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Coaching of international managers

Organizational and individual
perspectives

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Julkaisun nimike Kansainvälisen johdon coaching: organisaation ja yksilön näkökulmia		
Tiivistelmä <p>Johdon coachingin laajasta käytöstä huolimatta tieteelliset tutkimukset kansainvälisestä coachingista ovat olleet vähäisiä. Siksi tämän väitöskirjan tavoite on lisätä ymmärrystä kansainvälisestä coachingista ja tutkia johdon coachingia kolmesta aiemmin tutkimattomasta näkökulmasta kolmessa empiirisessä artikkelissa: 1) miten ja miksi johdon coachingia on käytetty globaaleissa talent management -ohjelmissa, 2) mitkä tekijät vaikuttavat ulkomaankomennuksella olevien johtajien coachingin onnistumiseen ja 3) miten johdon coaching kehittää ulkomaankomennuksella olevien henkilöiden urapääomaa.</p> <p>Tutkimuksen aineisto koostuu puolistrukturoiduista haastatteluista ja kansainvälisesti toimivien yritysten julkaisemattomista kirjallisista materiaaleista. Aineisto kerättiin kolmelta eri coaching-prosessiin osaltuvalta sidosryhmältä eri maista ja se on analysoitu käyttäen kolmea eri laadullista menetelmää (monitapaustutkimus ja temaattinen sisältöanalyysi, interpretatiivinen fenomenologinen analyysi sekä narratiivinen analyysi). Lisäksi väitöskirjan tutkimuksissa käytettiin coachingin vaihemallia, integraalista coachingin nelikenttämallia sekä tietää miten, miksi ja kenet urapääomaa kuvaavaa viitekehystä aineiston analysoimiseksi ja kategorisoimiseksi aikaisemmista tutkimuksista poiketen.</p> <p>Tutkimustulokset osoittavat, että kansainvälisesti toimivat yritykset käyttävät johdon coachingia global talent management -ohjelmien osana johtamistaitojen kehittämiseksi ja johtamisen muuttamiseksi valmentavaksi. Tutkimuksessa identifioitiin coachingin käyttöönoton eri vaiheiden erityispiirteet ja kehitettiin coachingin vaihemallia edelleen. Tutkimustulosten mukaan ulkomaankomennuksella olevien johtajien coachingin onnistumiseen vaikuttavat useat eri osatekijät, jotka ovat keskenään vuorovaikutussuhteessa. Tulokset osoittavat, että johdon coaching kehittää ulkomaankomennuksella olevien johtajien urapääomaa monipuolisesti. Kansainvälistä johdon coachingia voidaan suositella johdon kehittämisen välineeksi joustavuutensa vuoksi.</p>		
Asiasanat Kansainvälisen johdon coaching, Global Talent Management, ulkomaankomennukset, urapääoman kehittäminen		

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Abstract <p>Although executive coaching is widely used, international coaching studies are scarce. The aim of this dissertation, which consists of three articles, is to increase understanding of international, executive coaching by studying the research questions: 1) How and why is coaching utilized in Global Talent Management programs in multinational organizations? 2) Which factors are identified to be critical to expatriate coaching success? 3) How does coaching support the development of the career capital (capabilities of knowing-how, knowing-why, knowing-whom) of expatriates?</p> <p>The data of this dissertation consists of semi-structured interviews and published and unpublished written materials. The data was gathered from three stakeholder groups: coached international managers and expatriates; internationally working coaches; and HR professionals responsible for international coaching programs. Three different qualitative approaches (multiple case study and thematic analysis, interpretative phenomenological analysis, and narrative analysis) were applied in the analysis. Further, the Coaching Continuum Stage Model, Integral Coaching Model and Career Capital Model were adopted as analyzing and categorization tools, as it never had been done before in the coaching literature.</p> <p>The findings show that executive coaching was utilized as a part of Global Talent Management programs as a leadership development tool, aiming to transform the leadership culture toward coaching-based managerial practice, but coaching was not driven purely by talent management strategy in the studied multinational companies. The study contributes to coaching literature by developing the Coaching Continuum Stage model further and by identifying different characteristics of the stages of the continuum. In addition, the study shows that there are various factors impacting the success of expatriate coaching and that these factors interact with each other. Further, this study supports empirically the argument that international, executive coaching is a well-working developmental tool in an international context due to its adjustable nature. More-over, the findings confirm empirically the argument that international executive coaching supports the development of career capital for expatriates. International, executive coaching can be recommended as a Human Resource Development tool for multinational organizations.</p>		
Keywords International executive coaching, Global Talent Management, Expatriation, Development of Career Capital		

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Abbreviations

GTM	Global Talent Management
HR	Human Resources
HRD	Human Resource Development
ICF	International Coach Federation
IHRM	International Human Resource Management
MNC	Multinational Company

Articles

This dissertation is based on the following articles:

Salomaa, R. (2014) Coaching of Key Talents in Multinational Companies in Global Talent Management – Challenges, Strategies, and Opportunities edited by Dr. Akram Al Ariss, Heidelberg: Springer, 43 – 63.

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background and importance of the topic

The international aspect of coaching is increasingly important, both because the growth of professional coaching over the past fifteen years has been immense, and also because coaching today has become a global phenomenon (e.g. Abbott, Gilbert & Rosinski 2013; Barosa-Perreira 2014). Due to the growing demands of a rapidly changing global business environment, and following the trends of globalization, international mergers, acquisitions and growing diversity in the work place, coaching is on the rise across the globe (Tompson et al. 2008). Its annual revenue is estimated to be 2 billion USD (International Coach Federation's Global Coaching Study 2012). There is also evidence that coaching is widely accepted and used as a business tool and utilized in all of the Earth's continents.

It has been estimated that the total number of coaches, worldwide, is 40.000 – 50.000 (Global Coaching Survey 2008/2009, Frank Bresser Consulting Report). Grant et al. (2010) argue that at the present there are no barriers to entry, no minimal educational process, and no binding ethical or practice standards for coaches, and that coaching practice is unregulated. The majority of coaches practicing today do not use theoretically coherent approaches and scientifically validated techniques. In response, there is a call for greater scientific and professional rigor in coaching, and coaching is becoming increasingly accepted within academia (Grant et al. 2010). However, as a relatively new area of scholarship, coaching is generally an under-explored and researched HRD-related practice requiring further examination and discovery (Ellinger et al. 2011; Kim 2014). Several coaching scholars posit that a wider evidence-base is needed (Feldman & Lankau 2005; McDowall 2015; Passmore & Fillary-Travis 2011; Peterson 2011).

Although published peer-reviewed coaching research has significantly escalated since 1995, and the knowledge-base underpinning coaching appears to be growing at a substantial rate (Grant 2011), the main body of articles still consist of descriptive and practitioner-written papers aiming at emphasizing the benefits of certain coaching interventions (De Meuse, Dai & Lee 2009). Consequently, it has been stated that that the problem is not the practice of executive coaching per

se, but the lack of research and theory to advance the field of executive coaching (Joo 2005).

Today, a number of universities worldwide offer degrees in both coaching and coaching psychology. In addition, attention has been paid to the teaching of executive coaching. For example in the U.S., the Graduate School Alliance for Executive Coaching (GSAEC), with institutional members from several universities in the USA, Australia and Europe, is currently developing a set of standards for the teaching of executive coaching at university level (Grant et al. 2010; Maltbia, Marsick & Ghosh 2014). In 2009, a non-profit organization, the Institute of Coaching was established at Harvard University. It aims at building a global coaching research community and accelerating coaching research progress (www.instituteofcoaching.org).

As coaching is seeking a more professional footing, professional bodies, such as, for example, the International Coach Federation (ICF), the Association of Coaching (AC), and the European Mentoring and Coaching Council (EMCC), have also responded. They all highlight the importance of coaching research and have put significant effort into establishing credentialing processes and coaching competencies (Passmore 2006). However, it has been argued that differing perceptions of what constitutes executive coaching core competencies, by academic and coach preparation programs, credentialing associations, and practitioners, obfuscates clarity of definition, roles and implementation, which may confuse practitioners and slow progress in theory-building, research, and executive coach development (Maltbia et al. 2014). Also, research on the validity, for example, of the eleven International Coach Federation's (ICF) core competencies is still very limited (Blumberg 2016; Griffiths & Campbell 2008). In addition, how these core competencies apply to the international context has not been sufficiently discussed.

Further, coaching is reported to be one of the key learning and organizational interventions, and it is rated among the most effective talent management activities in companies (Chartered Institute of Personnel Development 2011 Survey Report & 2013 Prospects Report). It is typically used as a part of wider management and leadership development programs (Segers et al. 2011). Given that the shortage of talented leaders who are able to manage in uncertain global contexts and who possess the organizational and business savvy, and the cross-cultural capabilities, to run global businesses is well documented in the International Human Resource Management (IHRM) literature (e.g. Selmer 1999; Evans et al. 2010; Caliguiri & Tarique 2012), there is surprisingly little published research on global talent development issues in general (Garavan,

Carbery & Rock 2011). Little is known, for example, about how and why executive coaching is used in global talent management (GTM) programs, but it is suggested that it has a distinct role to play in developing the skills and abilities of future leaders in the global world of business volatility, complexity, and ambiguity (Awal & Stumpf 2009; Bernstein 2014).

