mellanen and Mellanen released a book that became a headline story even in evening television news. The book was titled "The good, the bad and the millennials". They discuss various issues concerning Finnish millennials and Finnish work life, and they also talk about coaching millennials. They describe how the most common pitfall in coaching is that the coach is guiding the coachee and pushing him or her to a desired direction. This brings forward the same issues that were found in the millennial focus group: the coach was "not interested in me". However, Mellanen and Mellanen (2020) mainly discuss the manager-as-coach setting and do not make a clear difference between it and external coaching. Their discussion is interesting when compared to this study, as it clearly shows that millennials require professional coaching but organisations do not train their managers to act as coaches. However, as in the case of the millennial coachees interviewed for this study, experiences of coaching were positive when clients were coached by a professional and mature coach.

As regards the characterisation of millennials, the in-depth interviews gave somewhat mixed results. It seems that most of the informants deem that millennials are open, have a good capacity for reflection, are willing to develop themselves and are somewhat more "free spirits" than older generations. On the other hand, millennials are not burdened with the "duties and obligations" often related with the traumas shared by older generations. Millennials are more demanding in what they want from life, more capable of creating fantasies or making future plans, while older generations are more generally in a "box" with their beliefs. Based on this, it seems that when millennials get older, they will become an excellent target group for coaching.

In terms of matching or building the coaching relationship, most of the interviewees think that the question is more of personality, for example temperament and character, and not so much of generation. It is interesting to compare these thoughts with recent literature on millennials. For example, Stewart et al. (2017) examined generational differences and described how literature and media had painted younger generations in an unattractive light and how this impacted the work environment, whereas Smith and Galbraith (2012) stated that recognition is a key factor in motivating and retaining millennials and that this recognition may come in many forms. Their study also concluded that millennials require instant and frequent feedback and a certain closeness with their supervisors and have a need to please their supervisors.

It is interesting how parallel these issues are to those raised in this study regarding managers-as-coach "being interested" in the coachee and the importance of the

relationship. Receiving feedback and active communication between two people is relationship-building. Thus, it would seem that common underpinnings in regard to openness, relationship and caring are found in millennials and other generations. Similarly, Stewart et al. (2017) conclude that millennials require closer interaction and relationship with their supervisors that is supported with open communication in team-oriented environment. As discussed earlier, millennials like social gatherings, openness and individuality. In Stewart et al. (2017), millennials responded to the question "what makes their generation distinct", and "liberal/tolerant" came to third place among the answers with a 7 percent share. It may be extrapolated that affinity for tolerance relates to individualism. The most popular answer was "technology use" (24 percent), followed by "music/pop culture" (11 percent). Interestingly, "clothes" came in fifth with 5 percent, again a trait that can be linked with individuality. Interestingly, Stewart et al. (2017) also compared figures for three preceding generations and none of them listed liberal/tolerant or clothes among the top five distinct characteristics of their generation.

It seems that some of the arguments related to millennial traits are shared in other studies as well. However, cohort-level generational characteristics, as discussed in the literature review, might not be present at an individual level, and assuming this can be risky. Weber and Urick (2017) discuss the importance of understanding millennials and their psychological makeup in more depth. They highlight that it is critical to take into account the environmental and other factors that have impacted on millennials during their life, such as education, upbringing and experiences. Weber and Urick investigate a concept called the "personal value orientation" (PVO) and how it can elicit individual level value differences in the millennial cohort included in their sample. They performed an extensive study among biological millennials, i.e. selected the sample based on birth years. They showed that within the millennial generational cohort, there was an overwhelming amount of variation in the personal value orientation. In other words, individuals within one cohort may be different or similar.

Interestingly, Weber and Urick (2017) noted some differences between male and female millennials, where for example females placed greater importance on moral and social values. They added that work experience and business disciplines also seemed to weigh on the values of the respondents and that there are other "groupings" that can be more defining than generational cohorts. What is particularly interesting to note is their discovery about the work experience, i.e. work years. As noted in the data analysis, the millennials were not as homogenic a group as first thought and that even though the researcher defined the cohort by education, location and other traits, it was realised that work experience and

business discipline can affect character in ways that are not easily identifiable. Thus, it is important to understand that incompletely justified groupings of people may lead to overtly simplified results and there can be substantial variation between individuals.

6.2.2 National Distinctions

It seems that research is making progress in investigating various aspects of the coaching system, such as commissioning, matching, relationship, the ways coaching can be used in various organisations and age groups, and various coaching models being used in coaching. This study looks at coaching in the national context of Finland, and similar area-specific studies have also been carried out elsewhere. The impact of culture on coaching practice has been gaining recognition recently. For example, van Nieuwerburgh and Allaho (2017) explored coaching in Islamic culture and raised important cultural factors that should be considered within the coaching relationship and the overall coaching process. Likewise, Tee et al. (2018) investigated coaching practice in Scotland and the elements influencing coaching commissioning, such as the reputation of a coach, price and coaching model used. The results from Scotland were compared with wider results from the United Kingdom and Europe, and national distinctions were recognizable in the Scottish context. In Scotland, most of the coachees were male (Tee et al., 2018). As discussed earlier, in Finland coaching is not actively used by younger generations, and almost all coaches are women.

The aspect of "openness" was highly valued and sought after according to the interviews, which relates well with the cultural aspects of Finns. Finns are notoriously untrained at expression and communication, and this trait often diminishes the impact of Finnish professionals and ranks high among professionals as a skill they would like to develop (Kahra, 2010). Finns are typically "closed", as discovered in a study investigating the Finnish technology business decision-making culture (Kuitunen and Lähteenmäki-Smith, 2006).

These same challenges with Finns were also shown by this study. However, it seems that the organisations in Finland do not have the funds to employ coaching to the extent desired by HR professionals. It appears that Finland is not alone with this dilemma, as current research has also started to look at ways to facilitate low-cost coaching by, for example, utilizing peer-to-peer coaching. In this line of thought, Warner and Budd (2018) investigated the impact of peer-to-peer coaching in reducing test anxiety and improving self-esteem using the IGROW or GROW coaching models on sixth form students. The study demonstrated positive results in terms of significant self-esteem improvement and reduction in test anxiety. However, the study did not discover any significant impact on perceived

stress reduction. Nevertheless, this low-cost coaching model seemed to benefit the client, and the coaching service had a positive contribution. What is even more interesting is the method of peer-to-peer coaching by using the IGROW or GROW model, which can be rather easily trained (Downey, 2018). This type of peer-to-peer coaching could be a viable coaching alternative in Finland, especially for organisations with limited funds.

6.2.3 Trust, Relationships and Openness in Finnish Context

The coaching relationship seems to be the most important factor, but it needs to be built on trust. "You can be married, but if you don't have trust, you don't have a relationship", is a statement that fits Finnish people well. Trust is a very "national" concept in Finland – a deep-rooted trust. Perhaps for this reason, "trust" was so prominent in the informants' discussions. Hofstede (2001) brings up the fact that since Finns have participated in wars, the uncertainty avoidance is more present among Finns than with old democracies, such as Sweden, the Netherlands and Denmark. Understandably, in this context of uncertainty avoidance, trust becomes critical.

Finnish people value trust, but trust is not something that is taken for granted, it is earned. Furthermore, trust in the Finnish culture seems to have two layers: the "trust layer", which is on the surface, and the "openness layer", which could be understood as the deeper level. For example, between family members, "openness" may be almost non-existent, even if the family members have trust. This can be understood so that basic trust exists almost automatically in the Finnish culture, but the deeper level trust that would also support openness is not as prevalent.

To explore further the subject of "trust", "deep trust" and the notion that "coach is not interested in me" expressed by certain coachees, certain arguments can be presented. While it seems that basic trust is solid in the Finnish culture, it appears that the millennials experience challenges in establishing deep trust with the coach and thus openness within the coaching relationship. The basic trust facilitates basic answers and basic conversation, but in reality, only scratches the surface, while deep trust that would facilitate true and transparent openness and reflection is lacking. As discussed, this observation fits well the typical Finnish characteristics, and it also fits well with the millennials, who are craving for recognition and transparent and conversation and require that they are seen as whole individual entities and, thus, as a target of interest. Lacking this confirmation, millennials may feel insecure, start to distrust the coaching situation and will not engage openly and honestly in the conversation.

This situation can be understood by reflecting on Hofstede's (2011) definitions on culture's consequences. According to Hofstede, Finns live in a feminine culture, and for example, it is in the nature of the culture to try to solve conflicts with negotiation, rather than with fighting (Hofstede, 2001). On the other hand, this also means that Finns want to avoid conflicts. Finns prefer to keep silent instead of saying what is really in their mind, just to avoid conflict. Keeping silent is potentially a negative issue in the coaching relationship. Furthermore, Finnish culture is characterized by having both high femininity score and strong uncertainty avoidance score (Hofstede, 2011). Hofstede defines uncertainty avoidance as the "extent to which the members of a culture feel threatened by uncertain or unknown situations" (Hofstede 2011:161). Femininity, on the other hand, is defined by Hofstede as follows: "femininity stands for a society in which social gender roles overlap: both men and women are supposed be modest, tender and concerned with the quality of life" (Hofstede, 2011:297). Figures 6.2.3 (a) and 6.2.3 (b) adapted from Hofstede (2011) illustrate the scores of various nations with respect to the uncertainty avoidance and the masculinity/femininity index (individuality).
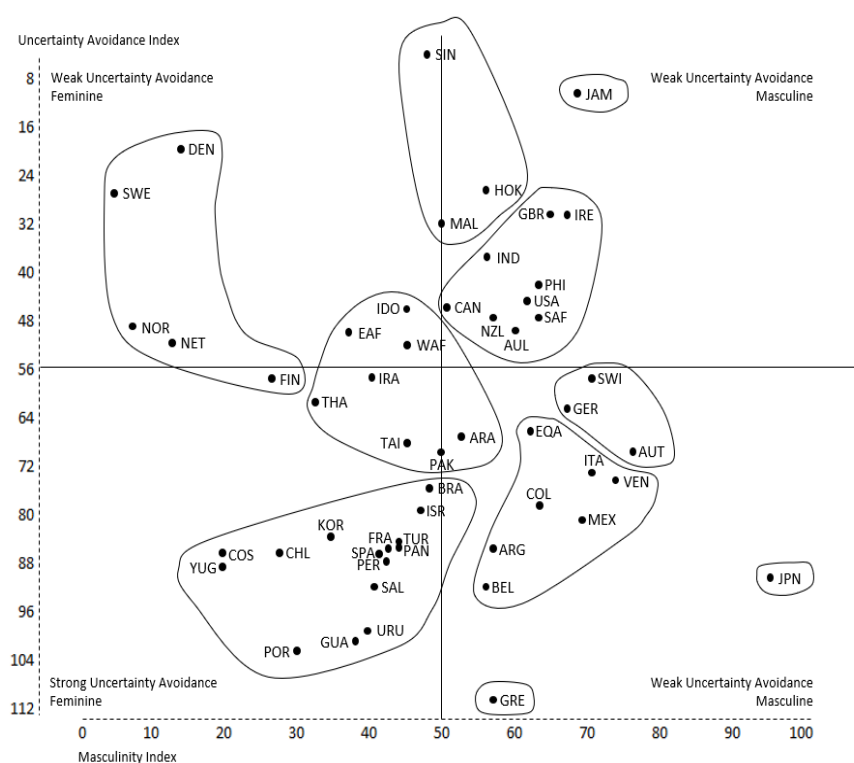
Figure 6.2.3 (a). Hofstede's uncertainty avoidance index (Hofstede, 2001).
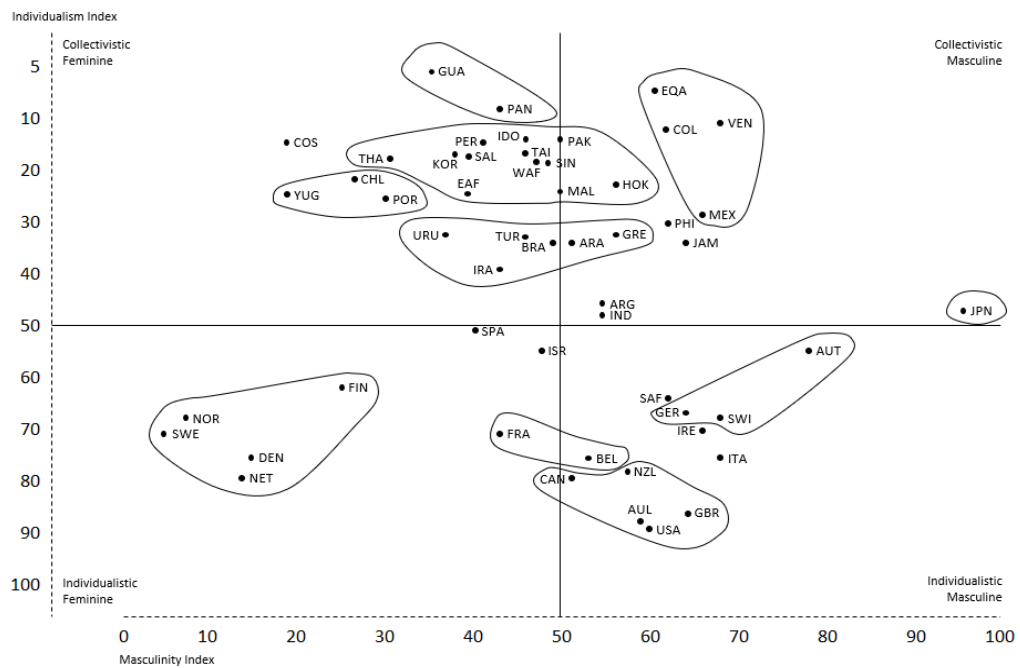
Figure 6.2.3 (b). Hofstede's individualism index (Hofstede, 2001).

When reflecting on the above and the insights this study has brought forward, some concluding remarks on openness and trust in the Finnish context can be made. As Figures 6.2.3 (a) and 6.2.3 (b) illustrate, Finland is in both cases located in another quadrant from the United States and Great Britain, from where most of the coaching research and literature originates. The literature and this study have demonstrated that trust is essential in the coaching relationship (Baron and Morin, 2009; Boyce et al., 2010; De Haan, 2016), and there has been discussion on the requirement of openness. However, it seems that not enough attention has been paid to the cultural dimension and the circumstances prevailing in each culture, or on their impact on relationship building when coaching is performed.

This study has examined coaching within the Finnish context, while being aware of the Finnish cultural dimension. Besides the national cultural dimension, the dimension brought by the millennial generation has also been investigated. These contexts make this study unique and thus worthy of reflection. Uncertainty avoidance is an approved trait of Finns, which is furthermore supported with the Finnish traits of modesty, avoidance of confrontation and introvert behaviour. According to a popular Finnish proverb, "silence is gold".

Taking these factors into account when establishing "trust" in the coaching relationship, it can be understood how gravely important it is to be able to develop that trust beyond the familiar and polite level of basic trust and to reach openness, because without openness

the coaching sessions will not be truthful and will not work for the benefit of the coachee. However, what could be further argued is the difference between Finland and, for example, the United States and Great Britain in relation to the process of establishment of trust in the coaching relationship. The fact that the Finns do not open up easily means that it takes a certain amount of skills, maturity and "being at service" mindset from the coach to achieve the required level of trust. The "being at service" mindset, which is strongly present when coaching millennials, should also be a way to demonstrate that the coach is "interested in me", the millennial clients. It would appear that these factors are all interlinked and that the Finnish cultural landscape provides unique challenges that need to be managed: first with trust developing into deep trust, which in turn supports the concept of "being at service". This approach should provide the coachee a holistic feeling that the coach is in the coaching relationship solely for the unique coachee, that she/he is "the interesting subject" to the coach and that the level of deep trust they have reached in the coaching releationship will provide a platform for openness. It is important to understand the Finnish cultural landscape, its uniqueness and its differences to other cultures, and how these differences create challenges to reach openness.

For example, in the United States, openness might be achieved by saying "please be open and tell me everything, I am here for you" and it would probably work, whereas in Finland saying the same phrase would be regarded more or less as a joke. This reflection is interesting and important to comprehend. While the basic roadmap of what is needed to form a coaching relationship could apply universally, the ingredients and subtle cultural differences make the journey very different in different parts of the world.

What this study points towards is the coach. Lancer et al. (2016) discuss the maturity of the coach and describe how a novice coach might be mastering most likely one or, in some cases perhaps a few coaching techniques, and how their freshness in the coaching profession limits their ability to serve the client to her or his best interest. It might still be good coaching but might be missing astuteness and depth. In contrast, Lancer et al. (2016) state that a mature coach has a multitude of tools and natural experiences to use as an arsenal. Furthermore, the coach is all the time observing, sensing and living the reactions, emotions and actions of the coachee and accordingly adjusting the tools and methods in a way that is almost inconspicuous to the coachee but is meant to enhance, support and maximize the session intervention, discovery and development (Lancer et al., 2016).

This can be reflected against the millennials and different leadership style preferences between different generations. For example, Shrivastava et al. (2017) discuss the

requirement of different leadership styles for the formulation of trust development through building relationships and the challenges the different generations pose to leadership in this regard. They discuss the millennials' desire for empowerment, so that they might believe they are trusted, and their constant willingness to challenge hierarchies and authorities. Based on this view, it could be suggested that when coaching millennial Finns, the coach needs to pay close attention to the individual character of the coachee, and that true formulation of trust and openness will require from the coach a display of true caring, being at service, focus and interest towards the coachee. In addition, it is vital for the coach to see the coachee not just as an individual but also a representative of a certain generation, generational cohort and of the Finnish culture, to work with these elements and to allow them to lead the coach. Lancer et al.'s (2016) discussion on the skills of a mature coach seems to fit these requirements very well.

6.3 Summary of Discussion

The discussion has raised interesting thoughts about the Finnish cultural dimension; about how it reflects on the building of the coaching relationship and especially about how hard openness is for Finns due to our cultural characteristics and how this factor should be taken into account when building the coaching relationship.

Millennial Finns require understanding, focus and interest. They are similar and dissimilar at the same time when compared to previous generations. It is essential that their cohort and individual characteristics are considered and reflected on by the coach, so that the coach can appreciate the uniqueness of the coachee.

It is also typical to Finnish culture, where women and men and people in general are very equal, that age, similarity or dissimilarity or professional background do not play a key role when it comes to the building a coaching relationship. What has more influence and importance are the coaching skills and the overall maturity and ability of the coach, i.e. the deep-rooted characteristics and values of the coach.

7 Conclusions and Recommendations

7.1 Conclusions

This final chapter discusses and illustrates the conclusions of the study. In this chapter, the research question "How to create conditions for a successful coaching relationship between a coach and a millennial Finn" is answered based on the data, analysis and discussion.

The study suggests that for millennial Finns, the Finnish cultural background results in a specific requirement of openness that facilitates the establishment of deep trust in the coaching relationship. This requires a special ability and maturity from the coach that also manifests as true interest in being at service and in coaching millennials.

The chapter also presents practical and future research recommendations and discusses them from various viewpoints. Furthermore, the chapter includes the researcher's reflection on the entire DBA journey.

7.1.1 Millennial Finns Lacking Coaching

The study clearly brings forward the segregated offering of coaching within companies and organisations in Finland and how diverse the offering is between intra-company layers and more widely between different companies and organisations. According to this study, the best coaches are offered mostly and actively for higher senior management and executives. In instances where millennials are not offered individual coaching and are instead part of team coaching, team development and shared team goals are the priority (Boyatzis, 2009). This study evidences that while millennials desire more support, this is not offered, at least not through high-level professional individual coaching. The study reveals mediocre coaching offering in various forms, while millennials would require individual development through individual coaching. Fusco et al. (2015) discuss in their group coaching study the importance of individuals' process. In fact, Fusco et al. (2015) conclude that effectiveness of group coaching is founded on the individuals and their ability and skills. This supports the argument that team coaching cannot replace individual coaching for millennials. In sum, this study provides interesting information on the challenging state of coaching for millennial Finns.

The data and literature of the study suggest that in Finland, the emerging career stars, who are usually younger than senior managers, are not offered coaching as part of their continuous professional development. It would be interesting to investigate the motives and

values of the business culture behind such practice. The study suggests that this practice is based on a clear strategic-level decision by human resources management or a higher authority in the company, or it has become a custom that has never been questioned. The study revealed that the inadequate practices when offering coaching to millennial Finns were rather consistent among Finnish companies. However, the data show that there is a clear demand and interest from millennial Finns for coaching services that meet their expectations.

The study also provides evidence that matching in the formulation of the coaching pair either does not take place or is very rare in Finland. This finding was a surprise, but it is line with the other findings on the current state of coaching for millennial Finns. There is a major gap between the need for coaching and its offering: millennials desire professional coaching, but companies seem to lack financial resources and motivation to offer it. Interestingly, the study suggests that Finnish company leaders and human resources management are making these decisions knowingly despite the current discussion on the benefits of having a multi-generational, well-functioning working culture.

7.1.2 Ability to Coach Millennials

All discussions about openness, trust, matching or similarity vs. dissimilarity seem to point to one direction: to the coach. The coach provides the fabric for the "coaching relationship", an overall space for which the coaching relationship sets the boundaries. In this space, the coach provides all the necessary elements, so that the coaching relationship can be established in a space of trust and openness. However, this space must keep expanding, thus deepening trust and openness, during subsequent coaching sessions. In the literature, there is a good amount of discussion on coaching skills (Patti et al., 2015; Spaten and Flensborg, 2013) and on the similarity and dissimilarity of coach and coachee, but is there enough discussion on who has the correct abilities to be a good coach? What are the required abilities, and what kind of personality is required to obtain these abilities? Based on this study, it is evident that more attention must be placed firstly on the personality of the coach and, secondly, on the ability to coach. In particular, the evidence gathered in this study suggests that when the coachee is a millennial, the coach must have a whole-hearted desire to serve a millennial client.

Figure 7.1.2 (b) below shows a suggestion on the overall prerequisites to act as a coach: a personality that supports the required characteristics, i.e. not putting oneself ahead of the client, but instead understanding the dilemmas, position, challenges and obstacles felt by

the client; respecting those feelings without judgement and with due respect; and being able to mirror those feelings towards the client without being condescending or putting oneself above the matter.

Based on the literature review and this study's evidence, millennials value individuality, individual choices and openness to all new and new outcomes. The coach must have enough depth, respect and love in her/his vision to see whatever the client wants. Even though it might be unconventional by existing or previous standards, it should be supported. This study has brought forward examples where millennials want a surfing holiday instead of a promotion, or a better work-life balance instead of a better remunerated senior position. In the HR professionals' focus group, one HR manager mentioned the reason why her company only offered team coaching for millennials – "they want to have holidays and breaks, not careers". These types of statements and sentiments suggest that there is a conflict prevalent in the organisations, which do not seem to respect and understand their own millennial personnel. However, many of the coaches represent previous generations, who value promotions and careers. In fact, previous generations have valued these highly as evidence of personal achievement, and it can be challenging for a coach from a previous generation to understand the needs and wishes of millennial clients.

As Figure 7.1.2. (b) suggests, the coach should also have certain characteristics and attributes to be a "good coach", such as energy, presence, willingness to be at service and personal well-being. The coach should also be self-aware of her/his personal well-being, for example happiness. Based on this study, it may be argued that the more balanced, happy, loving and participating the coach is, the more effective she/he will be at the client's service. Energy and presence derive from the balance in life, love and personal satisfaction and well-being, and provide the elements for being focused on others in the situation.

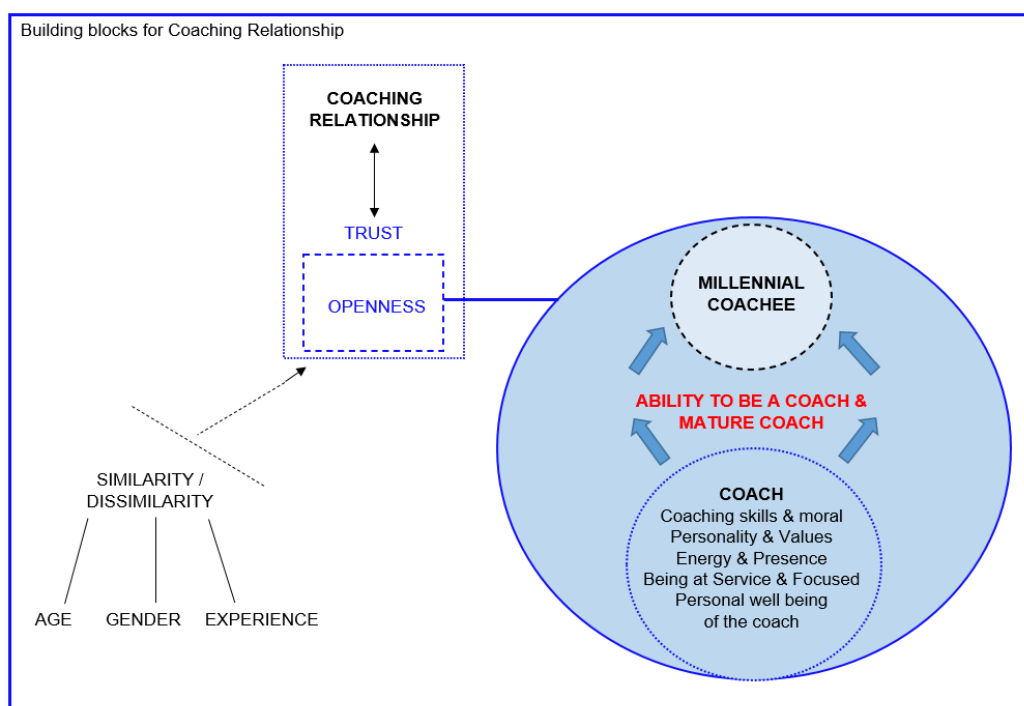Figure 7.1.2 (a) below describes the interlinkages of the coaching relationship.

Figure 7.1.2 (a). Coaching relationship interlinkages.

On the basis of the data in this study, the best coaches are naturally skilled and fluent with people. They are by nature equipped with basic psychology skills and have a good capacity for empathy and emotional intelligence, so they can get close to the coachee relatively fast and establish trust and openness for communication almost naturally. This ability provides a platform for the coachee's personal development. With her/his skills and presence, the coach acts as the conduit for the coachee's self-exploration and self-development. A skilful coach serves the coachee by being there to facilitate and avoids being visible in the process in a manner that would take focus and attention away from the coachee. In other words, a professional coach is at the service of the coachee. Interestingly, the study suggests that as long as the coach has the ability, maturity and the mindset to be at service for a millennial Finn, matching is not required in the coaching pair formulation. This supports De Haan's findings that for successful coaching, a "click" is not needed in the coaching pair formulation, but instead the essence and the fabric of the relationship (De Haan, 2016). These discoveries place a lot of weight on the coach's characteristics and mind-set to serve the millennial client.

Figure 7.1.2 (b) below illustrates how the coach is an essential and unattachable part of the coaching relationship. The coach-defining elements of age, gender and experience have

been removed from this figure, as the study suggested that their role is insignificant. Instead, the figure illustrates the basic requirements of the coaching profession: coaching skills and moral, personality and values, energy and presence, being at service and focused and personal well-being of the coach. Furthermore, the figure brings out the important and intrinsic element of the overall ability to be a coach.
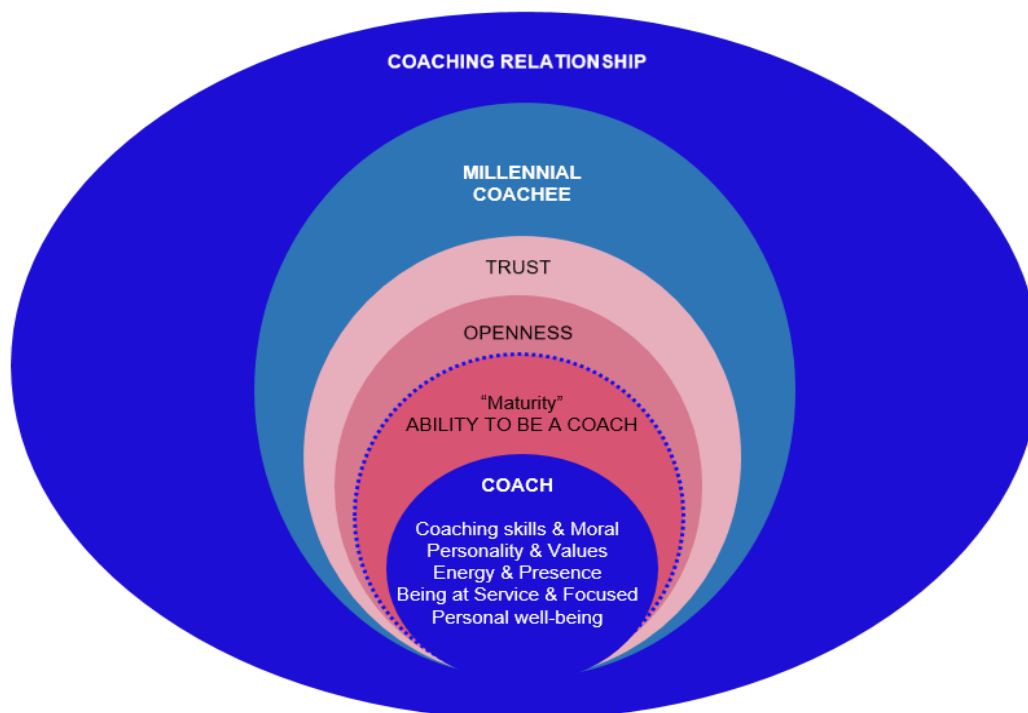
Figure 7.1.2 (b). The coach as the essential element of the coaching relationship.

However, based on this study, it is important to separate maturity from ability to be a coach. The ability is the sum of the coach's traits and characteristics and positive interest towards coaching millennials. It does not matter how experienced or mature the coach is, but if the coach is simply tired of listening to millennials or what she/he might consider trivialities or issues that go against her/his values, the coach no longer has the ability to be a coach. In other words, the ability to be a coach is critical, while maturity is a good complement to it.