In addition, research on coaching in the international context is needed because multinational companies (MNCs) are currently heavily investing resources in creating a coaching based managerial practice, a 'coaching culture', and they are aiming to train their line-managers and Human Resource (HR) professionals in coaching skills.

Furthermore, as contemporary career patterns are suggested to be flexible, non-linear and self-driven, individuals tend to take more control of their own careers (Baruch 2006). Given that employees increasingly value training and development as portable and highly valuable job perks, the importance of executive coaching is becoming more significant (Tompson et al. 2008). Consequently, coaching is frequently recommended for international managers and expatriates and for employees who move abroad from their home country due to their work, as a development and support intervention (e.g. Booyesen 2015; Littrell & Salas 2005; Mendenhall 2006; Mendenhall & Stahl 2000; Selmer 1999).

Although coaches working with international managers and expatriates need practical coaching tools and proven methodologies, and cross-cultural coaching has been listed as the hottest trend in Europe (Booyesen 2015), international coaching research is not well developed (Abbott et al. 2013); there is also a significant lack of empirical research in the area of career coaching (Ciutiene, Neverauskas & Meilene 2010; Feldman & Moore 2001), specifically in the international context. So far, most of the literature concerning international coaching is theoretical and covers topics such as multinational teams, coaching in a specific country or context, gender and diversity issues, culture, and different coaching frameworks and approaches suitable for international contexts (e.g. Handin & Steinwedel 2006; Peterson 2007; Passmore 2009; Moral & Abbott 2009; Coultas et al. 2011; Plaister-Ten 2013).

One of the evolving areas of international coaching is research on expatriate coaching. Typically, coaching is mentioned among other support and development interventions in the literature concerning expatriation and cross-cultural training (CCT) (Salomaa 2011), but very often these texts lack definitions and empirical evidence. However, the very few previous empirical studies support the idea that coaching seems to be an efficient support and development

intervention in the expatriate context (Abbott 2006; Abbott 2011; Herbolzheimer 2009; McGill 2010).

Based on the above-explained reasons, this dissertation focuses on how and why coaching is utilized and implemented in Global Talent Management programs in multinational companies (MNCs). Further, it focuses on success factors for expatriate coaching and studies how career capital capabilities (Inkson & Arthur 2001) of expatriates develop through coaching. In order to investigate these under-researched perspectives of international coaching I have applied a qualitative mode of constructivist-interpretative enquiry (Denzin & Lincoln 2011:13). In doing so, the purpose is not to gain an 'objective truth', but rather to obtain an understanding of different perspectives of executive coaching in an international context.

In order to develop a wider evidence-base for the research and practice of international executive coaching's different aspects (as mentioned above: coaching of key talents in Global Talent Management, expatriate coaching's success factors and development of career capital of expatriates through executive coaching), these aspects are explored and discussed in the three articles of this dissertation. Further, three different frameworks - the Coaching Continuum Stage Model by Peterson and Little, (cited in Peterson 2011), the integral coaching framework by Ken Wilber (cited in Bachkirova, Cox & Clutterbuck 2010:5), and the career capital framework of Inkson & Arthur (2001) - have been applied as analyzing and categorizing tools in this study, something that has not been done previously.

On the practical side, the goal of this dissertation is to produce some approaches and tools for: 1) internationally operating companies who are investing in their human assets and implementing coaching programs in order to perform better and survive in the challenging global business environments; 2) coach education and training institutions; and 3) coaches working in international environments.

1.2 Key concepts of the dissertation

In this section I define the key concepts of this dissertation: international coaching, Global Talent Management (GTM), an expatriate, and career capital.

International coaching

In this study international coaching is understood as 'a human development process of the coachee that involves structured interaction and the use of

appropriate strategies, tools and techniques in an international context. It is aimed to promote desirable and sustainable change for the benefit of the coachee and, potentially, for other stakeholders (modified from Bachkirova et al. 2010:1). Further, in this dissertation, coaching is understood as a one-to-one, action-oriented and goal-driven process facilitated by a coach. Coach refers here to the individual who provides one-to-one coaching. A coach can either have an internal role, or an external role, as an independent service provider (Zeus & Skiffington 2000). Coachee refers here to the executive who is coached. For a wider discussion on coaching definitions see section 2.1.

Global Talent Management (GTM)

Global Talent Management (GTM) refers in this dissertation to the management of talented or best employees globally (Al Ariss 2014b), and it is broadly defined here as ‘systemically utilizing International Human Resource Management (IHRM) activities to attract, develop and retain individuals with high levels of human capital (i.e. competency, personality, motivation), consistent with the strategic direction of the multinational enterprise in a dynamic, highly competitive, and global environment’ (Tarique & Schuler 2010: 124). Consequently, key talents are understood here to be high-performing employees in international management positions. An overview of GTM is presented in section 3.1.

An expatriate

Expatriates are employees who work and live abroad, and they are generally categorized in two groups: assigned or corporate expatriates, and self-initiated expatriates (Andersen et al. 2014). Several authors agree concerning the difference between the above terms, and ‘assigned expatriates’ typically refers to employees who are sent abroad by their company, usually receiving beneficial expatriate contracts, whereas ‘self-initiated expatriates’ are individuals who undertake their international work experience with little or no organizational sponsorship, and often with less favorable local work contracts (Biemann & Andersen 2010; Peltokorpi & Froese 2009; Suutari & Brewster 2000).

Self-initiated expatriates are individuals who relocate to a country of their choice to pursue cultural, personal, and career development experiences (Harrison et al. 2004; Jokinen, Brewster & Suutari 2008; Myers & Pringle 2005; Schaffer et al. 2012), often with no definite time frame in mind (Tharenou 2010), whereas corporate expatriates are transferred internationally for varying lengths of time depending on the purpose of the transfer and the nature of the task (Dowling, Festing & Engle 2008). In this dissertation expatriate assignment or long-term

assignment is understood as an assignment where the employee moves to the host country for a specified period of time, usually more than one year. Short-term assignment is understood to be an assignment with a specified duration, usually less than one year (Evans et al. 2011; Petrovic, Harris & Brewster 2000). An overview of expatriate literature is presented in section 3.2 of this report.

Career capital

Career capital (De Fillippi & Arthur 1996; Inkson & Arthur 2001) is a concept covering a broad set of competencies that employees need in order to be successful in their employment paths (Suutari, Brewster & Tornikoski 2013). Career capital is based on insights into the changing psychological contract between organizations and individuals (Rousseau 1995) and boundaryless careers (De Fillippi & Arthur 1996), the latter referring to the increased physical and psychological mobility across different boundaries, such as occupational and cultural boundaries (Sullivan & Arthur 2006). Career actors are viewed as individuals, who consciously gain portable capabilities, actively construct social networks, and enhance their careers. They identify their own drives and motivations, and apply these in their work context (Inkson & Arthur, 2001; Suutari et al. 2013).

Career capital consists of three ways of knowing: 'Knowing-how' comprises career-relevant skills, work-related knowledge and understanding what is needed for performance; 'Knowing-why' equips the person with energy, sense of purpose, motivation and identification with work; 'Knowing-whom' consists of a set of intra-firm, inter-firm, professional and social relations combined in a network and providing information and channels for self-promotion (Dickman & Doherty 2008; Inkson & Arthur 2001; Jokinen 2010). An overview of international careers and the development of career capital is presented in section 3.3 of this report.

1.3 Knowledge gaps

In this section I present briefly what is already known about the subject under investigation, and then discuss the knowledge gaps. A wider literature review is provided in chapters two and three. The discussion follows the sequence of the articles in this dissertation. First, I discuss the knowledge gaps related to GTM and coaching research; second, I focus on the gaps in expatriate coaching and factors impacting coaching success; and third, I discuss the gaps identified in career capital and coaching research in the expatriate context.

1.3.1 Coaching of key talents in the context of GTM

The topic of talent management has gained increasing attention in the last decade, and with the internationalization of business, a more 'global' dimension of talent management, GTM has emerged (Al Ariss, Cascio & Paauwe 2014). As with coaching, there is no consensus on what GTM encompasses, and it has been defined in several ways (Cerdin & Brewster 2014). Scholars posit that it is important to understand how the 'global' dimension of talent management is practiced in organizations (Al Ariss, Casico & Paauwe 2014), and suggest that international talents can be supported by providing developmental support, such as coaching or mentoring (Al Ariss et al. 2014; Shen & Hall 2009).

Garavan et al. (2011) posit that talent development is considered to be a key component of talent management and that it is a significantly under-developed and under-researched concept. The one-size-fits-all approach to talent development is considered to be ineffective. There is an increased emphasis on customizing talent development strategies to meet the needs of individuals, and it is suggested that these strategies will need to take account of individual needs, learning styles and current work priorities (Garavan et al. 2011, 6 - 14). Most of the studies on high potentials are normative and descriptive; very few articles have presented empirical findings on high potentials or discussed them in an organizational context (Vloeberghs, Pepermans, & Thielemans 2005). In addition, the international aspect is lacking.