The ability, as described earlier, of the coach will help to achieve openness and trust. Facilitation of true and genuine openness seems essential, as this is the conduit to deep trust. While it is perhaps true that the overall basic trust that Finns demonstrate and live by in the Finnish society makes them approachable, the results of the study emphasise that true and deep trust only results from openness and a genuine trusting relationship, in which the individual expresses emotions, opinions and values freely. The stereotypical image of

the Finns (which is also supported by relevant literature, such as Hofstede (2001) is that they are private and polite by character and capable of hiding their self-expression. This is an important aspect in relation to coaching intervention, which aims to self-development. If a person is not honest and does not express her/himself openly, how could true development occur? If the goals set for the coaching contract are to be met, genuinity is required, and for the coachee to be genuine, openness and deep trust must be present in the coaching relationship. The study suggests that this is only possible if the coach has the required "ability to be a coach". Similarly, van Nieuwerburgh et al. (2020) discuss the importance of safety in the coaching conversation. They argue that trust in the relationship provides room to talk candidly and without judgment and to be vulnerable. Furthermore, van Nieuwerburgh and Love (2019) bring forward how trust is the core of the coaching relationship and how it ultimately impacts the coaching outcome. In reflection of what has been discussed in this Chapter about "the ability to coach", van Nieuwerburgh and Allaho (2017), van Nieuwerburgh and Love (2019) raise the issue of "way of being", which means how the coach is fully present, appropriately authentic and brings energy to the coaching relationship and how that "way of being" facilitates the coaching relationship, trust and openness in conversation and, as consequence, the ability of the coachee to be vulnerable and candid (van Nieuwerburgh et al., 2020). It is interesting that the "way of being", as described by van Nieuwerburgh and Love (2019), has many similar attributes with the findings made in this study.

Mellanen and Mellanen (2020) discuss that if the coachee disagrees on the goals of the coaching, there is a risk that the coach starts to manipulate the coachee. This type of discussion suggests that certain coaches who claim to act as professional coaches in fact do not have the required capabilities and, therefore, should not engage in coaching in the first place. On a similar note, the millennials investigated in this study brought to attention the lack of interest from the coach towards them. The ability to be a coach refers to the mental goodness and professionality of the coach to use all the skills and tools of a good and morally sound coach. Some coaches know all the tools, are focused and have a genuine feeling that they are at the service of the client, but it appears that in the course of the coaching session, something happens to them and they lose their ability to coach professionally and become self-absorbed with the goals and direction of the coaching – they actually think they know better than the coachee. This is when coaching turns into consulting.

In the case of coaching millennials, the coaches should be aware of this danger. This is often the case when it comes to coaching millennials, as e.g. Mellanen and Mellanen (2020)

argue. The move towards consulting can be attempting especially since some of the characteristics of millennials, such as lack of career aspirations or desire for work-life balance, can be so different from the norm that it might be challenging for the coach to stay unbiased. For example, it might be difficult for a coach to accept a millennial coachee's choice to decline a major career advancement opportunity. All this emphasizes the importance of the ability of the coach to act as a professional coach under all circumstances. As this study has demonstrated, openness elicits trust, and for both elements to thrive, the coach's ability to create a suitable platform for the millennial coachee and for the coaching relationship seems essential.

Interestingly, the discussion above seems to confirm De Haan's (2016) and Boyce et al.'s (2010) arguments on the relative insignificance of matching or the impact of similarities/dissimilarities of age, gender, industry experience and other traits on a successful coaching relationship. In addition, the above discussion seems to confirm Stewart et al.'s (2017) finding on the importance of openness for millennials. Furthermore, the discussion also seems to support Gyllensten and Palmer's (2007) argument in favour of trust and transparency in building the coaching relationship. While many of the findings made in this study have already been suggested previously in the literature, it must be noted that the research has approached the coaching relationship mostly through universalities (such as "openness" and "trust"), and very little attention has been paid to the impact of cultural traits. For example, this study suggests that the relationship between Finns and openness is a very complex one and, therefore, it should be taken into consideration in all studies focused on coaching in the Finnish context.

7.2 Contribution to Knowledge and Practice

This study explored the Finnish dimension, generational issues and characteristics in relation to coaching relationship in the context of millennial coachees in Finland. Several professional coaches and various companies and academic institutions in Finland participated in the study. Part of their motivation to contribute to the study was that the focus of the study was in their interest, and it was recognised that this type of research had not been carried out in Finland. This study also suggested that coaching practice in Finland has distinctive national characteristics and that the coaching profession in Finland is still developing. This study also indicated that companies in Finland do not have the financial resources to offer coaching services in the same extent than in some other countries. The millennial generation has been subject to academic studies in Finland, and while those studies complement the outcome of this study, they do not provide same insights and

contributions. In the following sections, contribution of this study to knowledge and practice is discussed and evaluated critically.

7.2.1 Contribution to Knowledge

This chapter describes the study's contribution to knowledge. Key findings and implications are presented under each subject in separate tables.

Coaching and matching

In relation to the Finnish cultural context, the study suggested that age, gender, industry experience and similarity vs. dissimilarity have little or no impact on the building of the coaching relationship. In contrast to Ensher and Murphy (2011), this study did not find any significant relevance for age and gender, while with respect to irrelevance of matching, it concurred with De Haan (2016). In addition, the study suggested that matching does not play any significant role in Finland, since there were no real opportunities for genuine matching, i.e. there were not enough coach candidates to choose from or the organisations did not see it as important. However, the study suggested that if matching were to occur, the most beneficial scenario would be to have more than two mature and able coaches to choose from. The key findings and implications are summarised in Table 7.2.1 (a) below:

Issue	Findings	Implication
Age	Does not seem to have importance in Finland.	Focus should be on the coach's personality, maturity and ability to coach millennial Finns.
Gender		
Industry experience		
Similarity vs. Dissimilarity		
Matching	Is not practiced in Finland in majority of cases.	

Table 7.2.1 (a). Key findings and implications regarding coaching and matching.

Coaching relationship; openness, trust and deep trust

This study provided deeper insight and new knowledge in the Finnish context on how the trust within the coaching relationship needs to be understood and what facilitates openness. In this respect, the study seemed to confirm the results of the literature review (Gyllensten and Palmer, 2007; Boyce et al., 2010; De Haan and Duckworth, 2012; Zopiatis et al., 2012; Stelter, 2014). On the other hand, the study discovered that within the Finnish cultural context, there seems to be a deep requirement for openness that will truly facilitate an effective coaching session and is key to building trust. The findings of the study highlight the importance of the coach's ability and maturity to promote and facilitate openness and trust, especially with coachees representing millennials. The key findings and implications are summarised in Table 7.2.1 (b) below:

Issue	Findings	Implication
Openness	Seem to play an important role in the beginning of the relationship and are essential together to open a way and forge a deep trust.	Openness and acceptance are essentially important to understand with millennials as they want to be heard and understood as they are.
Trust		Basic trust in Finland is almost given, but coaches should not confuse this with deep trust. Trust must evolve to become deeper.
Deep trust	Is earned through a cyclical working process that is embedded in openness.	Change and personal development occur best when a person is open to change and possibility. Deep trust provides an environment for change.

Table 7.2.1 (b). Key findings and implications relating to openness, trust and deep trust.

Coaching millennial Finns

The study shed light on the concept of generations and cohorts (Smola and Sutton, 2002; Purhonen, 2007; Parry and Urwin, 2011) and described the characteristics of millennial Finns (Siltala, 2013; Kultalahti and Viitala, 2014). The study provided a contribution to knowledge from the viewpoint of millennial Finns in terms of their expectations, anticipations and feelings. While the study brought up the finding that millennials are not as career oriented as previous generations, it also highlighted the fact that they deserve the same development opportunities as previous generations. The study suggests that it would be ethical for the organisations to offer all generations similar development opportunities irrespective of the individual's career aspirations. The key findings and implications are summarised below in Table 7.2.1 (c):

Issue	Findings	Implication
Generations	Cohort experiences define generations but are not only defining factors.	Individual differences must also be understood within the generation cohort concept.
Millennials	Millennials want their individual values and expectations to be understood and valued.	Coaches must have the ability to listen and to respect their coachees' desires and goals.
Coaching millennial Finns	Millennials are demanding customers and can challenge the norm and want to feel they are worth individual respect and attention.	Coaches must show genuine interest and gain deep trust to nourish the coaching relationship.

Table 7.2.1 (c). Key findings and implications relating to generations, millennials and coaching millennial Finns.

7.2.2 Contribution to Practice and Recommendations

The contribution of the study to practice is especially interesting and timely in the Finnish context. The Finnish coaching industry is growing, but on the other hand it is lacking coaching stars. The marketing and lobbying of coaching towards Finnish businesses of all sizes, including start-ups and small and large business, is almost non-existent. However, in the last two years business schools in Finland have started offering coaching to their customers, which are large-size companies. Mellanen and Mellanen's book (2020) is a good

example on the level of discussion on coaching and millennials in Finland, in which stereotypes sometimes get more visibility than scientific facts.

Coaching Finnish Millennials

The practical contribution of this study in the Finnish context is that it provides clear evidence that professional coaching is appreciated and valued by millennial Finns and that they expect professional coaching. Another contribution is the realization of the need to improve training when a company's own staff, such as managers, act as coaches. Additionally, a direct contribution to practice relates to the selection of coaches for businesses that procure coaching services for millennials. The key recommendations and implementation are summarised in the Table 7.2.2 (a) below:

To whom	Recommendation	Implementation	Benefit for the coaching environment for millennial Finns
Coaching market	Professional coaching services must be marketed to millennials actively and openly.	Marketing to millennials is more focused.	Attention and respect to millennial's customer segment will increase.
HRM	Professional coaching services must be provided to millennials.	The findings of the study are discussed publicly and HRM is challenged to develop their practices.	Millennials have a platform to demand improved offering of coaching.
	There must be a selection of coaches to choose from.		

Table 7.2.2 (a). Key recommendations and implementation.

Attention to the ability and maturity of the coach

The study suggests that that there should be more attention to the choice of coaches and that the ability of the coach should be evaluated. Currently, it appears that in Finland, almost anyone can act as a coach, and after obtaining a certification, a coach can be called a professional.

The person who selects the coach for a millennial must inspect more closely the coach's true skills, values and attitudes. Currently, the coach-coachee matching process is almost non-existent in Finland, and this study raises the question on how to check that the coach is ultimately suitable for that coachee.

This must not be accomplished by resorting to a mere introductory session, but there must be a validating interview of the coach to assess her/his true ability and interest into coaching a millennial, whose values may be very different from those of the coach. In addition, there must be more coach candidates to choose from, so that an actual matching process occurs (Collins, 2012). The key recommendations and implementation are summarised in the Table 7.2.2 (b) below:

To whom	Recommendation	Implementation	Benefit for the coaching environment for millennial Finns
Millennial coachee	The ability and maturity of the coach to provide the services must be evaluated.	There is a validating interview and several coach candidates to choose from.	Positive coaching experiences and successfulness of coaching will increase.
HRM			

Table 7.2.2 (b). Key recommendations and implementation.

Finnish cultural dimension understood in the coaching context

In Finland, the high level of uncertainty avoidance may prevent individuals from evolving above a certain median level. When this is reflected against this study, it should be asked how Finnish coaches can improve their abilities and become mature coaches and whether Finnish coaches are at all aware of the possible handicap that the Finnish culture brings to them. Based on the results of this study, there must be a true, insightful and deep discussion on what it requires to develop into a mature coach in the Finnish cultural context. There will be individuals in Finland who evolve in their coaching profession, become true masters and serve their clients well, but how many will they be? Besides evolving towards maturity in the coaching profession, an additional question should be presented on the coach's ability to coach millennials.

This increases the need for the practicing coaches to have a more open discussion on who is suitable to be a coach. One further question could be whether coaching training should

be available to anyone or whether there should be some attitude testing to ensure that the candidate has the required morality, a genuine interest towards being at service and the ability to conduct coaching to a diverse clientele. The key recommendations and implementation are summarised in the Table 7.2.2 (c) below:

To whom	Recommendation	Implementation	Benefit for the coaching environment for millennial Finns
Coaches	Coaches must gain deeper understanding of generational differences and support increasing generational diversity.	"Diversity fluency" is made into a marketing trademark and a professional value of the coach.	Ability to select a suitable coach is improved.
Managers-as-coach	There must be a compulsory training and evaluation of the suitability to give coaching within the organisation.	Training and evaluation for managers who intend to act as internal coaches is made compulsory by the HRM.	Unsuitable managers are prevented from acting as coaches while suitable managers-as-coach are given credit.

Table 7.2.2 (c). Key recommendations and implementation.

7.2.3 Dissemination Plan

The plan for dissemination and publication of the results of this study consists of three activities that are in different stages of development.

The first step is to prepare an academic article. This can possibly be done in collaboration with the Reading University or with Aalto University in Helsinki. Currenlty, a key professor at Aalto has expressed his interest in collaborating with the researcher and submitting the article to the Academy of Management conference. This would be followed by participation in this conference in 2021 to network with the academic community and to build the academic brand of the researcher.

Secondly, there will be several opportunities to present the generational findings through BECI, and these discussions have already started. These could also result in a joint publication with less academic weight. More importantly, the collaboration with BECI is an excellent opportunity to present the findings to the market, as BECI's clientele includes

some of the most influential Silicon Valley F500 companies. BECI is also expanding to European markets in the near future.

The third action is the personal brand building via business and personal communications. The researcher will start communications through his personal webpages, which have been set up for the DBA. Discussions are also ongoing with Henley Finland as regards collaboration with the researcher in order to raise awareness of the subject in Finland and also to champion the Henley DBA in Finland. On the business side, the researcher has established a company in Helsinki, Finland, with a subsidiary in San Francisco, California, which is focused on coaching, story-telling and advisory services, and it will commence active communication and marketing of its services after the completion of the DBA. This will also assist the researcher in seizing future market opportunities both in Finland and California. The company is planning to set up its European base in Paris during the second quarter of 2021. Paris will be the company's centre office and the researcher's new home. This will further help the researcher to be more active with European market and institutions.

In summary, the measures to build awareness, market the knowledge and start acting as part of the academic community are in place, and they will be activated after the completion of the DBA.

7.3 Future Research Opportunities

There are several future research opportunities in the Finnish and global context.

7.3.1 The Finnish Aspect

Leadership style of a millennial Finn: a qualitative study with in-depth interviews

The leadership style and characteristics of millennial Finns would be an interesting topic to investigate. Millennials are moving up the organisation ladder, and it would be interesting to investigate how millennial Finns as leaders will impact the organisation culture, what types of tools they will employ as leaders for their organisational and self-development and how that will impact the Finnish market for coaching services in Finland.