With regard to coaching, there is considerable evidence about the impact of executive coaching on managerial behaviors (Levenson 2009; Peterson 2009; Kombarakaran, Yang, Baker & Fernandes 2008). For example, the study of Kombarakaran et al. (2008) demonstrated that executive coaching is an effective method of leadership development. It indicated that executive change occurred in the areas of people management, relationships with managers, goal setting and prioritization, engagement and productivity, and dialogue and communication.

Typically, coaching has been mentioned among other talent management practices (e.g. Burbach and Royle 2010) in the talent management literature, but empirical studies exploring coaching of talents are rare. A study of Feggetter (2007) explored how executive coaching works for candidates on a high potential development scheme in a domestic setting, and showed that coached managers benefitted from coaching because they gained broader leadership skills. These skills were transferable within the department under investigation. Further, the study provided evidence that the benefits of coaching exceeded the costs of

coaching. Lueneburger's study (2012) suggests that in order to motivate and retain an organization's best people, the key is to understand their strengths and maximize their opportunities to apply these strengths. In addition, Lueneburg (2012) argues that in order to effectively support talent retention, strategic coaching interventions should address issues such as a talent's ability to customize their role and career path.

No studies exploring how or why executive coaching is utilized in GTM programs in MNCs were found in the literature review. Moreover, the previous studies have not utilized the Coaching Continuum Stage Model (Peterson & Little 2008, cited in Peterson 2011) empirically to identify the key characteristics of the different coaching's implementation stages in relation to GTM. The first, explorative article of this dissertation aims to fill this knowledge gap.

Next, I move on to discuss the success factors of expatriate coaching.

1.3.2 Success factors of expatriate coaching

The internationalization of business through the establishment of international subsidiaries, joint ventures, and strategic alliances, has resulted in increasing numbers of people working abroad for part of their career. Accordingly, there is a large number of studies that analyze the role of international assignments in MNCs, and how these companies select, train, compensate, and design the professional careers of assignees (Bonache, Brewster & Suutari 2001; Caligiuri & Bonache 2016). However, empirical studies focusing on expatriate coaching are scarce.

In regard to expatriate coaching, most of the very few existing articles are theoretical and provide arguments and frameworks concerning why and how to coach international assignees (Abbott et al. 2006; Abbott & Stening 2009; Miser & Miser 2009). Further, in the literature review no empirical articles published in English in scientific peer-reviewed journals were found. Therefore, the search was extended to include coaching-specific handbooks, PhD dissertations and conference papers in the English language; as a result, four empirical studies that directly focused on coaching of expatriates were found (Abbott 2006; Abbott 2011; Herbolzheimer 2009; McGill 2010). The first study (Abbott 2006) explored acculturation of expatriates and repatriates in the Central-American context. The second study (Herbolzheimer 2009) focused on the practice and potential of expatriate coaching for European executives in China. The third study (McGill 2010) was also China specific, and explored the impact of executive coaching on the performance management of international managers in China in a single

organization. The fourth paper (Abbott 2011) examined evidence-based executive coaching as a means of supporting and developing expatriate executives through the facilitation of cognitive complexity and meta-cognition. So far, the evidence is still very limited.

These earlier studies have provided evidence that coaching of expatriates is related to improved performance and increased personal satisfaction and happiness (Abbott 2006; McGill 2010). Further, it has been shown that HR professionals are unfamiliar with the existence and practice of expatriate coaching (Herbolzheimer 2009), and that the expatriates benefit from coaching because it reduces stress (Herbolzheimer 2009; McGill 2010). Coaching has also been found to remind recipients about, and help them to deal with, intercultural differences (Herbolzheimer 2009). Furthermore, the findings support the idea that coaching enhances leadership development and managerial effectiveness (McGill 2010). In addition, there is some evidence (Abbott 2011) that executive coaching of expatriates has potential to develop the global mindset, a construct consisting of psychological, social and intercultural capital (Javidan et al. 2010), and cultural intelligence, the capability for consciousness and awareness during intercultural situations (Ng, van Dyne & Ang 2009).

None of the previous empirical studies focused on factors impacting expatriate coaching success. The above-mentioned studies had some limitations (two of the studies were conducted in a Chinese context and two in a Central-American context, two utilized an action research approach where the researcher was in the role of the coach, and one study had only 5 coached expatriates among other interview participants). The second article of this dissertation aims to address the lack of information about the factors impacting expatriate coaching success. Since the expatriate context is known to be much more challenging than the domestic environment, it is important to identify factors underpinning coaching's success in the expatriate context. The unique features and challenges of the expatriate context are discussed in more detail in the literature review in section 3.2.

Next, I discuss issues of international career research, the career capital framework and coaching as a means of enhancing the development of career capital of expatriates.

1.3.3 Development of career capital through expatriate coaching

One of the developing areas of research on expatriates has been the career perspective (Riusala & Suutari 2000; Stahl & Cerdin 2004; Stahl, Miller & Tung

2002; Suutari, Brewster & Tornikoski 2013). However, although it is known that personal and professional development of expatriates during international assignments is seen as one of the powerful international management development methods (Mäkelä et al. 2015), empirical research on organizational career management in general, and on supportive and developmental career management specifically, is scarce (Baruch & Peiperl 2000; Segers & Inceoglu 2012).

Currently, the individual behaviors and outcomes of international careering are increasingly described using the model of career capital (Inkson & Arthur 2001), which is based on insights into the changing psychological contract between organizations and individuals, and boundaryless careers (Dickmann & Doherty 2010). Generally, it is known that the career capital capabilities (knowing-why, knowing-how and knowing-whom) develop during international assignments (Dickmann & Doherty 2008; Dickmann & Harris 2005; Jokinen 2010; Jokinen, Brewster & Suutari 2008; Mäkelä & Suutari 2009; Suutari & Mäkelä 2007), and it has been suggested that career capital development can be enhanced, for example by interventions such as coaching or mentoring (Dickmann & Harris 2005). So far, expatriates' career capital development through coaching has not been studied.

In general, coaching has been addressed only sparsely in career development literature (Ciutiene, Neverauskas & Meilene 2010; Feldman & Moore 2001; Hatala & Hisey 2011). Parker and Arthur (2004) have linked the concepts of coaching and the development of career capital in a domestic setting. They posit that using coaching can simultaneously facilitate career and leadership development, and suggest that the three ways of knowing (knowing-why, knowing-how, and knowing-whom capital) provide an organizing framework through which both career and leadership development may be facilitated. However, no empirical study related to coaching and the development of career capital in the expatriate context was found. The third article of this dissertation aims to fill this gap.

After discussing the gaps related to executive coaching utilized in GTM, expatriate coaching's success factors and coaching as a development intervention enhancing the career capital development of expatriates, I present the aims and research questions of this dissertation in the next section.

1.4 Purpose of the dissertation and research questions

The overall purpose of this dissertation is to make a contribution to the executive coaching literature concerning the international context by, more specifically: 1) increasing the understanding of how and why coaching is utilized in GTM programs, and by identifying the key characteristics of the different stages of the Coaching Continuum Stage model (Peterson & Little 2008 cited in Peterson, 2011), a model that describes the different stages of coaching's implementation; 2) identifying the success factors of expatriate coaching; and 3) enhancing the understanding of coaching's contribution to the development of career capital of expatriates. At the same time, this dissertation aims to make a contribution to the fields of GTM and expatriation research.

Having identified the research gaps for each article of this dissertation (in section 1.3 above), I now present the research questions for this study:

- 1) How and why is executive coaching used in Global Talent Management (GTM)?*
- 2) Which factors are identified as critical to expatriate coaching success?*
- 3) How does coaching support the development of the career capital (capabilities of knowing-how, knowing-why, knowing-whom) of expatriates?*

I approached the objectives of the dissertation in three empirical articles. These articles are summarized in Table 1 below.

Table 1. Summary of the three articles of the dissertation

	Article 1	Article 2	Article 3
	Coaching of Key Talents in Multinational Companies	Expatriate Coaching: Factors Impacting Coaching Success	Coaching for Career Capital Development: A Study of Expatriates' Narratives
Focus of the study	Providing understanding about how and why coaching is used in GTM, utilizing the Coaching Continuum Stage Model (Peterson & Little, cited in Peterson 2011), and identifying key characteristics of the different stages of the model empirically.	Identifying the success factors of expatriate coaching and presenting them with the Wilber's integral coaching framework.	Exploring how coaching enhances the development of career capital (knowing-how, knowing-why and knowing whom) capabilities of expatriates by utilizing Inkson's and Arthur's (2001) career capital framework.
Source of data	Semi-structured interviews with 8 HR professionals responsible for coaching, and additional written documents.	Semi - structured interviews with 25 participants (coached expatriates, internationally working coaches and HR professionals responsible for coaching).	Semi-structured interviews with 6 coached expatriates.
Research approach	A qualitative approach, thematic content analysis, multiple-case study.	A qualitative approach, Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA).	A qualitative approach, narrative analysis.

I am the sole author of articles 1 and 2. I co-authored the 3rd article together with Dr. Liisa Mäkelä. I acted as the first author in article 3. In all three articles, I was responsible for the data collection and methodological choices. In the third study we conducted the data analysis, interpretation of the interviews, and construction of the story told by the researchers, together.

As Table 1 above illustrates, the first article is an explorative pilot study that utilizes the Coaching Continuum Stage Model empirically (Peterson & Little 2008, cited in Peterson 2011), since this has never been done previously. It is a qualitative multiple-case study exploring how and why executive coaching is utilized in GTM programs, and identifying the key characteristics of the different stages when implementing coaching in GTM programs. After this explorative pilot study, I directed the focus to coaching of expatriates from two different and previously unexamined aspects. Article 2 explores factors impacting the success of expatriate coaching and utilizes Wilber's integral coaching framework (Bachkirova et al. 2010) and Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) (Smith & Osborn 2003). Article 3 focuses on the narrative approach and the career capital framework of Inkson & Arthur (2001), exploring coaching as an intervention developing the career capital (knowing-how, knowing-why and knowing-whom) capabilities of expatriates.

1.5 Structure of the study

I have organized this dissertation in six chapters and three articles. In this first chapter I discuss the background to the dissertation, and present the main objectives and the key concepts of this study. In chapter two I review the relevant literature in regard to executive coaching. In chapter three I move on to the international context of this study, and review the literature on GTM, expatriation, and development of career capital of expatriates; I then discuss international coaching in general and close the chapter by reviewing current expatriate coaching literature. In chapter four I present the methodological choices of this study. In chapter five I summarize the three individual articles of this dissertation. In chapter six, I draw the main conclusions from the study. The last part of this report presents the articles.

2 EXECUTIVE COACHING

In this chapter I present a review of the literature concerning executive coaching in general. I start with a discussion of its definitions, present its demarcation from other support and developmental interventions and review its roots and background theories. Then I present executive coaching's stakeholders - the coach, the coachee and the organization - before discussing what is known about the coaching process itself. I continue by discussing research on executive coaching and its outcomes, and end the chapter by presenting the two coaching-specific frameworks that I adopted in this study: the Coaching Continuum Stage Model (Peterson & Little 2008, cited in Peterson 2011), and the integral coaching framework of Wilber (Wilber 2001; Bachkirova et al. 2010). The career capital framework of Inkson & Arthur (2001), adopted in article 3, is discussed in detail in section 3.3, where I review literature on international careers and the development of career capital.

2.1 Definitions of executive coaching

Although there has been considerable work done attempting to define coaching, there is no one unique definition for executive coaching. Indeed, there are various definitions of executive coaching (e.g. Joo 2005; Kampa-Kokesch & Anderson 2001; Kilburg 1996). Generally, when evaluating different definitions of coaching, it is suggested that these definitions share common core themes. Typically, the coaching relationship is understood as a collaborative and egalitarian, rather than authoritarian, relationship between coach and coachee. Coaching is focused on constructing solutions and goal attainment processes, rather than on solely analyzing problems (Grant & Stober, 2006:2-4).

In coaching an emphasis is on collaborative goal setting as well as in learning through coaching. There is also the recognition that, although coaches have expertise in facilitating learning through coaching, they do not necessarily need high levels of domain-specific expertise in the coachee's chosen area of learning. Moreover, coaching is seen as a systematic process, which is directed at fostering the ongoing self-directed learning and the growth of the coachee (Grant & Stober 2006:2-4). Barlett, Boylan and Hale's (2014) findings support these common themes. They posit that relationship, goals, performance, and learning are the keywords used most often in defining executive coaching. Also, Maltbia and Power (2005; see also Maltbia et al. 2014) have identified five key themes in their

analysis of executive coaching: a process; a partnership; a balance; and a new face of leadership for the 21st century.

Despite the variation in the definitions of executive coaching and overlap with other developmental approaches, it is typically considered a process or set of behaviors that enables individuals to learn and develop, as well as improve their skills and enhance their performance (Ellinger & Kim 2014:130). Furthermore, executive coaching is seen generally as consisting of two critical tasks: 1) establishing a collaborative relationship, and 2) enhancing the vision of the learner (Barlett et al. 2014:193).

To illustrate different kind of definitions of executive coaching I present six often-referenced definitions in Table 2 below.

Table 2. Illustration of different definitions of executive coaching

Contributor	Definition
Kilburg (1996)	'a helping relationship formed between a client who has managerial authority and responsibility in an organization and a consultant who uses a wide variety of behavioral techniques and methods to help the client to achieve a mutually identified set of goals to improve his/her professional performance and personal satisfaction and, consequently, to improve the effectiveness of the client's organization within a formally defined coaching agreement'.
Kampa-Kokesch & Anderson (2001)	'a highly confidential personal learning process that focuses not only on interpersonal issues, but also on intrapersonal ones'
Joo (2005)	'a process of a one-on-one relationship between a professional coach and an executive (coachee) for the purpose of enhancing coachee's behavioral change through self-awareness and learning, and thus ultimately for the success of individual and organization.'
Witherspoon & White (1996)	'a confidential, highly personal learning process.'
Feldman & Lankau (2005)	'a process of equipping people with the tools, knowledge, and opportunities they need to develop themselves and become more effective.'
The Graduate School Alliance of Executive Coaching (GSAEC) program's definition of executive and organizational coaching (http://www.gsaec.org)	'a development process that builds leader's capabilities to achieve professional and organizational goals.'

As can be seen from the above presented definitions, they highlight different aspects associated with executive coaching. Many authors see it as an individual learning and development process, and there is variation in how stakeholders

other than the coachee and coach are included in the definition. Kampa-Kokesch & Anderson's (2001) and Witherspoon & White's (1996) definitions stress the confidentiality of the coaching relationship. In contrast to other definitions above, Kilburg's (1996) definition also includes the tools and methods of an executive coach and stresses the formality of the coaching agreement. Words such as 'goals', 'improvement', 'effectiveness', 'performance' and 'change' are also present in the most of the above definitions. As this study focuses on international executive coaching, I define it for the purpose of this study by adopting a definition presented by Bachkirova et al. (2010:1) and modifying it by adding 'international context' to it. I understand coaching to be:

'a human development process of the coachee that involves structured interaction and the use of appropriate strategies, tools and techniques in an international context. It is aimed to promote desirable and sustainable change for the benefit of the coachee and potentially for other stakeholders' (modified from Bachkirova et al. 2010:1).

This definition is useful here, because it includes the central aspects utilized in many definitions, such as 'a human development process' and 'interaction'. It also includes 'the use of appropriate strategies, tools and techniques'. Further, this definition also recognizes other stakeholders than the coach and the coachee in the coaching relationship, which is important because this study takes place in the organizational context, and I utilize a holistic approach in article 2. Moreover, it does not use, for example the word 'consultant', which might be confusing because it is argued that coaching is often blurred with other interventions, for example with consulting or training (see the discussion in 2.2).

Having discussed some of the definitions of coaching, I now move on to review coaching's demarcation from other support and developmental interventions.

2.2 Executive coaching's demarcation from other interventions

In the search for coaching's identity, it has been compared with other interventions such as, for example, mentoring, workplace counseling, training, consulting, and therapy. Similar to the challenges in defining coaching, these fields overlap (e.g. Ellinger & Kim 2014; Peterson 2011). It is argued that executive coaching is often confused with both mentoring and workplace counseling and, to a lesser extent, with consultancy (Gray 2006). Further, it has been posited that understanding the boundaries between coaching and, for example counseling, is important for newcomers to the field, for potential

coaching clients and sponsors (Bachkirova 2014:352). Generally, many scholars argue that some conceptual distinctiveness between these different interventions can be observed (Feldman & Lankau 2005; Joo 2005; Bond & Seneque 2012). Next, I will briefly compare coaching with other forms of intervention: mentoring, workplace counseling, training, consulting, and therapy.

Mentoring

A mentor typically refers to a senior, more experienced employee who helps a less experienced person become proficient in his or her role in the organization. The mentoring relationships tend to be initiated informally and last up to 5 years. In contrast, executive coaching relationships are shorter in duration and are formally contracted. Further, executive coaches are often external professionals who do not provide advice (Feldman & Lankau 2005:831; Joo 2005: 474) whereas the professional coach's expertise lies in facilitating the executive's learning and development using a range of validated techniques (Abbott et al. 2006:302). Mentors are seen to be responsible for a number of duties, such as communication facilitator, door opener, and career enhancer (Herbolzheimer 2009). Further, the empirical study of Gray, Ekinici and Goregaokar (2011:425) has provided evidence that while mentors need to demonstrate career-counseling attributes, these are not present in the practice of coaching. Coaches, however, do need business knowledge, including an awareness of strategy of the company, organizational communication, and business ethics.