Generations co-working in Finland after Covid-19: a quantitative large-scale study

The co-working of generations in the Finnish context would be interesting to investigate, and this type of study could be conducted within large Finnish corporations. This topic has become even more interesting as generation z has entered the workplace. At the same time, people are working sometimes well up to their seventies, which means that currently

many generations are working together. The Covid-19 situation and widely adopted remote working practices also fuelled the general discussion in Finland on differences between people and generations in adapting to new working practices. This new working culture will also impact how the generations interact with each other socially at the workplace, as physical meetings at the office are no longer mandatory. In the Finnish culture, where privacy is valued, remote working has been a "heaven" for many, and some have even stated they would rather not return to the office at all. This attitude results in a contrast with team-spirited, socially tolerant millennials, which may be problematic in the future, and there is possibly a generational gap emerging in attitudes towards Covid-19. This difference in attitudes will also impact co-working at the workplace.

Diversity and openness in the Finnish workplace – generations shaping the culture*: *a quantitative, large-scale study

Diversity and openness, how they are present themselves and are understood in the Finnish working culture from the leadership perspective would also be an interesting subject. Diversity and openness can be also associated with emotions and communication, which are also challenging issues for Finns. The process-oriented working culture in Finland is likely to face more challenges in the future, as millennials and generation z-ers bring their values and expectations to work life. Organisations embracing diversity and openness are likely to succeed as co-existence becomes even more important for businesses in Finland, where there is a shortage of skilled labour in many industries.

Gap between corporate strategy, communication and human resource management practices: a qualitative study with in-depth interviews

This study brought forward interesting and disturbing facts on the lack of professional coaching offered to millennials in the Finnish organisations. In addition, the data revealed that there was sometimes an almost hostile behaviour towards millennials and a lack of understanding and sympathy towards their needs. Since organisations will need people to execute their strategies, it would be interesting to explore why is there a gap between how human resources management is acting, what corporate communications are saying and what is outlined in the corporate strategy. Since the study evidenced that the Finnish businesses have not invested into coaching millennials, it would be interesting to explore whether Covid-19 has made the situation and outlook even worse. The study could investigate millennials' and generation z-ers' expectations on development tools and interventions after the Covid-19 experience and contrast these findings against the strategy of human resources management.

7.3.2 The Global Aspect

Ability of the coach: a qualitative study with in-depth interviews

Coaching in any cultural context and especially the maturity and ability of the coach are interesting questions to explore in association with millennials and other future generations. One interesting option would be to investigate the maturity and ability of the coach and, at the same time, explore differences between mature and novice coaches and, for example, managers-as-coach. This study data showed that perceived satisfaction in relation to the coaching intervention varied among the informants depending on who was offering the coaching, i.e. professional coach or a manager-as-coach. It could be investigated whether all these coaches (professional coaches or non-professional coaches, i.e. who coach but do not have a certification, or a managers-as-coach) could provide effective coaching when the conditions, i.e. the "ability to be a coach" and the "maturity of the coach", are met, or whether there is correlation between different coaches and the perceived satisfaction of the clients.

Coaching millennials and generation z-ers after the Covid-19: a quantitative large-scale study

The Covid-19 episode has left and is leaving a mark on all societies and businesses. The near future poses many questions for almost all businesses, and their profitability is in question in many cases. This will certainly influence how much funding human resources or talent management will be allocated. It might be interesting to study, considering the outcomes of this study, how the Covid-19 will impact the state of coaching within businesses and especially for millennials and generation z-ers. This issue has become even more acute when generation z has entered the workplace.

Impact of local culture on research: a quantitative large-scale study or qualitative study with in-depth interviews

An investigation on the impact of local cultural aspects would be interesting anywhere. In general, there should be more discussion and investigation on the cultural landscape in which any research is being conducted. There is a need for a deeper reflection on the impact of culture on any research, especially in the current environment where "nationalist" and "me-first" viewpoints are gaining popularity and the cultural divide between nations is growing. Furthermore, the differences in values and cultures have become wider due to the approach to Covid-19. Countries have survived the Covid-19 in very different ways, and this may have repercussions on many levels of their societies that will impact local culture and

attitudes towards other cultures. For example, different approaches of Sweden and Finland to Covide-19 has aroused disputes between local academics on who had the correct approach and what are the merits to determine that – and both seem to be able to justify their approach.

Artificial intelligence coaching: a qualitative study with in-depth interviews

Artificial intelligence has already entered the coaching market. It would be interesting to study the perceived differences, if any, between standard coaching and artificial intelligence coaching. Could AI allow offering of coaching to all in the future, and is artificial intelligence the answer to more "human" coaching since artificial intelligence poses no judgement or bias and accepts the coachee just as she/he is? Is a machine better than a human and more humane at the end? This would be very interesting and important subject.

Moral guidelines of artificial intelligence coaching – who draws them: a qualitative study with in-depth interviews

With the rapid development of artificial intelligence applications in coaching, it would be interesting to investigate the source of philosophy and moral guidelines of the AI and how that will impact the coaching outcome. When artificial intelligence coaching is offered in large scale for tomorrow's leaders and executives, these guidelines and values may have a major impact on the coaching outcome. When using AI, the boundary between coaching and consultancy should be investigated, and furthermore, what type of supervision would be applied to artificial intelligence coaching – or will it be one artificial intelligence supervising another, which is a likely scenario.

7.4 The Researcher

The researcher is a Henley Business School MBA and MSc and holds a coaching certification from the Berkeley Executive Coaching Institute. He has been a business leader since his early twenties and has worked for both large and small global businesses, local businesses as well as start-ups. He has always been interested in people, cultures, leadership and organisational development. Working around the world has given him an opportunity to experience the impact of local culture on global business. Perhaps this global work experience has even served as one of the key catalysts for this study: the never-ending interest towards understanding which factors local culture and people bring to any equation. In addition, fascination for and respect towards personal development were also key parts of the motivation behind the study.

The researcher has a keen interest in all generations but particularly towards the younger generations, as they will be in charge one day. Coaching as an intervention has long fascinated the researcher, and through this study, his knowledge on coaching has grown unexpectedly. The researcher has found that in the larger picture, we are all similar and different at the same time. However, when you start looking closer in more detail, you start to see the unique individualities more clearly. This might be the reason behind his interest in millennials.

All the factors above built this motivation towards the DBA. It was a personal challenge, awarding a feeling of contribution. As Maslow argues (2011), the challenge plays a key part in personal development. Challenge teaches the maker about the maker her/himself. Many people have a fear of knowledge, of what the person learns about oneself when confronted by many obstacles and personal abilities are pushed to the limit, but there lies the reward for personal learning (Maslow, 2011).

The study took several years, and many challenges were overcome during these years. The main challenges included time management, access to informants and prioritizing between work, research and personal life. In this case, the resilience to carry on the study might be explained by a concept of twisted gratification: the gratification to make something is actually the motivation (Maslow, 1943). Overall, the total work done with the study is not only limited into writing the theses but also conducting all the other work such as data collection, transcription and analysis; the key elements in achieving a DBA. All of this is achieved through the counselling from the DBA supervisors who as mentors guide and assist the researcher.

7.4.1 Researcher Reflection

This journey of development, which resulted in the DBA, involved evolution at a personal level, both in skills and mental ability, and it was more revolutionary than one could have ever envisaged. This is a story of a novice academic who through long periods of work and challenges produced a thesis and achieved new knowledge for all to share, serving the community with a contribution to practice. It is an example on what anyone of us can provide for our common good.

The reflection of the entire MSc and DBA journey at Henley is multifaceted. Firstly, a long time has passed, and it is hard to say with accuracy which has been greater: the accumulation of knowledge and learning, or the personal development.

During the MSc and at the beginning of the DBA, the process was interesting, and one could even say entertaining, which changed to challenging and demanding. The last years were the hardest and the best. There is no great victory or learning without discomfort, work and even pain that is associated with it – all victories come with a price. Perseverance is a great asset in this type of project.

Firstly, a lot of learning has occurred, but it has not satisfied the researcher's hunger for more, in fact it has brought more questions for investigation and has widened horizons for possibilities. In a way, this development has resulted in a "possibilian mentality" (Eagleman, 2010), which means that what we know to be scientifically right today, might be proven different tomorrow by new science. This applies even to life habits – how we live today might be different tomorrow. The Covid-19 has certainly demonstrated its power to cause that, and it is for the individual to decide whether to adapt or to rebel. A possibilian is a positive character as he encourages exploration and is not afraid to question the norm. The intensification of this characteristic of the researcher is a direct result of the MSc and DBA journey.

The journey has resulted in the development of several practical skills. Firstly, the overall time and organisational management has improved greatly and at the same time, stress associated with time and workload has reduced. Overall, the researcher's capabilities in processing and searching for information have improved and become more accurate, and at the same time, approach to information has become perspicacious. The DBA has transformed life entirely, and it could be argued that most events in the last few years are in some way a positive result from the personal development that has occurred through the DBA program. For example, learning coaching practices inspired the researcher to explore coaching by taking a coaching course at the Berkeley Executive Coaching Institute (BECI), from which the researcher gained a certificate in coaching. The course gave the researcher new tools to employ both as a leader but also for self-development. At BECI, coaches are trained to be present and equipped with high level of positive energy, strong focus, and an ability to be aware of the situation.

Perhaps one of the most precious lessons and changes for the researcher has been to open and be authentic, both in private life but also as a leader and a friend. Learning to present, listen and discuss issues as they are, even when the topic might bring discomfort to oneself and to the recipient, has been life changing. The openness and authenticity have not only impacted only one life but others as well, and the positive feedback received when talking openly about, sexuality, illnesses, fears and dreams has been greatly rewarding in itself.

The tools, reflections and intra-person discoveries made in the last few years have assisted the researcher in maturing as a person.

The Gibbs reflective cycle as shown below in Figure 7.4.1 was used to aid in the process of self-reflection. Various steps of the cycle are described in more detail below.
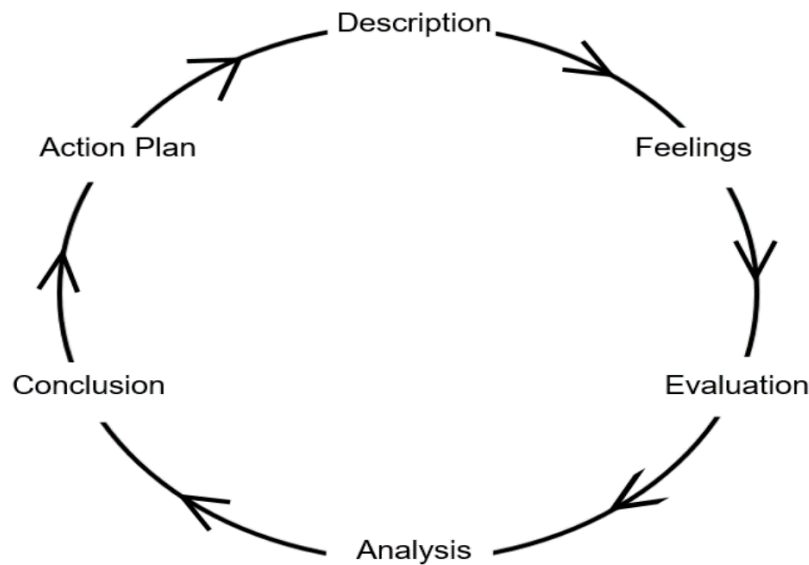

Figure 7.4.1. Gibb's reflective cycle.

Description

The task was to complete the DBA, knowing that it would sometimes be a lonely, intimidating, and painful but also life-enriching experience that would take years. The key was not losing anything from current life but to enrich it through learning and personal development.

Feelings

Current feelings towards the overall experience are both positive and negative. The conflicting feelings are associated with planning, execution and personal performance, where many issues worked out and were managed in the end but could have been done more efficiently. In addition, there are great positive feelings of satisfaction towards new discoveries made at personal level, friendships that have emerged during the project, knowledge and development that have been achieved, future opportunities that are in the horizon, and the overall personal development that has been achieved.

Evaluation

Planning could and should have been more dynamic and rigorous and the applies to execution. In some way, it was good that was time for the person to mature, but on the other hand more dynamic time management could have contributed towards keeping work, study and private life in better balance. It is however certain and positive that the time spent has benefitted the DBA project and the personal development.

There is one key question that will never be answered. What would it have been like if the researcher had lived in England and could have interacted more closely with the University of Reading and Henley? Based on the successes of networking and building relationships both in business and academic life, it is likely that the researcher could have benefited from being closer to these institutions. However, it is never too late, and the journey does not end here and the researcher's motivation to continue being part of these communities is strong.

Analysis

Perseverance has always been one of the researcher's strengths both in business and private life. However, usually motivation and perseverance have resulted in achieving milestones. The milestones during the later stage of the DBA journey were not profound experiences, which challenged motivation sometimes. However, when motivation was exhausted, perseverance always compensated. Since the researcher is experienced in building businesses, visioning possibilities and networking, he needed a similar "opportunity proposition" for the later stage of the program, i.e. how to make the effort count. This vision gained momentum through the enrolment to BECI and the establishment of successive start-ups. Networking and future opportunities both in academia and consultancy supported the overall desire to evolve as a human being and as a person. Gaining new knowledge and contributing back to the society became the main catalysts for the completion of the DBA.

Conclusion

It is easy to say today what should have been done differently, but it was not possible at that time. Today it is hindsight. One can only be pleased and blessed that development has taken place and that the ability to act and perform differently is there today.

Action Plan

> The use of skills, strength, sometimes audaciousness and presence of love towards other people and personal openness has become a way of life for the researcher. The openness includes personal traits, needs, values and way of working of the researcher, and he bring them to the table openly. It is important to challenge and question issues that are not satisfactory or not understood. However, there must always be a will to compromise. The above describes the researcher as a leader in business and as a private person. Without the DBA and other elements of development associated with the holistic experience, this would not be the case today. What starts next is the evolution of the academic personality, and the above will surely support the researcher on this journey.

As the Gibbs reflective cycle shows, a new chapter is about to open in the researcher's life, and it is associated with academia, teaching and consultancy. A key point remains and it is the researchers' thirst for knowledge and hunger for development.

One topic occupies the researcher's mind especially and that is the Finnish culture and the Finnish business culture and how to contribute to it. It seems that the Finnish business leadership culture is dominated by "high-quality mediocracy", i.e. in the end, very few people seek higher personal awareness or question the norm. Instead, Finns seek and desire consensus, silos, standards and certainty throughout all levels of the society and leadership. This cultural fact was also raised by Tom Dodd, the British ambassador of Finland, when Henley MBA alumni met him at the British Embassy for a Brexit discussion in December 2018. When the alumni were pressing him on British culture and Brexit, the ambassador noted that in Finland everybody wants to agree on everything, i.e. reach consensus. It is hard for the average Finn to understand the British system, especially the discussion and process around Brexit. This was a valid and accurate point, and there is reason to ask whether Finnish business leaders care to understand generational and diversity issues. A generic goal for the future would be to contribute to the discussion in Finland on the direction and values of Finnish business leadership culture. The researcher's future work with Henley Finland will certainly provide platforms and opportunities for this.