Workplace counseling

Workplace counseling or supervision developed as a result of the professionalization of social work. Counseling and coaching resemble each other in many respects, but due to coaching's prevalence among private sector companies, coaching is often targeted to corporate executives. As a result, coaching and counseling have taken hold as two separate forms. Further, some authors perceive coaching as carrying a more resource-oriented, potential-focused connotation than counseling (Herbolzheimer 2009:74-75). It has been also argued that counseling focuses more on problems and the causes behind the problems whereas coaching emphasizes new competencies, actions, strengths and achievements. Further, coaching interfaces with learning and development tools and behavioral diagnostic assessments whereas counseling generally involves minimal assessment (Zeus & Skiffington 2007:13).

Training

When coaching is compared with training, the following differences have been identified: coaching is more customized; it focuses on the client's situation, and has a process-related nature. Coaching is more time consuming and usually more expensive than training. In addition it has been argued that coaching works from the coachee's agenda, and that coaches and their coachees are equals in the coaching relationship. Training is used by a greater variety of target groups, and it has a standardized content, consisting usually of a set curriculum limited to a few consecutive units aiming to develop technical skills (Rogers 2012:21; Herbolzheimer 2009:75; McGill 2010:120). Lawton-Smith and Cox (2007:8) emphasize that coaching is a process of person-centered development and not a new, more fashionable name for training.

Consulting

In contrast to consulting or advising, executive coaches do not assume the role of technical expert and are not contracted for traditional business consulting. Executive coaches do not provide advice or recommendations on specific business initiatives (Feldman & Lankau 2005). Compared to consulting, coaching is seen as a more holistic process, in which the coach's expertise is in the domain of conversation, communication, interpersonal skills and emotion (Zeus & Skiffington 2007:15-17).

Therapy

Although the different genres of psychology used in therapy have influenced coaching, clear differences between coaching and therapy also exist. In therapy, there are patients with mental disorders and who are under emotional stress, the focus is more in the past and on problem solving, whereas coaching is offered usually to non-clinical clients with present and future focus in an organizational context (Peltier 2001; Zeus & Skiffington 2007:10).

In order to get an overall understanding of the concept under investigation I review coaching's roots and its often-referenced background theories in the next section. Further, while executive coaching is argued to have impacts from many theories, some of these theories have special importance in regard to this study. I identify and elaborate on these influences in the next section.

2.3 Executive coaching's roots and background theories

In regard to the roots of coaching there is evidence that it sprang from several independent sources at the same time and that coaching has a broad intellectual framework that draws on the synergy, cross fertilization, and practices of many disciplines. Individuals from a wide range of occupational background work as coaches and they have brought theoretical grounding, various tools and techniques from the other disciplines into the coaching practice. Disciplines such as, for example, adult learning theories, psychology, philosophy, management and sports have influenced the field of coaching (Bachkirova, Cox & Clutterbuck 2010; Brock 2008; Gray 2006; Stober & Grant 2006). However, in the 21st century corporate coaching has no longer been linked with sports coaching, and there is also evidence of other influences on coaching, such as, for example, mindfulness, quantum physics, neuroscience and systems theory (Campone 2008).

Generally, coaching literature demonstrates little consensus on what theoretical principles underpin executive coaching (Bono et al. 2009; Gray 2006). There is evidence from Finland that executive coaches utilize different background theories and combine them with each other (Virolainen 2010). However, the most prominent approaches utilized in executive coaching are argued to be cognitive, and goal-oriented approaches (Barlett et al. 2014).

Next, I briefly outline often-referenced background theories impacting executive coaching, and indicate when a theory has influenced this study. I discuss intercultural theories separately in chapter three, in which I focus on the international perspectives of coaching.

Humanistic approach

It has been argued that humanistic psychology is a philosophical foundation for all coaching in terms of values and assumptions (e.g. Gray 2006; Stober 2006). In recent years, alternative branches of psychotherapy have developed, many of which are practiced by executive coaches: for example, person-centered psychotherapy, gestalt psychotherapy and neuro-linguistic programming (Gray 2006: 475-497). There are certain parallels between a humanistic, person-centered approach and literature on the ingredients of executive coaching. This approach is founded on an optimistic view of the person, where the coachee is seen holistically, capable for utilizing his or her experiences and potential for growth and development. Further, empathy, unconditional positive regard, authenticity, trust and freedom for choice are the central concepts of this approach (Stober 2006:19-26).

Positive psychology

This rather recent approach in psychology has been influenced, for example, by the work of scholars such as Seligman, Peterson, Diener and Csikzenmihalyi. Positive psychology coaching is a scientifically rooted approach to helping coachees increase well-being, enhance and apply strengths, improve performance, and achieve goals, and it is influenced by a number of psychological paradigms (Kauffman 2006; Kauffman, Boniwell & Silberman 2010). In this approach language of strength and vision is the firm foundation of coaching. Positive psychology focuses on understanding how positive emotions work; these are of importance in coaching because they are known to be central to psychological flourishing (Kauffman 2006). Given that the international business environment and the context of expatriates is known to be very challenging (see the reviews in section 3), awareness of one's strengths is of great importance. The approaches of positive psychology are therefore valuable for international coaching.

Adult learning and adult development theories

It is also argued that adult learning theories underpin all coaching practice, and that the concept of change, which is at the heart of coaching, is also inherent in the concept of learning (Bachkirova, Cox & Clutterbuck 2010:6). The three theories of adult learning that are seen to underpin all coaching, are: a) Andragogy, the theory introduced by Knowles in the 1970s; b) Experimental learning by Kolb in 1984; and c) The transformative learning theory by Mezirov in 1990 (Bachkirova et al. 2010), but other theories also exist (for reviews see: Cox 2006 and Gray 2006).

As people develop, they come more and more able to understand and take into account the perspectives of others, and become more aware of their own responsibility for their emotions. From a developmental perspective, growth requires some qualitative shift, both in knowledge and in perspective of thinking. The adult developmental theories are useful in coaching because they help us understand ourselves better, and learning about the coach's own development and witnessing and supporting the development of the coachee, is a developmental activity (Berger 2006: 77 - 102).

Both Berger (2006) and Bachkirova (2010) highlight the importance of Keegan's theory (1982) in coaching. This theory suggests that as we grow, the new form, leaving traces of the less mature form behind, overtakes the previous form. Development occurs when a choice or multiple perspectives are discovered, and coaching can support this development. Both adult learning and adult development theories are important when new competencies and patterns of thinking are developed. Given that international assignees are required to learn new skills and master change situations in a complex global business environment, both the adult learning and adult development theories are of importance in an international coaching context.

Cognitive, behavioral, and cognitive-behavioral approaches

Cognitive-behavioral coaching assumes that the way coachees think about events influence the way they feel about them, which in turn impacts upon stress and performance (Williams, Edgerton & Palmer 2010). This impact of executive coaching is critically important in the challenging global environment. Cognitive-behavioral coaching draws on the work of researchers and therapists Beck, Ellis, and Bandurra. Their work has jointly formed Cognitive Behavioral Therapy, CBT, which has its roots in the work of the Stoic philosophers Epictetus and Marcus Aurelius (Athanasopoulou & Dopson 2015).

In this approach coachees are guided to identify and dispute the negative thoughts or beliefs they have about themselves (Gray 2006). Further, the approach emphasizes the importance of identifying realistic goals and facilitates self-awareness of underlying cognitive and emotional barriers to goal attainment (Bachkirova et al. 2010). Further, an emphasis is given to the facilitation of practical change through personal development and learning (Athanasopoulou & Dopson 2015).

The key concepts of this approach are the setting of objectives and goals, gaining new-insights, and overcoming the barriers of our thinking and beliefs. The GROW-model (Goal, Reality, Options, Will), first developed by Graham Alexander in the 1980s (Virolainen 2010), is a cognitive-behavioral model that is widely used in executive coaching. A goal-oriented coaching approach can be seen to be very useful, for example in the expatriate context, because international assignees need to perform well in a foreign country and in challenging business environments.

Systems theory

Coaching is argued to be a journey in search of patterns, and one of the lenses that can be adopted for this purpose is the use of complex systems theory. Systems theories are a wide range of theoretical approaches, such as cybernetics, complexity theory, and chaos theory. One of the founders of systems approach was the biologist von Bertalanffy, who developed the general systems theory between the 1920s to the 1960s. According to him, the world could be viewed as a series of systems within systems, which all have some common characteristics (Cavanagh 2006: 313 - 354).

A system is a group of interacting or interdependent elements that form a complex whole that unfolds over time. Each system also has an impact on the order in the larger system. Holism and interdependence are common to all systemic approaches. This approach is based on the belief that the parts of the system are essentially interdependent, and it is focused on the relationships between the parts. Its key implication for coaching is that the coach must understand how the coachee is related to the situations, events, and systems in which they are involved. Cavanagh (2006) proposes that coaching can be seen as a complex adaptive conversation that carries the coachee to the edge of chaos (see also Stacey 2000), which can be seen as a creative 'place'. The systemic approach is important for this study, because the framework of Wilber, utilized in article two, is a holistic and systemic model in which different stakeholders are interacting with each other and have an impact on the success of expatriate coaching. The integral coaching framework is presented in section 2.7 and discussed in article 2.