In summary, the DBA provides a platform to engage. However, what value is there in knowledge if the bearer does not have the ability to justify it? It is important to have people with knowledge and ideas who can convey and champion the message and whom the audience can trust and feel comfortable with. Where modern leaders require authenticity, so do academics as well. In today's world it seems that sometimes communication, attention

and noise are more important than the content. Anyone reaching a DBA has a moral obligation to communicate, gain attention and to make noise. World needs factual content that serves the interest of civil society and contributes to the community. We must lead with our example as private global citizens and as part of the wider community.

7.5 Summary

This chapter has further discussed the ability to act as a coach, how that impacts openness in the coaching relationship and how important this openness is in the Finnish cultural context to facilitate effective coaching.

The chapter also offers contributions to practice and knowledge which are focused on Finland. It is the researcher's deep belief that the coaching industry in Finland will benefit from the discussion of this work and that it will result in future research and investigation in Finland into coaching relationship and coaching practices. Business life has already shown interest in the discoveries made in this study, for example with respect to how Finnish companies manage their coaching offering. It is likely that this discussion will become more dynamic and louder when the work is presented to the Finnish public.

The business life and coaching clientele is evolving and becoming more diverse. This is a fact that must be kept constantly in mind. Continuous training, development and self-evaluation is as essential for coaches as it is for any manager and for any millennial. When coaching millennials in Finland, there are usually thee main stakeholders: the HRM, the coach and the millennial. Very few millennial Finns can afford to buy coaching services individually without partial or full sponsoring from their organisation.

The study has provided evidence on the poor state of coaching millennials in Finland. This situation is particularly sad when considering that millennials are hungry for development and for career opportunities. However, they also want to their individual values and needs recognized in the process. Finnish HRM departments might have had an easy ride in terms of how easy and modest customers the previous generations have been. However, now it is time to change and to adapt if they want to keep and train the best talent for their company. This does not only apply only to millennials: all diversity issues are included.

The professional coaching industry and professional coaches are also faced with a changing and evolving world. New customer segments are emerging to the coaching market and it is essential for the coaching industry to recognise them and to evaluate if current practices also need to change. Even if the theory on how to deliver coaching services in its many forms is solid, there is the human element in the form of the coach which is not. Taking

the human element into consideration, it is essential to evaluate how the coaches are adapting to and valuing the new customer segments. This is especially important to recognise in the Finnish context where the coaching market is relatively small and thus many coaches, especially after Covid-19, are in constant need and lookout for new customers.

Millennial Finns are both a misunderstood and well understood cohort. The reason for this is that there are clear generational differences at a wider level but upon closer individual inspection, those differences mellow down. This makes the concept of generation sometimes challenging at an individual level. However, millennials represent a very different generation in terms of the life experiences, social norms and behaviour, and laws, values and technology with which they have grown are different. Finland is a fast-evolving country in some respects, and this is particularly evident in more liberal life values and social norms. Where for example a transgender person faced discrimination in the nineties, she/he is now well understood and accepted both at workplace and in society. Before it was allowed to call people by discriminating names on the street, whereas today hate speech is not allowed publicly, and online police controls social media and gives fines for behaviour that infringes on diversity.

The data, analysis and discussion in this study provided an answer to the research question "how to create conditions for a successful coaching relationship between a coach and a millennial Finn". The answer looks at the coach and her/his ability and maturity to be in service for a millennial client. It is interesting that the answer was focused on the mentality and values of the coach. Perhaps this result also speaks about the direction Finland and its citizens are headed to in a democratic society that respects rule of law. It is not enough to have skills and processes: what is needed in addition is love, compassion, caring, mutual respect and happy co-existence. Interestingly, these are similar words that the Finnish prime minister, who is extremely popular, is voicing out what Finland stands for today. Emotions, feelings, sympathy and empathy are part of the today's business and social life. The Covid-19 has intensified this evolution in a positive way in Finland. When we protect the vulnerable, we also must be more open as a society and more accepting towards each other. Perhaps the best contribution of this study is what it has done to the researcher. It has opened the eyes and given more reasons to ask "why".

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van Nieuwerburgh, C. and Allaho, R. (2017) *Coaching in Islamic Culture. The Principles and Practice of Ershad*. Routledge, London and New York.

van Nieuwerburgh, C., Barr, M., Munro, C. Noon, H. and Arifin, D. (2020) Experiences of aspiring school principals receiving coaching as part of a leadership development programme. *International Journal of Mentoring and Coaching in Education*, Vol. 9, No. 3, p. 291-306.

Warner, N. and Budd, M.-J. (2018) The impact of peer-to-peer coaching on self-esteem, test anxiety and perceived stress in adolescents. *The Coaching Psychologist*, Vol. 14, No. 2, 69-79.

Weber, J. and Urick, M. J. (2017) Examining the Millennials' Ethical Profile: Assessing Demographic Variations in Their Personal Value Orientations. *Business and Society Review*, 122:4, 469-506.

Weston, M. (2001) Coaching Generations in the Workplace. *Nursing Administration Quarterly*, Vol. 25, Iss. 2, 2-11.

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Wiginton, J. G. and Cartwright, P. A. (2020) Evidence on the impacts of business coaching. *Journal of Management Development*, Vol. 39, No. 2, p. 163-180.

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https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2019/03/finland-is-the-world-s-happiest-country-again/.
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Yogamalar, I. and Samuel, A. A. (2016) Shared values and organizational citizenship behavior of generational cohorts: a review and future directions. *Management*, Vol. 21, No. 2, 249-271.

Yle (2015). Available from https://yle.fi/uutiset [Accessed 10 January 2020].

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Zilca, R. (2016) Research: Millennials Think About Work Too Much. *Harvard Business Review*, 15 July.

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Appendix A: Focus Groups Structure

Focus Group process and discussion launch themes.

Appendix B: Interview Protocol

INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Opening

Could you please tell about yourself: age, education and working history in a few words?

Could you please tell about your experience on coaching in your own words?

Theme: Matching

In your experience, what personality traits should one pay attention to when selecting a coach?

> Banning, K. L. (1997) Now, coach? *Across the Board*, Vol. 34, 28-32.

> Bozer, G., Joo, B.-K. and Santora, J. C. (2015) Executive Coaching: Does Coach-Coachee Matching Based on Similarity Really Matter? *Consulting Psychology Journal: Practice and Research*, Vol. 67, No. 3, 218-233.

> Kombarakaran, F. A., Baker, M. N., Yang, J. A. and Fernandes, P. B. (2008) Executive Coaching: It Works! *Consulting Psychology Journal: Practice and Research*, Vol. 60, No. 1, 78-90.

> *Focus Group results: personality factors surfaced as a major theme in the HR and coachee focus group as an influencing factor for coaching relationship success.*

In your experience, what impact does coach/coachee similarity or difference have on coaching?

> Bozer, G., Joo, B.-K. and Santora, J. C. (2015) Executive Coaching: Does Coach-Coachee Matching Based on Similarity Really Matter? *Consulting Psychology Journal: Practice and Research*, Vol. 67, No. 3, 218-233.

> Laske, O. (2007) Contributions of evidence-based development coaching to coaching psychology and practice. In: *International Coaching Psychology Review*, Vol. 2 No. 2, 202-204.

Probes

Thinking specially about age – do you have experiences on age similarity or dissimilarity?

Focus Group results: age and experience surfaced as a major theme in the coachee focus group as an influencing factor for coaching relationship success.

What about gender – any gender preferences and experiences?

Gray, D. E. and Goregaokar, H. (2010) Choosing an executive coach: the influence of gender on the coach-coachee matching process. *Management Learning*, Vol. 41(5), 525-544.

What about business experience? Can you please give examples?

Feldman, D. C. and Lankau, M. J. (2005) Executive Coaching: A Review and Agenda for Future Research. *Journal of Management*, Vol. 31, 829-848.

Joo, B.-K., Sushko, J. and McLean, G. N. (2012) Multiple Faces of Coaching: Manager-as-coach, Executive Coaching, and Formal Mentoring. *Organization Development Journal*, Vol. 30 No. 1, 19-38.

Ladyshewsky, R. K. (2010) The manager as coach as a driver of organizational development. *Leadership & Organization Development Journal*, Vol. 31 No. 4, 292-306.

What kind of impact does similar business background have, if any?

Kilburg, R. R. (2009) Executive Coaching – Developing Managerial Wisdom in a World of Chaos. London, United Kingdom: American Psychological Association.

Passmore, J. and Gibbes, C. (2007) The state of executive coaching research: What does the current literature tell us and what's next for coaching research? *International Coaching Psychology Review*, Vol. 2, No. 2, 116-128.

Can you give examples of coaches' personality characteristics – based on your experience?

- What makes a good coach?

- What makes a bad coach?

Cox, E. and Bachkirova, T. (2007) Coaching with emotion: How coaches deal with difficult emotional situations. *International Coaching Psychology Review*, Vol. 2, No. 2, p. 178-189.

De Haan, E., Duckworth, A., Birch, D. and Jones, C. (2013) Executive Coaching Outcome Research: the Contribution of Common Factors Such as Relationship,

Personality Match, and Self-Efficacy. *Consulting Psychology Journal: Practice and Research*, Vol. 65, no. 1, p. 40-57.

Harris, M. (1999) Look, it's an I-O psychologist...no, it's a trainer...no, it's an executive coach. *TIP*, 36(3), 1-5.

McBain, R. (2004) *Mentoring, Self-Efficacy and Emotional Intelligence: Their Relationship and Impact upon Academic Progression.* A thesis submitted in partial Fulfilment of the requirements of Henley Management College/Brunel University for the degree of Doctor of Business Administration. Henley-on-Thames: Brunel University.

Passmore, J. and Gibbes, C. (2007) The state of executive coaching research: What does the current literature tell us and what's next for coaching research? *International Coaching Psychology Review*, Vol. 2, No. 2, 116-128.

Patti, J., Holzer, A. A., Brackett, M. A. & Stern, R. (2015) Twenty-century professional development for educators: a coaching approach grounded in emotional intelligence. *Coaching: An International Journal of Theory, Research and Practice*, Vol. 8, No. 2, 96-119

Stern, L. R. (2004) Executive Coaching: A Working Definition. *Consulting Psychology Journal*, Vol. 56, 154-162.

Focus Group results: personality factors surfaced as a major theme in the HR and coachee focus group as an influencing factor for coaching relationship success.

Focus Group results: coach incompetence, lack of coaching skills and lack of coach personal interests towards the coaching client surfaced as major themes in the coachee focus group as an influencing factor for coaching relationship success.

Can you give an example of a good and bad coaching experience?

Collins, C. E. (2012) *Exploring Executive Coaching: Its role in Leadership Development.* A thesis submitted in partial Fulfilment of the requirements of Warwick University for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy. Warwick University.

Focus Group results: coach incompetence, lack of coaching skills and lack of coach personal interests towards the coaching client surfaced as major themes in the coachee focus group as an influencing factor for coaching relationship success.

What experiences do you have on matching a coaching pair?

What experiences do you have on being matched?

Collins, C. E. (2012) *Exploring Executive Coaching: Its role in Leadership Development.* A thesis submitted in partial Fulfilment of the requirements of Warwick University for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy. Warwick University.

Focus Group results: matching surfaced as the major theme in the HR and coach focus group as an influencing factor for coaching relationship success.

Theme: Relationship

Based on your experience, what is important in a working coaching relationship?

Grant, A. M. (2013a) Autonomy support, relationship satisfaction and goal focus in the coach-coachee relationship: which best predicts coaching success? *Coaching: An International Journal of Theory, Research and Practice*, 7:1, 18-38.

Joo, B.-K., Sushko, J. and McLean, G. N. (2012) Multiple Faces of Coaching: Manager-as-coach, Executive Coaching, and Formal Mentoring. *Organization Development Journal*, Vol. 30 No. 1, 19-38.

Law, H. (2013) *The Psychology of Coaching, Mentoring and Learning*. Second edition. Wiley Blackwell.

Sonesh, S. C., Coultas, C, W., Lacerenza, C. N., Marlow, S. L., Benishek, L. E. and Salas, E. (2015) The power of coaching: a meta-analytic investigation. *Coaching: An International Journal of Theory, Research and Practice*, Vol. 8, No. 2, 73-95.

Probes

Thinking specially about relationship, what sort of factors have an impact on it?

Based on your experience, what sort of impact do you think that trust has?

Boyce, L. A., Jackson, R. J. and Neal, L. J. (2010) Building successful leadership coaching relationships. Examining impact of matching criteria in a leadership coaching program. *Journal of Management Development*, Vol. 29, No 10, 914-931.

Gyllensten, K. and Palmer, S. (2007) The coaching relationship: An interpretative phenomenological analysis. *International Coaching Psychology Review*, Vol. 2, no. 2, 168-177.

Simon, S. N. (2009) Applying Gestalt Theory to Coaching. *Gestalt Review*, Vol. 13, No. 3, 230-240.

Stern, L. R. (2004) Executive Coaching: A Working Definition. *Consulting Psychology Journal*, Vol. 56, 154-162.

What comes to your mind when thinking about openness?

Gillie, M. (2009) Commentary: Applying Gestalt Theory to Coaching. *Gestalt Review*, Vol. 13, No. 3, 254-260.

Based on your experience, what kind of impact do coaching skills have?

De Haan, E., Duckworth, A., Birch, D. and Jones, C. (2013) Executive Coaching Outcome Research: the Contribution of Common Factors Such as Relationship, Personality Match, and Self-Efficacy. *Consulting Psychology Journal: Practice and Research*, Vol. 65, no. 1, 40-57.

What about personal interest towards the coaching client?

Focus Group results: lack of coaches' personal interest towards the coaching client surfaced as major themes in the coachee focus group as an influencing factor for coaching relationship success.

What do you think is a good coaching relationship – can you give examples?

What do you think is a bad coaching relationship – can you give examples?

Baron, L. and Morin, L. (2009) The Coach-Coachee Relationship in Executive Coaching: A Field Study. *Human Resource Development Journal*, Vol. 20, No. 1, 85-106.

Collins, C. E. (2012) *Exploring Executive Coaching: Its role in Leadership Development*. A thesis submitted in partial Fulfilment of the requirements of Warwick University for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy. Warwick University.

De Haan, E., Duckworth, A., Birch, D. and Jones, C. (2013) Executive Coaching Outcome Research: the Contribution of Common Factors Such as Relationship, Personality Match, and Self-Efficacy. *Consulting Psychology Journal: Practice and Research*, Vol. 65, no. 1, p. 40-57.

Gyllensten, K. and Palmer, S. (2007) The coaching relationship: An interpretative phenomenological analysis. *International Coaching Psychology Review*, Vol. 2, no. 2, 168-177.

Ianiro, P. M., Schermuly, C. C. and Kauffield, S. (2013) Why Interpersonal dominance and affiliation matter: an interaction analysis of the coach-client

relationship. *Coaching: An International Journal of Theory, Research and Practice*, 6:1, 25-46.

McKenna, D. D. and Davis, S. L. (2009) Hidden in Plain Sight: The Active Ingredients of Executive Coaching. *Industrial and Organizational Psychology*, Vol. 2, 244-260.