Narrative theories

Drake (2010) argues that narrative coaching draws on narrative psychology to understand and connect to the narrator, on narrative structure to understand and elicit the material in the narrated stories, and on narrative practices to understand and harvest the dynamics of the narrative field. Further, Vogel (2012) posits that the assumption that a narrative perspective is relevant to coaching is supported by the argument that humans are, at some level, narrative beings, and literature on narrative agrees that stories are integral to how humans understand the world.

Stelter et al. (2010) posit that coaching can be seen as a narrative-collaborative practice, an approach that is based on phenomenology, social constructionism, and narrative theory, all of which are also of importance for this study. Further, Stelter (2013) argues that narrative coaching takes into account the social and

cultural conditions of late modern society, and must be seen as intertwined with them. It is argued that this approach focuses on narrative identity, growth, the power of discourse, and the possibilities of new stories (Drake 2010).

While this study does not focus on narrative coaching as such, narrative approaches are important for this thesis, because it has been argued that they are evident in coaching (Vogel 2012:2) and that researchers such as Drake in Australia, Law in England and Stelter in Denmark have grounded coaching on them (Stelter et al. 2010:3). As can be seen in article 3, I have applied narrative analysis to explore the stories told by interviewed expatriates in order to understand whether, and how, coaching enhances the development of career capital in the expatriate context.

Theories of transition and change

According to Grant (2006), coaching is a goal-directed activity, which helps individuals and organizations to create and sustain change. He suggests that there are three key models of transition and change that are useful in goal-focused coaching: Bridges' (1986) Transition Model, Schlossberg's (1981) Adaption to Transitions Model, and Prochaska and DiClemente's (1984) Transtheoretical Model of Change. In addition, Rogers (2011) discusses Kübler-Ross's theory about loss and bereavement as a useful model in coaching, and posits that Bridges' and Kübler-Ross's frameworks work well together. Grant (2006) argues that by understanding the different types of goals and their relationship to the process of change, coaches can work more efficiently with their coachees. In general, theories and frameworks of transition and change are very useful tools for cross-culturally working coaches, because international key talents and expatriates experience constant change and also often several career transitions (see the discussion in sections 3.1, 3.2 and 3.3).

2.5 Executive coaching's stakeholders and process

Today, executive coaching is manifested in a very wide range of combinations of approaches depending on what the coach prefers and which approach is most suitable for each coachee (Athanasopoulou & Dopson 2015:57). Usually, the stakeholders in the executive coaching process include the coach, the coachee, and the organization; coaching is generally funded by the organization and requested by the coachee's boss or HR professional (Athanasopoulou & Dopson 2015; Louis & Fatien Dichon, 2014; Peterson 2011). In this section I discuss what is known about the different stakeholders - the coach, the coachee and the organization - and the coaching process.

2.5.1 Executive coaching's stakeholders: the coach, the coachee and the organization

The executive coach

Although it is widely recognized that executive coaching is an unregulated field, and practically anyone can claim to be an executive coach, there is evidence that the majority of executive coaches have a solid educational background with master degrees in business or the social sciences, and that they work for consulting companies or are self-employed (Judge & Cowell 1997). In general, there is evidence that coaching certifications, accreditation, age and gender are not the top criteria that organizations use when selecting coaches (Tompson et al. 2008:13; Gray & Goregaokar 2010). However, there is an ongoing debate about the qualifications for executive coaches. Some scholars (e.g. Kilburg 1996) have argued that coaches with an education in the field of psychology are best suited for the role of an executive coach, while others highlight that, for example, business acumen, understanding of leadership, business disciplines, and management principles are the core competences for executive coaches (Feldman & Lankau 2005:832; Kampa-Kokesch & Anderson 2001). Indeed, some studies have focused on this aspect, but the findings are contradictory (e.g. see Wasylshyn 2003; Garman, Whiston & Zlatoper 2000).

When looking at coaching competencies, the challenges in defining coaching seem to extend to identifying the competencies of an effective coach (Peterson 2011:533). However, both contextual knowledge and experience of management are needed in executive coaching (Gray, Ekinci & Goregaokar 2011:425). Moreover, Gray et al. (2011) found that the ability to develop critical thinking and action, the skill to develop core management skills, and to forge the coaching relationship are key competencies of an executive coach. In addition, listening, understanding and encouragement, knowledge, empathy, authenticity and involvement are seen as important capabilities in coaches (Passmore 2010; De Haan et al. 2010).

The executive coachee

Relatively little is known about the executive coachees and their coaching needs (Feldman & Lankau, 2005:842). The coaching literature has shown that recipients of executive coaching services typically fall into two categories: a) executives who have performed highly in the past but whose behaviors are interfering with, or not sufficient for, current job requirements; and b) managers who have been targeted for advancement to the executive level but are missing some specific skills (Feldman & Lankau 2005:834). Further, it is argued that in

the past, executive coaching was often utilized to manage underperforming executives, whereas today it is typically devoted to the development of high potentials (Bono et al. 2009; Coutu & Kauffman 2009). According to the empirical study conducted by McGovern et al. (2001), executive coaching is focused on enhancing: 1) interpersonal skills (35 %); 2) management skills (18 %); 3) business agility and technical or functional credibility; 4) leadership skills (14 %); and 5) fostering personal growth (12 %). Moreover, Coutu and Kauffman (2009) argue that the three top reasons to engage executives in executive coaching are: to develop the capabilities of high potential managers, facilitate a transition (in or up), and act as a sounding board.

There is evidence that the executive coachees share some common capabilities and characteristics, which are important for coaching's success. It has been shown that commitment to the coaching process by the coachee is one of the determinants of coaching success (Bush 2005). Also, the willingness of the coachee to learn and change is one of the factors influencing coaching's effectiveness (Bush 2005; Peterson 2011). Further, it is known that some executives are more open to coaching than others (Passmore & Fillery-Travis 2011; Peterson 2011). For example, Stewart et al. (2008) have found positive correlations between application of coaching development and conscientiousness, openness to experience, emotional stability and general self-efficacy. Jones et al.'s (2014) study provided evidence that the coachee's personality matters. They found a significant positive relationship between extraversion and perceived coaching effectiveness.

The organization

Coaching has become part of wider management and leadership programs in organizations (Ely et al. 2010; Segers et al. 2011:204). Tompson et al's survey (2008: 11-12) revealed that organizations use coaching to improve individual productivity and organizational performance. Further, coaching is utilized for addressing workplace problems, boosting employee engagement, and improving retention rates and recruitment outcomes. However, it has been argued that although organizations are using coaching widely, relatively few organizations gain the full benefits of executive coaching by implementing coaching in a systematic way (McDermott et al. 2007; Peterson 2011). Among the concerns are a lack of clarity and consistency in how coaching is used, a lack of cumulative organizational learning about how to manage coaching, an inconsistent quality of coaching, and a lack of systematic goal setting and outcome evaluation (Peterson 2011:545).

Further, there is evidence that organizations that use central coordination of coaching, evaluate its effectiveness, and focus on positive performance outcomes report better results than those that do not (McDermott et al. 2007:30). The clarity of the coaching purpose also counts, and the clearer the reason for coaching in the organization is, the more likely it is that the coaching processes are viewed as successful. Further, making coaching a stand-alone activity is not correlated with success, and it has been suggested that coaching should be integrated in other HR systems such as talent management (e.g. Tompson et al. 2008; Kombarakaran et al. 2008). The organizational support toward the coachee, in particular that of the coachee's manager, has been found to be very important to coaching success in the organizational setting (Hooijberg & Lane 2009:486; Wise & Voss 2002: 8-10). McGovern et al. (2001) argue that in order to get maximum benefits from coaching it is worth taking time for managerial support and positive communication about coaching throughout the organization.

2.5.2 Executive coaching process

In the coaching literature executive coaching process is typically described as consisting of different steps (e.g. Barlett 2007; Flaherty 2006; Orenstein 2006; Saporito 1996). However, the number of steps and their contents vary. As a critique of step models in general, Peterson (2011:536) argues that they portray coaching as mechanical and linear, whereas in reality coaching is fluid, constantly evolving, and different for every person. However, there are some key elements, which appear to be common to most executive coaching processes. As an example, from an organization's side there are typically some pre-coaching activities organized by HR: determining if coaching is needed; matching the coach and the coachee; and preparing them for the coaching process (Athanasopoulou & Dopson, 2015:57). In order to give a picture of an executive coaching process, I discuss next its different phases, as presented by Feldman and Lankau (2005:837-838): data gathering, feedback, implementation of the coaching intervention (consisting of periodic coaching sessions), and evaluation.

Data Gathering

The first phase of the executive coaching intervention typically focuses on setting the foundation for the coaching relationship and defining the executive's developmental goals (Saporito, 1996). According to Feldman and Lankau (2005:837) this phase includes the establishment of a relationship with the coachee and discussing the parameters of the relationship (e.g., confidentiality, norms of behaviors in coaching sessions, etc.). Further, the coach gathers data

about the coachee and the organization. In addition, coaches may also conduct assessments of executives' personality, leadership style, values, and attitudes. Data may be obtained from the executive, personnel records, members of the top management team, organizational employees, and/or board directors (Feldman & Lankau 2005:837; Kilburg 2000).