Closing

Is there anything else I should be considering to research coaching and matching Millennials?

Is there anything else you would like to add?

Appendix C: Statistics Finland

2/9/2020 Finland among the best in the world | Statistics Finland

https://www.stat.fi/tup/satavuotias-suomi/suomi-maailman-karjessa_en.html 1/5

(/index_en.html)

Finland among the best in the world

Finland is a small country on a global scale.

The population of Finland makes up just 0.07 per cent of the world's population and its area as much of the total world area. But even a small country can jump to the top of the world, and this is what Finland has done: in international country comparisons of positive things Finland is often among the top countries next to other Nordic countries. In honour of Finland's centenary celebrations, we collected a list of comparisons in which Finland is one of the best in the world. The list below was last time updated on 5 December 2018, when Finland was for the last day one hundred years old. An updated list is available at Independence Day 2019. (http://www.stat.fi/tup/tilastokirjasto/itsenaisyyspaiva-2019_en.html)

Society

Finland is the most stable country in the world.

The Fund for Peace, Fragile States Index 2018 (http://fundforpeace.org/fsi/data/)

Finland is the freest country in the world together with Sweden and Norway.

Freedom House, Freedom in the World 2018 (https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world-2018-table-country-scores)

Finland is the safest country in the world.

World Economic Forum, The Travel & Tourism Competitiveness Report 2017

(http://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_TTCR_2017_web_0401.pdf)

Finland is the fourth best country in the world.

The Good Country Index, Results (https://www.goodcountryindex.org/results)

Finland has the best governance in the world.

Legatum Institute, The Legatum Prosperity Index 2018: Finland (http://www.prosperity.com/globe#FIN)

Finland's police and internal security as a whole are the second best in the world.

The International Police Science Association, World Internal Security and Police Index (http://www.ipsapolice.org/ProjectInfoDetails/world-internal-security-and-police-index)

Finland has the least organised crime in the world.

World Economic Forum, The Global Competitiveness Report 2018: Organized crime (http://reports.weforum.org/globalcompetitiveness-report-2018/competitiveness-rankings/#series=EOSQ035)

Next to Norwegians and Icelanders, Finns feel the second least insecure in the world.

Gallup, Law and Order Index 2018 (https://news.gallup.com/poll/235391/peace-security-reachworldwide.aspx?g_source=link_NEWSV9&g_medium=TOPIC&g_campaign=item_&g_content=Peace%2c%2520Security%2520Still%2520Out%2520of%2520Reach%2520for%2520Many%2520Worldwide)

Finland's judicial system is the most independent in the world.

World Economic Forum, The Global Competitiveness Report 2018: Judicial independence (http://reports.weforum.org/globalcompetitiveness-report-2018/competitiveness-rankings/#series=EOSQ144)

After Danes, Finns vote in the freest and most reliable elections.

Pippa Norris, Thomas Wynter and Sarah Cameron, Electoral Integrity & Campaign Media: The Electoral Integrity Project 2018 mid-year update (https://www.electoralintegrityproject.com/2018midyearupdate/) (The Electoral Integrity Project, University of Sydney & Harvard University)

Finland has the third least corruption in the world.

Transparency International, Corruption Perceptions Index 2017

(https://www.transparency.org/news/feature/corruption_perceptions_index_2017#table)

Finland is the third most prosperous country in the world.

Legatum Institute, The Legatum Prosperity Index 2018: Finland (http://www.prosperity.com/globe#FIN)

Protection of property rights in Finland is the best in the world.

World Economic Forum (WEF), The Global Competitiveness Report 2018: Property Rights (http://reports.weforum.org/globalcompetitiveness-

report-2018/competitiveness-rankings/#series=EOSQ051)

Availability of official information in Finland is the best in the EU.

Center for data innovation, The State of data innovation in the EU: Freedom of information

(https://www.datainnovation.org/2017/10/the-state-of-data-innovation-in-the-eu-2/)

Finnish banks are the soundest in the world.

World Economic Forum, The Global Competitiveness Report 2018: Soundness of banks (http://reports.weforum.org/globalcompetitiveness-

report-2018/competitiveness-rankings/#series=EOSQ087)

Finland's pension system is the third best in the world. (34 countries in the comparison).

Mercer, Melbourne Mercer Global Pension Index 2018 (https://www.mercer.com.au/our-thinking/mmgpi.html)

Finland has the third most personal freedom and choice in the world.

The Social Progress Imperative, 2018 Social Progress Index: Finland (http://www.socialprogressindex.com/?tab=2&code=FIN)

Finland has the fourth best press freedom in the world.

Reporters Without Borders, 2018 World Press Freedom Index: Ranking (https://rsf.org/en/ranking)

After Denmark and Sweden, Finland is the most socially just EU country.

D. Schraad-Tischler & C. Schiller: Social Justice in the EU – Index Report 2017 (https://www.bertelsmannstiftung.de/en/publications/publication/did/social-justice-in-the-eu-index-report-2017-1/) (Bertelsmann Stiftung 2017)

Among the world's richest countries, Finland is the third most dedicated to policies that benefit people living in poorer nations.

Centre for Global Development, The Commitment to Development Index 2018 (CDI) (https://www.cgdev.org/commitmentdevelopment-index)

Finland is the best country in the world in a comparison of human wellbeing.

Sustainable Society Index, Main results 2016 (http://www.ssfindex.com/results/main-results-2016/)

Finland is the third best country in adhering to the rule of law in the world.

The World Justice Project, Rule of Law Index 2017–2018 (http://data.worldjusticeproject.org/#table)

Finland is the best country in protecting fundamental human rights in the world.

The World Justice Project, Rule of Law Index 2017–2018 (http://data.worldjusticeproject.org/#table)

Satisfaction and trust

Finland is the happiest country in the world.

Sustainable Development Solutions Network, World Happiness Report 2018 (http://worldhappiness.report/)

Finns are the second most satisfied with their life among Europeans.

Eurostat, Percentage of the population rating their satisfaction as high, medium or low

(http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/en/web/products-datasets/-/ILC_PW05)

Finns are the most satisfied with their accommodation in the EU.

Eurostat, Percentage of the population rating their satisfaction as high, medium or low

(http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/en/web/products-datasets/-/ILC_PW05)

Among EU citizens, Finns are the second most common to have someone to rely on in case of need.

Eurostat, Persons having someone to rely on in case of need. (https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/products-datasets/-/ilc_pw07)

Finns' trust in the police is the highest and in the political system and in the legal system the second highest in Europe.

Eurostat, Average rating of trust (http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/en/web/products-datasets/-/ILC_PW03)

Finns trust news the most in the world. (37 countries in the comparison).

Reuters Institute, Digital News Report 2018 (http://www.digitalnewsreport.org/)

In Finland, consumers' confidence in the economy is second strongest in Europe.

European Commission, Business and consumer surveys (https://ec.europa.eu/info/business-economy-euro/indicators-statistics/economicdatabases/business-and-consumer-surveys_en)

Equality

Finland is the third most gender equal country in the world.

World Economic Forum, Global Gender Gap Index 2017 (http://reports.weforum.org/global-gender-gap-report-2017/shareableinfographics/)

Participation of genders in working life in Finland is the second most equal in the EU.

European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE), Gender Equality Index 2017: Work / Participation (http://eige.europa.eu/genderequality-index/2015/countries-comparison/work/1/bar)

Finnish women's gender equality in working life is the fourth best in the world.

The Economist, The Glass-Ceiling Index 2018 (https://www.economist.com/blogs/graphicdetail/2018/02/daily-chart-10)

In Finland, power is divided between genders the third most equally in the EU.

European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE), Gender Equality Index 2017: Power (http://eige.europa.eu/gender-equalityindex/2015/countries-comparison/power/bar)

Finland has the third most female MPs in European countries.

Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), Women in Politics 2017 (https://www.ipu.org/resources/publications/infographics/2017-03/women-inpolitics-2017?utm_source=Inter-Parliamentary+Union+%28IPU%29&utm_campaign=550dedbec7-EMAIL_CAMPAIGN_2017_02_23&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_d1ccee59b3-550dedbec7-258891957)

Finland has the second lowest poverty rate in OECD countries.

OECD, Poverty rate (https://data.oecd.org/inequality/poverty-rate.htm)

Finland has the fifth lowest income differences in OECD countries.

OECD, Income inequality (https://data.oecd.org/inequality/income-inequality.htm)

Environment and energy

The air in Finland is the cleanest in the world.

Finnish Meteorological Institute, Finland tops WHO air quality statistics (http://en.ilmatieteenlaitos.fi/press-release/524196421)

Finland is the water richest country in the world.

Keele University, The Water Poverty Index: an International Comparison (http://econwpa.repec.org/eps/dev/papers/0211/0211003.pdf)

The risk to be exposed to natural disasters is lowest in the world in Finland together with Bahrain, São Tomé and Príncipe and Singapore*.*

Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) and the European Commission, INFORM Global Risk Index Results 2018

Finland has the most forests in Europe.

FAO, Global Forest Resources Assessment (http://www.fao.org/3/a-i4808e.pdf)

Finland has the third most wetlands in Europe.

Eurostat, Wetlands cover 2% of the EU's land (http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/products-eurostat-news/-/EDN-20180201-1)

The share of renewable energy of total energy consumption is the second biggest in Finland of EU countries.

Eurostat, Share of energy from renewable sources in the EU Member States (https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statisticsexplained/index.php?title=File:Figure_1-Share_of_energy_from_renewable_sources_2004-2016.png)

Education and human capital

Finland has the most human capital in the world.

The Lancet, Measuring human capital: a systematic analysis of 195 countries and territories, 1990–2016 (https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736(18)31941-X/fulltext#seccestitle160)

Finland ranks as one of the top OECD country in education.

OECD, Better Life Index: Education (http://www.oecdbetterlifeindex.org/topics/education/http://reports.weforum.org/global-competitivenessindex-2017-2018/competitiveness-rankings/#series=EOSQ087)

Education in Finland answers to future needs the third best in the world.

Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU) & Yidan Prize, Worldwide Educating for the Future Index

(http://educatingforthefuture.economist.com/)

Finland is placed third in a comparison of lifelong learning in EU countries.

European Commission, European Innovation Scoreboard 2018: Lifelong learning

(http://ec.europa.eu/growth/industry/innovation/facts-figures/scoreboards_fi)

Finnish adults are the third best in literacy and numeracy of OECD countries.

OECD, How's Life? 2017: Measuring Well-being, Education and skills: adult skills (http://www.keepeek.com/Digital-Asset-Management/oecd/economics/how-s-life-2017/online-data-annex-current-well-being_how_life-2017-53-en#page43)

Finland is the most literate country in the world.

J. W. Miller and M. C. McKenna, World's Most Literate Nations: Rank Breakdown (http://www.ccsu.edu/wmln/rank.html)

Finns are the second biggest library users in Europe.

The European Bureau of Library, Public Libraries – Statistics (http://www.eblida.org/activities/kic/public-libraries-statistics.html)

Information society and competitiveness

Finland is the second best in the world in using information and communication technologies to boost competitiveness and well-being.

World Economic Forum (WEF), Global Information Technology Report 2016: Networked Readiness Index (http://reports.weforum.org/global-information-technology-report-2016/networked-readiness-index/)

Finland has EU's best digital public services.

European Commission, The Digital Economy and Society Index (DESI) 2018: Finland

(http://ec.europa.eu/information_society/newsroom/image/document/2018-20/fi-desi_2018-country-profile_eng_B4400116-A9B9-4D17-9137969FEFF24981_52222.pdf)

Finland has the strongest digital knowledge capital in Europe.

<European Commission, The Digital Economy and Society Index (DESI) 2018: Finland

(http://ec.europa.eu/information_society/newsroom/image/document/2018-20/fi-desi_2018-country-profile_eng_B4400116-A9B9-4D17-9137969FEFF24981_52222.pdf)

Finland has the second most wireless mobile broadband subscriptions per inhabitant in OECD countries.

OECD, Wireless mobile broadband subscriptions (https://data.oecd.org/broadband/wireless-mobile-broadband-subscriptions.htm)

Finns use most mobile data per subscription.

OECD, Digital Economy Outlook 2017 (http://www.keepeek.com/Digital-Asset-Management/oecd/science-and-technology/oecd-digitaleconomy-outlook-2017_9789264276284-en#page148)

Finnish enterprises are most likely to have their own website of OECD countries.

OECD, Digital Economy Outlook 2017 (http://www.keepeek.com/Digital-Asset-Management/oecd/science-and-technology/oecd-digitaleconomy-outlook-2017_9789264276284-en#page164)

Finland is the third best country for business in Europe.

European Chamber, Best European countries for business 2018 (https://eucham.eu/images/Infographic%202018.pdf)

Finland has the third best economic environment for business growth.

Grant Thornton, Global Dynamism Index 2015 (https://www.grantthornton.global/globalassets/1.-member-firms/global/insights/articlepdfs/2015/gdi2015_report_final_update.pdf)

Corporate ethics in Finland is the second best in the world.

World Economic Forum (WEF), The Global Competitiveness Report 2017–2018: Corporate Ethics (http://reports.weforum.org/global-competitiveness-index-2017-2018/competitiveness-rankings/#series=GCI.A.01.02.01)

Finland is the second best country in the field of clean technology. (40 countries in the comparison.)

WWF & Cleantech Group, The Global Cleantech Innovation Index 2017 (https://wwf.fi/mediabank/9906.pdf)

Finland's sustainable competitiveness is the fourth best in the world.

SolAbility, The Global Sustainable Competitiveness Index 2017 (http://solability.com/the-global-sustainable-competitiveness-index/theindex)

Children's well-being and school attendance

Finland has the second lowest inequality among children in the world.

UNICEF, Fairness for Children: A league table of inequality in child well-being in rich countries (https://www.unicefirc. org/publications/pdf/RC13_eng.pdf)

Finland is the second best country to be a girl in the world.

Save the Children, Every last girl: Girl's opportunity index

(https://campaigns.savethechildren.net/sites/campaigns.savethechildren.net/files/Every%20Last%20Girl%20Africa%20online%20version.pdf)

Finnish children have the fifth most secure childhood in the world.

Save the Children, The Many Faces of Exclusion: End of Childhood, Report 2018

(https://www.savethechildren.org/content/dam/global/reports/2018-end-of-childhood-report.pdf)

Young people (aged 11 to 15) in Finland are the fourth satisfied with their life among young people in welfare countries.

UNICEF, Child Well-being in Rich Countries: A comparative overview (https://www.unicef-irc.org/publications/683/)

Finns aged 15 are the third most satisfied with their lives among same-age young people in

OECD countries. OECD, PISA 2015 Results, Students' Well-Being (http://www.oecd.org/edu/pisa-2015-results-volume-iii-9789264273856-en.htm)

Finnish fourth graders' knowledge of science is the second best in OECD countries.

M. O. Mullis, I. V. S. Mullis, P. Foy and M. Hooper, TIMSS 2015 International Results in Science (http://timss2015.org/timss- 2015/science/student-achievement/)

Finns aged 15 are among OECD countries the second best in literacy and the third best in science.

Ministry of Education and Culture, PISA 2015: Finnish youth still at the top despite the drop

(https://minedu.fi/artikkeli/-/asset_publisher/pisa-2015-suomalaisnuoret-edelleen-huipulla-pudotuksesta-huolimatta?_101_INSTANCE_0R8wCyp3oebu_languageId=en_US)

Health

Finland is among the world's top 25 countries in life expectancy at birth. Differences at the top are small.

WHO, Life expectancy (http://apps.who.int/gho/data/node.main.688)

Finland has the least underweight (under 2,500 g) children born of OECD countries.

OECD, Low birth weight (http://www.oecd.org/els/family/CO_1_3_Low_birth_weight.pdf)

Mothers' and children's well-being in Finland is the second best in the world.

Save the Children, State of the World´s Mothers 2015, 16th annual report

(https://www.savethechildren.org/content/dam/usa/reports/advocacy/sowm/sowm-2015.pdf)

Finland has the world's third lowest infant mortality rate (deaths at the age of under one year).

UN, SDG Indicators, Infant mortality rate (http://unstats.un.org/sdgs/indicators/database/?indicator=3.2.1)

Maternal mortality is the lowest in the world in Finland together with Greece, Iceland and Poland.

WHO, World Health Statistics 2018: Monitoring health for the SDGs

(https://www.who.int/gho/publications/world_health_statistics/2018/en/)

The second lowest number of children weighing under 2.5 kg are born in Finland in OECD countries.

OECD, Health at a Glance 2015. Infant health: Low birth weight (http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/health_glance-2015-13-en)

Finland has the second lowest total mortality from cancer in EU countries.

OECD, Health at a Glance: Europe 2018: Mortality from cancer (https://read.oecd-ilibrary.org/social-issues-migration-health/health-ata-

glance-europe-2018_health_glance_eur-2018-en#page95)

Finnish adults are the second least likely to smoke of EU countries.

OECD, Health at a Glance: Europe 2018: Adults smoking daily (https://read.oecd-ilibrary.org/social-issues-migration-health/health-at-aglance-

europe-2018_health_glance_eur-2018-en#page117)

Finland's share of actively exercising people is bigger than in any other EU country.

Eurostat, How much do Europeans exercise? (http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/products-eurostat-news/-/DDN-20170302-1)

Appendix D: Ethical Approval Process

Henley
Business School
UNIVERSITY OF READING

Ethical Approval process

Information sheet

Title of research project: How to select an executive coach for a millennial Finn?

This research project investigates coaching intervention and issues as coach-coachee matching and coaching relationship in order to understand if matching is relevant in the coaching process. The research also looks at these issues in relation to a millennial Finn (born after 1982) as the coaching client.

The research forms part of my DBA academic qualification at Henley Business School at the University of Reading.

Part of the research involves interviewing people who are coaches, who have been coached and who are HR professionals, and for this reason, I would like to invite you to take part.

If you agree, you will be asked to participate in a focus-group.

During the focus group interview I will ask you questions on themes related to coaching and millennial Finns.

You can choose not to answer any particular questions and you are free to withdraw from the study at any time.

With your permission, I would like to record for later analysis. The data will be kept securely and destroyed after the completion of the project.

At every stage your identity will remain confidential. Your name and identifying information will not be included in the final report.

The identity of your organisation will not be included in the final report.

A copy of the completed thesis will be available on request.

The project has been subject to ethical review in accordance with the procedures specified by the University of Reading Research Ethics Committee and has been given a favourable ethical opinion for conduct.

If you have any further questions about the project, please feel free to contact me at the email address below.

Name of researcher: Jules Lajola

Email address: jules@juleslajola.com

Date: [TBA]

Consent form

Title of research project: How to select an executive coach for a millennial Finn?

1. I have read and had explained to me by Jules Lajola the information sheet relating to the project and any questions have been answered to my satisfaction.

2. I agree to the arrangements described in the information sheet insofar as they relate to my participation.

3. I understand that my participation is entirely voluntary and that I may withdraw from the project at any time.

4. I agree to the interview being *video/audio* recorded.

5. I have received a copy of this consent form and of the accompanying information sheet.

6. I am aged 18 or older.

Name of participant: [TBA]

Signed: ....

Date: [TBA]

Contact details of Researcher:

Jules Lajola

jules@juleslajola.com

Ethical Approval process

Information sheet

Title of research project: How to select an executive coach for a millennial Finn?

This research project investigates coaching intervention and issues as coach-coachee matching and coaching relationship in order to understand if matching is relevant in the coaching process. The research also looks at these issues in relation to a millennial Finn (born after 1982) as the coaching client.

The research forms part of my DBA academic qualification at Henley Business School at the University of Reading.

Part of the research, involves interviewing people who are coaches, who have been coached and who are HR professionals, and for this reason, I would like to invite you to take part.

If you agree, you will be asked to participate in a in-depth interview.

You can choose not to answer any particular questions and you are free to withdraw from the study at any time.

With your permission, I would like to record for later analysis. The data will be kept securely and destroyed after the completion of the project.

At every stage your identity will remain confidential. Your name and identifying information will not be included in the final report.

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Date: [TBA]

Contact details of Researcher:

Jules Lajola

jules@juleslajola.com

Appendix E: Example of Framework

	Trust	Openness
25	*I notice that in fact trust only comes let's say after two or three months, it is only at that date that they truly have the courage to be open even though they have chosen me and they have been given the choice so even then I have had to earn that trust*	*I really think it is the safe atmosphere and the very fact that you manage, in one way or other, to create a space in which I could be open with all my faults and good and bad characteristics*
25	*the first word that comes into mind is the ability to build a safe atmosphere whatever the means, through listening and presence and appreciation*	*that if you get during our meeting a feeling that you cannot be here open and honest and say out loud such things that you find difficult to admit even to yourself so then I might not be the right coach, I do offer people that escape*
25	*our relationship became stronger and we got that kind of trust so that we do not need to talk for an hour, twenty minutes is sufficient for us*	*even if we were totally similar which, basically, should mean that this should be totally ok and then we meet for the first time and the client notices that I remind him of his old school bully and he cannot possibly be open and might not even be able to explain in words that the reason is that my traits are similar to those of his bully so it won't work*

25	*trust (...) and that you have confirmed the rules of the game for the process, somehow established the trust through the process, that you agree together on the rules of the game, you emphasize that this is confidential*	
26		*perhaps openness is the other side of the courage so that you are open to things, open dialogue, that is the other side of trust so that you are also able to discuss difficult issues*
26		*they belong to that age group so that the ability to reflect is incredible so I have to say that something must have happened in this school world after a fifty-year old has been at school because they really have the ability to reflect upon their doings*
27	*I do not think that personal traits count it is perhaps more a question of whether you have the trust to do that team or group coaching (…) I think that at the end of the day certainly trust would be at the core*	*a good coaching relationship requires that the client opens himself and speaks honestly about his issues since if he somehow starts acting with caution and just speaks vaguely the coaching process cannot be as fruitful as it could be, at its best*

	when we went ahead and the trust grew it could be that the discussion took us to a matter which was totally different from the goal that we had set at the beginning and it might be an issue that was, from the viewpoint of his total well-being and life, something dramatically critical	*it can be that the individual does not want to open certain doors, he is not ready, the coaching process can only proceed so far as the client at that point and at that situation has resources for, even though there could be something important to be discovered here, but if the client is not ready to go there, so then you just don't go there*
27		
	(…) I think that it is most critical that the coach and the coachee meet in person before the process begins (…) and you must establish some kind of personal connection there so it often happens that I personally go or want to meet the people who are interested in purchasing my services	
27		
	so that the coach does not just take it as a given and appreciation and trust must be established right from the start if it is not established or it cannot be established a lot is going to be missing	*if you have a coachee and you coach him and ask questions about him in the beginning, I think that it is also fair that you tell something about yourself and are open (…) there must be two human beings present and that is when trust is established*
31		

34		*I was kind of totally naked there, I did not have any hidden agendas here and well we discussed it very openly and I think that I was able to support him very well in the thought process that he went through there*
35	*it is the first ten minutes that's how much time you have*	*I think that openness is respect, it in fact means that you appreciate this other human being as a human being and if you can't be totally open in the relationship so you end up discussing so superficial issues that it will not be worthwhile to pay lots of money for that*
35	*(trust) is established through me having the business background, I have the references, I have the evidence, in a way I already have the credibility, you think hey this girl knows what she is doing, but then actually it really is established only in the situation when you face the person what is your attitude what is your energy*	*it can be in the beginning if the person is really reserved or in a way trusts but is maybe reserved, maybe so that he does not really know how to talk about feelings or put these thoughts down into words, but when the trust is at the bottom you can work on openness*
35		*there are lots of these 55-year old men who have been for thirty years in management so it is really not the first thing that they are used to doing that you can speak freely, they are not even used to being open to themselves let alone to a strange person, so it is totally ok that you come and learn it there*

	I would say that it is important that the client feels that he can trust that he feels so that this person is on his side and that the trust right away or very quickly can be on such a level that there is absolutely no need for the client to think what he can say to this person	*if you are a bit doors closed or the client feels that this is an issue we can't talk about and those are the issues that the client is very much thinking about so in that case it won't proceed (…) it is one of coaching's basic principles that a human being is a whole so that you have there everything all the life circles*
37		
	trust (...) if we think about results trust is the most important thing in the relationship	*I think that the most important thing is that you are honest to yourself and able to talk about those issues in which you want to develop and which you can influence and you must not think that, well this is something I do not dare to talk about, because that won't help you*
37		
	I think that absolutely first there must be trust because I go into depths so quickly so if you don't trust me so I would imagine that I would hear sooner that I don't want to talk about this issue	*I think openness is in a certain manner a condition for establishment of trust, a condition for that you can show that you have compassion, openness is also about talking, through openness you in a way also have the opportunity to discuss a matter which should be clearer in terms of ethics*
38		
	the main issue is the human being but when you tell something about yourself and your own background I think this will arouse trust	
39		

39	*I think it is at the beginning it is really important, so if it does not start to build up for real so I think that is the most important stage*	
39	*trust is really important I think that it will be a bit waste of time if there is no trust and if you cannot speak about the issues that really move you*	
40	*when the other one is completely opposite I think it will take more time to establish trust*	
40	*(...) when you have developed a deep trusting relationship with somebody and this is the most terrific side to coaching, is that you can somehow be a part of a bigger change for that person*	
40	*when he in principle thought so let's see how this will be but then when we got into a trusting conversation so his mindset changed totally and he felt that there were immense benefits for him*	
40	*well it is the basis it is the starting point, if you don't have trust you won't be able to proceed or then you will only talk on the surface level of something not so relevant or the human being is somehow a shell*	

42	*trust has an immense impact on openness so how openly you are able and dare to discuss and share things about you*	*well trust has an enormous impact on the openness and on how openly you are able and dare to discuss and share things about you (…) it also probably helps the coach to perform, to reach the best possible end result*
42	*trust of course I think it is somehow the alpha and omega in everything*	*(when thinking about openness) when thinking about working life, it went deeper, you were able to analyse your own workplace and work community more openly and deeply and somehow safely and critically so there was no danger that someone would get offended by it*
43	*you must be able to create an atmosphere of trust (...) even if you don't have anything to hide but within atmosphere of trust, I mean that you succeed in creating an atmosphere where the employee may act as a human being and bring up his ups and downs*	
48	*you had right from the beginning a safe feeling to be coached, that is immensely important and through that feeling of safety, there would be trust*	
48	*and the trust may be also grows when the coach shares from his own career path or life something more personal and also dares to talk about those failures*	

	the trust made it so that I felt that I could be one hundred percent open and tell everything	
49		
	well I think it is important that you are interested (...) I don't know how else the trust would be established if not, I think that trust will not be established in a clinical atmosphere	
49		
	(trust) has an immense significance I am sure that we would not have achieved so good results or those deep waters without trust, it is the basis of everything	
49		
	I think trust is absolutely the first thing and think that it must be clear at the very first meeting that these are confidential discussions because then it opens the possibility to discuss anything	
50		
	absolutely I think that perhaps trust allows for openness and being critical, trust perhaps interacts with openness in other ways too	
50		
		it is important that you have trust and both share the same understanding on what they are about to do and that that is a safe meeting and that the coachee can feel that this situation is for him and this is not a job interview or something where you should try to show your competence
51		

	that kind of trust that you can speak because it was what I myself realised that if I don't tell those things that I have in mind what is important if I cannot tell those issues to the person she won't necessarily be able to ask me the right questions	*I think that (openness) is something you have to earn and openness will follow when you talk about issues as they are, and there can be no openness without trust*
52		
	the openness results from talking about the issues as they are and there cannot be openness without trust	*but if you think, what can I tell, if you can't tell the whole thing where it comes from you are a little bit in a half-way state so that you will not give proper answers, then it might be challenging for the coach to try to find out why did he say this and try to dig it out*
52		
	the coach said that it is good to have this kind of session to find out whether you can trust the other person so that you are able to go things through openly	
52		
	would I gain any benefit from changing the coach I don't think so because I believe that the trust with the other human being is much more important than what the coach knows or is able to do	
52		

	Relationship	**Similarity vs. Dissimilarity**
	when the relationship deepens and trust grows, it might be that the target that first seemed small suddenly becomes much bigger, so you need to have a possibility to continue the relationship	*perhaps the less we know about the person's background, the better coaches we are and that we do not make an error and assume things when we in fact should have the patience to ask*
25		

		that is natural for a human being that if you find in the background something which resonates with your own history it could be that that is the reason why he chooses just this coach, and there is this risk of expectations that now I will have for myself a mentor who tells me how I should deal with these issues
25		
		a safe environment will build itself faster if you are similar, but then again challenging, the other side, bringing up those different perspectives might be more natural if you are different
25		
26	*well commitment is important in that sense that when we know that at the first or second coaching meeting we create the foundation so then it is the third time when we can begin to assume that there will be results so that we don't give up too early, the other important thing is trust so that there is a confidential dialogue and cooperative relationship*	*if you are a person with a very similar personality trust is established very easily and quickly (…) this is an absolute strength, however if you are too similar so am I capable as a coach to bypass my personality and ask those questions and bring up such perspectives that would really challenge him to think issues from a different viewpoint, if I were totally different such questions would come naturally from a different perspective*
26		*my experience is that coachees or clients in general want that coach has experience from the industry or from coaching same type of persons or persons in similar positions this is what clients wish*

		coaching processes can be very functional with results and impacts even if the coach has no understanding of the client or if for example his natural speed is very different from the client's mindset, dissimilarity opens the client's perspective better than similarity
26		
	it is important that we both share the feeling that this will become a good cooperative relationship and, if it feels based on this meeting that something is not quite right it is better for the client that I recommend some other option	*I think that a certain kind of similarity, it may be easy and safe to proceed with a same type of person, so for example if the other one has a very slow tempo and I personally, I am quite fast, so slow and reflective types are perhaps challenging for me*
27		
		if you have clients with a very different tempo, well I remember one such client who talked and talked and talked but somehow I did not manage to get a grip on him, somehow even though I tried various ways, I do not really know what was the problem so I never really knew whether he did get anything out of it
27		
		sometimes the fact that there is enough difference means you are able to give the other person something that he does not have (…) so this is not an ideal profile, how much dissimilarity similarity, how can anyone know what is the optimal combination for just that coaching pair
27		

	well of course that both want to be there (laughs), the coachee is not reluctant but, on the contrary is excited and willing to come there and of course same goes with the coach	*maybe it is more a question of type so that you somehow feel that the communication is not artificial but somehow relaxed or easy (…) I think that at the end of the day that might be more decisive*
31		
		but there are certain matters that are important in interaction between people and one of them is rhythm so if you have a person who is very fast, let's say as a coach so the coaching journey might be very burdensome if the coachee is very slow and reflective
31		
		I think that certain respect and belief in the stuff is better when you are a bit older, my coach was roughly fifteen years older than me so I think maybe if someone twenty-five year old coach would come and ask me those questions I guess there would be a different respect
32		
	you should trust the ten minutes, if you as a coachee have the feeling that we are not in the same wave-length, change because it can be quite ok as a coaching process but it will never be brilliant	*if the coach is personally very similar to the coachee there are risks because I understand you so well that I might no longer be able to question your thinking, if you yourself are not super-conscious of what you are doing*
35		
		even though I say that it is good that they are different you need to have some contact points (…) so that you have that much in common that there is a feeling that you are like equal partners
35		