In regard to data gathering and assessments there are a great variety of tools available for executive coaches (for a review see e.g. Nash, Christian & Anderson 2011), which are complementary rather than competing, and are applied by the coach depending on the coachee's needs and the coach's preference and experience. For example, instruments such as an assessment of an individual's emotional intelligence and a 360-degree feedback - an assessment process that involves soliciting feedback from one's immediate work circle, including subordinates, peers and supervisors - are typically used as a part of executive coaching processes (Athanasopoulou & Dopson 2015:43; 61; 65).

Feedback

In the feedback step, the coach presents the results of the data collection to the coachee. The objective of this phase is to assist the executive in digesting the feedback and to facilitate the discussion of the executive's strengths and areas for development. These feedback sessions may include key stakeholders in the organization. At the end of this phase, the coach and executive often identify together the specific objectives of the coaching intervention (Feldman & Lankau 2005:837 -838).

Implementation of the coaching intervention

During coaching sessions, coaches work with their coachees in structured and periodic sessions to monitor and reinforce developmental activities, to modify developmental plans, and to discuss ways of overcoming barriers to change (Feldman 2001; Feldman & Lankau 2005:838). The executive's superior or the human resources director may be included in some of the sessions to review progress and obtain support for developmental activities (Tobias 1996; Feldman & Lankau 2005). However, given that coaches come from different backgrounds and have very different approaches to the coaching process, a general standard does not exist on how these sessions are conducted (Feldman & Lankau 2005: 838).

In regard to the type of coaching meetings and the duration of the coaching process, it is known that the majority of executive coaching sessions are carried out face-to-face; however, a large proportion of them are a combination of

different methods (face-to-face, over the phone, and via web-based technologies). The average duration of a coaching assignment may be from three months to over one year, a slight majority of them lasting six to eight months (Tompson et al. 2008:10). Although there is some variation in the research findings concerning the duration and content of an executive coaching process, it is acknowledged that executive coaching has a predefined length and that it is short-term in nature (Athanasopoulou & Dopson, 2015:62).

Evaluation

Once the regular coaching sessions come to an end, coaches may follow up with their coachees to assess the impact of the coaching intervention. Coaches may collect data from their coachees on their learning experiences and how coaching affected their effectiveness in the organization. Also, the HR department may conduct an independent evaluation (Feldman & Lankau 2005:838).

Having discussed the stakeholders and the typical process of executive coaching, I now move on to presenting the coaching frameworks of this study.

2.6 The coaching frameworks utilized in this study

In this section I present the two coaching frameworks that I have adopted in this study, more precisely in articles 1 and 2. I start with the presentation of the Coaching Continuum Stage Model (Peterson & Little, cited in Peterson 2011) and continue to the integral coaching framework by Wilber (Bachkirova et al. 2010). The career capital framework (Inkson & Arthur 2001), which is adapted in article 3, is discussed in more detail in section 3.3.

2.6.1 The Coaching Continuum Stage Model

The Coaching Continuum Stage Model (Peterson & Little, 2008 cited in Peterson 2011) is a framework describing the stages of coaching's implementation within organizations. I adopted this framework in this study, because it linked clearly coaching with talent management, and it had not been utilized empirically previously. In this model, organizations move through four stages along the continuum, from relatively ad hoc uses of coaching to more systemic and strategic application. The model comprises of four stages: ad hoc, managed coaching, proactive, and mature.

In the first '**ad hoc**' stage most organizations begin to use executive coaching when one individual requests it. Coaching is reactive and is not implemented in a

coordinated manner across the organization. Further, at the organizational level there is no awareness of who is receiving coaching and what the process involves, nor is there an awareness of the costs and value of coaching.

The second '**managed coaching**' stage is led by a coaching champion. This role involves managing all the coaches working in the organization. Organizations move to this stage either when they notice that they are spending significant amounts of money on coaching, or when they realize that coaching has important potential value, which they wish to control in a more structured way. The coaching champion establishes coach selection criteria, screens and keeps track of coaches, and defines the process. This process may include evaluating coachee's reactions, although organizations rarely define who receives coaching or measure coaching outcomes at this stage.

At the third '**proactive**' stage organizations begin to use coaching for groups, such as for onboarding new executives or accelerating the development of talents. This is driven by a business need, and the aim is to create clear organizational value by using coaching to develop talent pools. At this stage, organizations start to think more strategically about who provides coaching and who receives it. Some organizations try to establish a 'coaching culture' by enhancing their internal coaching capabilities and by limiting the use of external coaches in order to reduce costs. Further, some organizations define coaching roles for specific needs.

At the fourth, '**matured**' stage coaching is driven by the organizational talent management strategy. These companies have identified their most critical talent, and they have also prioritized where development will make the biggest difference. Stage four organizations have a clear understanding of their talent and their development needs, and utilize an array of development tools.

Next, I present the integral coaching framework of Wilber.

2.6.2 The integral coaching framework

Wilber's integral coaching framework (Abbott 2010; Abbott et al. 2013; Armstrong 2009; Bachkirova et al. 2010; Williams 2008; Wilber 2001) is a model consisting of four major quadrants relevant to coaching (I-; WE-; IT- and ITS-perspectives). Integral theory refers to the systematic holistic philosophy developed originally by Ken Wilber and this all-encompassing theory incorporates and honors all perspectives in coaching while presenting a larger picture (Brock 2008:83). In Wilber's framework, human experience is placed within a quadrant map, based

on distinctions between the individual and the collective, the subjective and the objective. These dimensions are interconnected. I adopted this holistic framework in this study because it is well referenced in coaching literature and because it offered a tool for categorizing coaching literature and for analyzing the findings of the second article. In alignment with Bachkirova et al. (2010:6) I see that it is important to value all the dimensions of the model and reject absolutist claims for the exclusivity of any of them.

In this framework the coachee is a participant in a whole system that includes culture, systems and the social context of their situation (Abbott 2010; Armstrong 2009). The integral model can be seen as a landscape for the coaching process that takes into account that people both influence, and are influenced by, personal, organizational, social and cultural demands (Armstrong 2009:44). The dimensions of Wilber's framework are: the individual experiences of the coachee and coach (I-perspective); their mutual relationship, including cultural and linguistic aspects (WE-perspective); the behaviors, techniques and models used in coaching that are observable and measurable (IT-perspective); and the systems, the complexity of factors influencing coaching processes, such as organizations, families and societies (ITS-perspective) (Bachkirova et al. 2010: 5).

The integral framework has been previously used, for example, for a discussion about how to categorize coaching research and literature (Bachkirova et al. 2010:5). Bachkirova et al. (2010) posit that an overview of current literature shows that coaching has been described and explored in the four dimensions of the model. Although this framework is well referenced in the coaching literature, empirical studies utilizing it seem to be scarce. Armstrong, Melser and Tooth (2007) have adopted the model in an unpublished empirical study that focused on exploring the benefits of executive coaching. They concluded that there is a strong case for coaching to be framed as a holistic, integral and transformative activity. Previously, Wilber's model has been discussed and used, for example, in counseling, business ethics, and organizational development literature; for instance, *The Journal of Organizational Change Management* has presented a collection of papers addressing integrally informed approaches to organizational transformation in a special issue (Landrum & Paul 2005).

After presenting the coaching frameworks adopted in this study, I close this chapter with an overview of the current state of executive coaching research.

2.7 Research on executive coaching

Recently, there has been a significant growth in the amount of peer-reviewed coaching related research, indicating an increase in the number of academic institutions worldwide who are now seriously interested in the research and practice of executive coaching (Athanasopoulou & Dopson 2015). Further, several scholars have reviewed literature on coaching from different angles; for example, from the perspective of coaching psychology (Passmore & Theebom 2015), from coaching research evolution's point of view in (Campone 2008), and from the angle of the cross-disciplinary approaches adopted in coaching research, coaching education and coaching practice (McCarthy 2015).

Well-referenced reviews of executive coaching include: the articles of Feldman & Lankau (2005), Fillery-Travis and Lane (2006); Joo (2005); the seminal work of Kampa-Kokesch and Anderson (2001); Kilburg (1996); Passmore et al. (2010), Passmore and Fillary-Travis (2011), and the book chapter of Peterson (2011). Very recently, Athanasopoulou & Dopson (2015) published the first systematic review focusing on executive coaching research which covered, for example, the processes, outcomes, theoretical frameworks utilized in executive coaching, and its links to leadership development. They concluded, for example, that research on executive coaching has provided little comparative evidence about which executive coaching models are more helpful and has not produced deep understanding of how various stakeholders contribute to its success or failure. Considering article 2's exploration of the antecedents of successful expatriate coaching from the point of view of different stakeholders, its focus is timely.