37		*this is a wonderful question because on the other hand if you are similar so it is easy for me in a way to adapt myself to the client's experience, if we are different so I am kind of more curious about the difference so I guess it depends on the matter*
37		*I have worked with clients that have a totally different approach from me, so then you have there a certain kind of loose feeling, a certain kind of liberty between us, maybe it is because I am aware or feel that I don't understand the client so well, so if I work with a person who is in some way similar to me (…) it becomes a box in which the client must fit*
38		*I think coaching relationship is good when there is enough similarity, sufficiently dissimilarity, not so that everything fits in perfectly, because it gives a nice different perspective which makes the coaching work possibly more fruitful*
51	*it is important that you have trust and both share the same understanding on what they are about to do and that that is a safe meeting and that the coachee can feel that this situation is for him and this is not a job interview or something where you should try to show your competence*	

Age	**Gender**

26	*I have experienced a group in which the age range was 40 years twelve people and it worked very well, in that group age had no relevance whatsoever*	*well finally it is not a question of gender, I think it is more about the person's other traits*
27	*age will only be a problem if either one feels that it is a problem*	*well I do not really know I would not say, rather it is a question of type and style, based on my experience*
31	*if for example the coach is clearly older the coachee is twenty or thirty years younger than you so it might very easily result in a clear mentoring position and then you must be very careful that it is a coaching relationship and more equal in that sense*	*I have not noticed that it would have any significance at least for me but sometimes clients wish that the coach is a man or a woman*
31		*it is often the case that it is not the coachee who asks for it but for example the supervisor or HR who are coordinating it, so they might say that it might be better for this person if it was a man or a woman and in the background I think there is some kind of assumption of the person's values or attitudes*
35	*a twenty-year old who has not yet experienced much life so how deep a coach can she be, this is what I maybe doubt a bit but where the line goes so it is not necessarily thirty years or forty years or sixty years it is maybe more that you have experienced life*	*once it happened that this person chose a male coach and I think that for him it was a gender issue, so if it is this kind of issue for the client so it is then better that the client chooses a person with whom he is in sync*

37	*well I think there is this same similarity when I coach a person with approximately same amount of life experience than me so it makes it quicker easier maybe and deepens the trust in certain way (…) and again you easily get the feeling that we are kind of the same and somehow get to the same wavelength easily*	*I think it has less significance than age but, now when I think about it, so it is a bit same thing as with the client being very different as to his approach, so I am more free to be curious about it and do not assume so much and then I will do my work better*
38	*I know that once one client wondered how can you practice career coaching if you are in the final stages of your career, do you have all the means of modern job searching, but not so that it would have been a question of anything else than expertise*	*yes there have been preferences, so if there is, so preferably a women, if there is, so preferably a man*
42	*well I would say that for me it was very important that my coach was significantly more experienced and older than me in that sense that she had more life experience and experience from working life in general*	*maybe I would feel that a woman as a coach could be better since I feel a bit that women's status in the working life is still that they are a bit at a weaker position so I believe that only another woman could be a good coach to another woman*

	Experience	**Generation and Millennials**
25	*you often come across the situation that when a client chooses the coach so he wants to check her background (…) if you have on some level lived in that same world than your client, I have succeeded in getting quicker to the core, I have found quicker those, let's say those strong questions which have made the person open up*	*well I would rather say that it is the human the person the individual which makes the difference, not the year you were born in*

25		*when these millennials become well a bit more mature they will be a very promising client group for coaching (…) you could think that this dialogue is easier with them so that at the stage when they begin to be interested in developing themselves it is likely that coaching will work very well with them*
26	*they belong to that age group so that the ability to reflect is incredible so I have to say that something must have happened in this school world after a fifty-year old has been at school because they really have the ability to reflect upon their doings*	
27	*when the coachee assesses that well is this the right guy for me, if you have in mind certain kinds of problems for which you search a coach so in that case I think the coachee appreciates that you have for example worked as a superior*	*well the experience that I have from working with younger people so it can be that they have not taken a moment to reflect on what they want and whose dreams they want to fulfil and what is their own stuff so that many of the youngsters that I have met might be a bit after someone else's dreams*
27	*in coaching there should not be any relevance what is your expertise what is your working experience since a coach is like a tabula rasa but I think it surely helps you to identify with the client's world so that you understand the language the client speaks*	

27	*traditionally coach does not give advice and does not say where you should go but you can share from your own experience base if you ask the client's permission for that and it sometimes happens that this kind of practical example from your own experience may be significant for the client*	
31	*well before I somehow thought that it is safer if you understand something about the coachee's business (…) but nowadays a rather think that is safer when you do not know so then you have the opportunity to be in this no knowing position that you ask more genuinely*	
31	*if you have a very similar background it will make the coaching worse (…) because in that situation it is so easy to begin consulting or it happens very easily that you start together dramatizing and saying yeah this is so horrible which is of course unprofessional coaching but it happens*	
32	*she did not know the industry in such detail but maybe she taught me to make my message clearer and when you think about the results and where is the largest benefit, so I think it is a strength that you do not know the industry but you look at it very neutrally, you look at it as being just another industry*	

well if I was coaching in a company and I did not understand their jargon and they use it very much, I would need somehow to cope with the situation so find out how much do I need to understand so that I can support the person (…) sometimes you have to stop and say that hey now I am not sure what you mean	*no it depends on education it is not necessarily always the age but the culture of the family in which people have grown, and it may be that this is the reason why it works since I come from a slightly different culture*
35	
it does not matter at all in terms of the process whether I understand or not (…) and it might be better that I do not understand because once again I do not assume anything, I do not have a tunnel vision but I can be freely curious	*people in their twenties do not expect anything they do not expect so much but I think in certain way respect all experience but cannot somehow specify it but older people who have experience and who are as prisoners in a box of their beliefs might have more expectations or fantasies on what would be good*
37	
well actually it is better for the success of the coaching that the coach does not know anything but then again this is not something that all people know, many people believe that it is a good thing if I have similar experience from that industry, so the clients sometimes have such expectations, but in reality coaching is purer the more stupid the coach is	
37	
we have learned and inherited different kind of thinking which includes a lot more duties and obligations, the young are much freer than people of my age to think what I want from life or from my working duties	
37	

39	*it is more of a question of how at ease you are there so do you feel that you are in your own area, can you be yourself, can you feel at ease when you talk about these things, if you think that somebody had been let's say a nurse and had not worked for a single day in corporate world, so it can happen that your own mind builds a barrier for you*	
42	*I have set very high targets for myself and I feel that the person who gives me coaching must have enough working experience so that it is credible and she is able to give me visions which genuinely help me in getting forward*	*many times it would be sufficient for some people that somebody would just say that you have done a damn good job (…) this is maybe a relic from the Finnish management culture which should have already disappeared, this thinking that gratefulness is the poor man's payment (…) today's millennials just don't buy that anymore*
42		*people of your own age and especially those highly educated academic people are very much thinking about their own direction and their own significance, their own career, the meaning of life so to speak and it somehow seems that people have this feeling of insufficiency and certain kind on uncertainty of their own expertise*

Coaching Skills	**Presence**

25	*I think it requires a lot a flexibility that you have genuinely the ability to adapt to the client's needs so that you will not get stuck as a coach to your agenda or even to the client's need even if it is somehow changed or reformulated along the way*	*the first word that comes into mind is the ability to build a safe atmosphere whatever the means, through listening and presence and appreciation and whatever elements there are*
25		*if you really must make it entirely naked so I would say that presence is enough so that you are present for the other human being that you have the attitude that you are here for that other person, so I would say that the attitude combined with the ability to be present is enough*
25		*this is the foundation on which you develop yourself further when you build the coaching skills, I absolutely do not want to say that you don't need them they absolutely improve the quality of the relationship and the doing but I think that the presence and the growth, a right kind of attitude of growth, when you have that and you build the skills on that, it will be good*
26	*coaching skills grow when you are doing coaching and it is important that you have the possibility to practice those skills so that you work upon a model that someone has taught you (…) if you apply a certain model from one year to another you will no longer be a professional coach*	*what is absolutely critical is that you give time and in coaching this relates to being a coach, to how you are present in the coaching session as a coach but at the same time somehow on the side or in the background, so that it is not about me, to any extent*

	well it is easy to learn technique it is no problem at all but if you do not have the heart and the sensitivity to live in that situation it cannot be, you can perform somehow but in my opinion this is not a coaching performance that would be sufficient for me (…) it is not a question technique	
27		
	so deep down you have in mind the target state, but when you are there you do this hundred percent, so what it is then, it is what do you see, what do you hear, what do you feel, well tell me about where you are now and what is here between and then it is, well I think that when I start coaching I have this very simple model in my mind but it evolves and changes and perhaps there will be several side paths	
27		
	there is a lot of debate on whether it is a method or what it is and I somehow think of it in a bit broader terms so that I do not think that it is only a trick or a method or a technique, but also a kind of mindset issue too	
31		

31	*when I got more experienced and had done more coaching hours so I came to see that it is not so terribly dangerous if you sometimes also switch to so-called sister methods of coaching, in some situations it is only good if you put a mentor hat in your head and in some situations you can even consult (…) since in my opinion genuine client situations they are something else than academic tests*	
32	*she just had the guts to go on and on and then maybe at certain points which I felt were important, she said that now I will take the coach's hat off and this will not be coaching and I think that it would be good for you to do this or this way and then she was that well now the coaching continues, for a few times*	
34	*I cannot separate them [coaching skills and experience], you know they come and go always together in a way, in principle you might have studied all the courses and be technically capable but it is in a way only through experience that it realises that you can really act as a coach, utilize what you have learned*	

	in the beginning it was very much like ok what is our objective and how do we get there, it was very objective-oriented and action-oriented, then gradually the more practice and mature you gain in the profession you understand that it is more important to have the patience to explore things, have the patience to offer people the joy of discovery	*they are also simply looking for someone who would genuinely listen so that you can speak out your thoughts and then, thanks to this alone, such thoughts already somehow seem a lot clearer or brighter*
35		
35	*I don't believe in this black-and-white thinking that coach must never give any advice or hints, I think you can but it requires you are already quite senior in your professional coaching skills so that you can throw them in so that they are only one hint among others*	
37	*when you have more experience and you train yourself to be really stupid, and then when you notice that the client makes a discovery, you begin to calm down and begin to have confidence in it that I can be stupid in relation to the client, so that I really don't know anything about him, anything else but that that there is an immense potentiality, anything might come from there*	

	coaching skills is what in my opinion turn coffee table discussions into development with objectives, we can conduct a very fine discussion here at the coffee table and feel that yes this was an excellent discussion but it will not lead anywhere	
38		
	when you are not yet an experienced coach you rely on what you have learnt, you comply with certain methods orthodoxically, but an experienced coach is able to use methods without them showing as such, as if here I now have this trick number three in use, so maybe it is a kind of smoother working in which listening skills might have a larger role	
38		
	in the beginning you are very careful, there is much methodology and you use the coaching skills knowingly, you follow the book, and from there on little by little, by relying on your own skills, everybody will discover their own style, you will find what is natural for you as a coach	
38		
		well it goes without saying that it if the coach is not interested in the client so the coach can leave and start another other career, the coach must be, the coach must be genuinely interested in the client
48		

Interest	**Being at Service**

		a good coach has good self-knowledge a good coach respects the person and a good coach is also one who develops himself or goes forward in the profession and (...)I think the fourth thing would be that a good coach understands that this is not my show
26		
		the most important is that firstly the coach is somehow comfortable with himself and has that amount of courage and dares to embark on the process while being totally himself, so in a way in the process you forget yourself you somehow swim with the client
27		
		somehow a great heart and two ears with which you listen carefully and also perceive from the client's talk such issues that are said on one hand but also those that are not said (…) it is not what you want but somehow with your own doings try to attempt to bring the best out in that other person
27		
		I somehow would go back to my ability as a coach to leave my ego outside the room, ability to create a space where we are only for this person and this person is able to leave or lower his shields, the ego, and be revealed (…) as a coach, it is not about me, the person is not telling those issues to me
35		

	you have to be in that way interested that you care, that you really and whole-heartedly want that this person to succeed and achieve the things he wants to achieve, but then that you would somehow be interested in this case, so then again I think you should not be because then you go you will get involved in the matter, then you will no longer be there so that you direct the thinking process, then you will start to ask things because you want to know things	*well a bad coach has a bloody big ego I think this is surely number one, the coach must have certain kind of humbleness, so it is not about you as a coach, not in the slightest, it is not about what you think or what you like or so, when you do this work you are there only for the client, totally (…)when you are there you must be able to kind of exclude yourself (…) my thoughts and my feelings and my, you know all my precedents and all, to come there empty and be present*
35		
	if I had to define from my own perspective, so it is, it is curiosity, more than anything it is curiosity about the person's experience and path of life and about where he wants to go	*it is my duty to ensure that that space is entirely the client's space that all that happens all choices all reflections all such things, they all take place in the client's mind and come out from there because I am curious for what there is in the client's mind*
37		
	the coach understands a lot and knows a lot and coaches have a very strong desire to help people (…)if the coach cannot trust that the client knows, the coach might have a strong pressure to start telling stuff to the client, instead of being just really stupid and curious, which would be more beneficial to that person	
37		

38	*if you are not the slightest bit interested in the other person and you don't appreciate him and if your concept of human being is such that you are not interested I think you should not have a coaching relationship in the first place*	
42	*I think that it really is an essential part of it that you are not only a question automate which only writes things up, but there is a kind of caring element strongly involved in it*	
42	*I think that it is also very important for me that the coach genuinely cares about me and is genuinely interested in solving with me the issues that trouble me and all in all I think that genuineness honesty are very important for me, I very easily sense if someone is not with me hundred percent*	