Further, Athanasopoulou and Dopson (2015) posit that some of the coaching research designs are not rigorous and that the financial benefits of an executive coaching intervention cannot be easily measured (Athanasopoulou & Dopson 2015: 153). In addition, Barlett, Boylan and Hale (2014) conducted an integrative literature review of peer-reviewed publications in order to uncover common themes within definitions, models and approaches, and the effectiveness of executive coaching. They argue that there is an absence of empirical research on the characteristics of an effective coach, and that the borderlines between coaching, mentoring, counseling and consulting must continue to be defined.

So far, several meta-analytic studies (Jones, Woods & Guillaume 2015; de Meuse, Dai & Lee, 2009; Sonesh et al. 2015; Theebom, Beersma & van Vianen, 2013) have been conducted. In general, these meta-analytical, and most of the empirical, studies indicate that coaching is an effective tool for improving and developing individuals and their organizations (e.g. Barlett et al. 2014; Jones et

al. 2015). However, several scholars stress that a larger evidence-base is needed (Ellinger & Kim 2014; Feldman & Lankau 2005; Passmore & Fillery-Travis 2011; Peterson 2011), and that empirical coaching research in the international context is scarce and evolving (Abbott et al. 2013; Booysen 2015; McGill 2010).

In regard to how coaching research has been categorized, for example, Passmore and Fillery-Travis (2011) have divided coaching research (2000 – 2009) into the following categories: the nature of coaching, coach behavior studies, client behavior studies, coach-client relationship studies, coaching impact studies, organizational, and the future decade for coaching research. As mentioned earlier, another way of categorizing the literature has been presented by Bachkirova, Cox and Clutterbuck (2010:5), who posit that coaching has been described and researched in at least four major dimensions, which correspond to the four quadrants by Wilber (1998, 2001): I – coach and coachee as individuals; IT – behaviors, processes, models, and techniques; WE-coaching relationships, culture and language; and ITS- systems such as organizations, families and societies (see section 2.6 and article 2). Following this categorization, the studies of this dissertation can be positioned as follows: article 1 in ITS -dimension (exploring how executive coaching is implemented in GTM programs in MNCs); article 2 in all the dimensions, since it is studying antecedents of coaching success factors of expatriate coaching and utilizing the holistic framework of Wilber; and article 3 in I-dimension, because it explores how coaching enhances the development of career capital capabilities from the coachee's perspective. However, all the studies have implications for both WE and ITS-dimensions, because this dissertation studies international, executive coaching in an organizational context where cultural issues also play a role.

Next, I move on to discussion of executive coaching's outcomes.

One of the research areas with regard to executive coaching focuses on coaching's outcome. Generally, the outcome research in coaching is in its infancy (De Haan et al. 2013; Joo 2005; McKie 2007). Despite the growth of the executive coaching field there have been relative few studies of the efficacy of coaching (Gray et al. 2011:415). In addition, Grant (2013) argues that we must first understand the nature of coaching before its efficacy can be discussed. According to him the efficacy of coaching is complex, and the academic coaching outcome literature is disjointed and somewhat fragmented. Further, it is suggested that changes in human behavior take time and are therefore difficult to measure (Athanasopoulou & Dopson, 2015:82). In addition, although the financial return on investment (ROI) in executive coaching is one of the instruments that can be used for measuring the outcomes, it is argued to be an unreliable and insufficient

measure (Grant 2012). Further, it has been stated that an overemphasis on financial returns can restrict coaches' and organizations' awareness of the full range of positive outcomes possible through coaching (Grant 2012; Theeboom et al. 2014).

It has been generally found that executive coaching has a positive effect on the individual and the sponsoring organization, but there are also a few studies providing evidence of some moderate or conflicting or negative outcomes. However, many of these outcome studies lack academic rigor with regard to research design, execution and analysis (Athanasopoulou & Dopson 2015). After this general review on the current stage of outcome research of executive coaching, I will next discuss a new research line that focuses on antecedents for the success of executive coaching, something which is of importance for this dissertation.

De Haan & Duckworth (2012) argue for a new way of studying executive coaching outcomes. They posit that we are not likely to get rigorous data on executive coaching's outcomes in the near future and suggest that researchers should be aiming at identifying the antecedents, often referred to as 'active ingredients' in the coaching literature, which predict the effectiveness of executive coaching (see also McKenna & Davis 2009; de Haan et al. 2013; Grant 2014). Article 2 of this dissertation aims to contribute to this emerging research line by presenting an explorative study in the expatriate context that goes beyond the coach-coachee relationship and investigates the success factors of expatriate coaching (see article 2).

All in all, although the number and quality of executive coaching research papers has increased during the last few years, it still remains a fragmented and developing area of research. Given that it has been argued that the executive coaching process in domestic organizations could also be applicable to international contexts, though with some caveats (McGill 2010), I now move on to the international scene of this study, in which I discuss the contexts (GTM and expatriation, and the development of career capital of expatriates) and international coaching in more detail.

3 INTERNATIONAL SCENE OF THE STUDY

In this chapter I present a literature review adopted in this dissertation from an international perspective. As the present dissertation includes studies from different perspectives of international executive coaching - GTM, expatriation, and the development of career capital of expatriates - this literature review represents a cross-section of these fields.

Given that there is empirical evidence that coaching relies on the existing knowledge and understanding of the coach in response to the demands made by the context of coaching transaction itself (Cox 2003), it is important to start the review by having a look at the contexts of GTM and expatriation. Also, as argued by Abbott (2006), viewed from a systems perspective, executive coaching is an entry point to the individual's complex world of interacting systems. Therefore, I discuss GTM (article 1), expatriation (articles 2 and 3) and international careers, specifically the literature on the development of career capital for expatriates (article 3), and then move on to international coaching in general and close the chapter by reviewing the literature on expatriate coaching.

3.1 Global Talent Management

Since the well-known McKinsey report 'The war for talent' in the late 1990s (Bechler & Woodward 2009), the interest in talent management has grown exponentially. The practice is far ahead of research, but there is considerable evidence that organizations worldwide face formidable talent challenges. It is known that MNCs continue to search for individuals who can effectively manage through the complex, challenging, changing, and often ambiguous global environment (Caligiuri & Bonache 2016; Evans et al. 2010; Tarique & Schuler 2010). There are at least four major drivers that have shaped and are shaping the field of GTM: shortage of talented workers; changing demographics; changing attitudes toward work and the structure of work; and country culture differences. Each of these drivers of GTM impacts the need and content of GTM practices and policies and vice versa (Tarique & Schuler 2012).

Furthermore, although there is a growing consensus that GTM is an emerging area, there is no consensus regarding its exact definition or boundaries (Cascio & Boudreau 2016; Schuler, Jackson & Tarique 2011). However, scholars agree that an optimization of talent potentials will lead to better organizational performance

(Al Ariss, 2014b), and that international employees are now viewed as an important part of the global talent pool, contributing to the competitive advantages of the global organizations (Al Ariss & Guo 2015; Bechler & Woodward 2009; Carr, Inkson & Thorn 2005; Cerdin, Dine & Brewster 2014). So far, much of the theoretical and empirical base upon which talent management is premised is based on North American thinking and research (Collings, Scullion & Vaiman 2011b).

Indeed, the meaning of GTM is multifold (Lewis & Heckman 2006). There is a lack of knowledge in regard to meanings, challenges, and future vision of GTM (Al Ariss, 2014b). For example, GTM has been understood in a recently published book on GTM (Al Ariss 2014a) in three different ways: 1) selecting, recruiting, developing, and retaining talents in such a way that *it meets the global strategic goals of companies*; 2) identifying, selecting, recruiting, developing, and retaining talents *in international contexts*; and 3) *in association of expatriate management*, as a critical element of strategic HRM (Cerdin & Brewster 2014). Given that the strategic demands are increasing for culturally competent professionals, organizations will need to become more effective in leveraging expatriates' competencies or finding those who already possess these competencies (Caligiuri & Bonache 2016).

As the articles of this dissertation explore coaching in both GTM and expatriate contexts, and given that companies can leverage the cross-cultural competencies either by hiring those who have lived and worked abroad or by offering international assignments, it is worthwhile noticing that there is an increasing integration between global mobility and talent management. Consequently, it has been suggested that, currently, talent management and expatriation are two significantly overlapping but separate areas of research and practice, and that their integration would be beneficial (Caligiuri & Bonache 2016; Cerdin & Brewster 2014; Collings 2014).

Further, it is suggested that talent management and global talent management (GTM) seem to be evolving into two separate literature streams. Whereas GTM draws on the international human resource literature, the talent management literature has its roots mainly in the strategic HRM literature (Dries, Cotton, Bagdadli & Oliveira 2014). GTM can refer to the management of all employees (inclusive approach), or it can refer to the management of talented or best employees globally (exclusive or elitist approach). The latter refers to the management of high-achieving employees (Al Ariss 2014b; Cerdin & Brewster 2014). It suggests that particular IHRM activities are only provided to specific employee groups (e.g. the use of cross-cultural training, and the use of executive

development programs such as executive coaching for individuals who are considered high potentials for senior management positions). As executive coaching is often provided for senior leaders and key talents, and is also included in the leadership development programs, the first explorative study of this dissertation represents the exclusive approach in talent management. However, because there is evidence that coaching has positive effects not only on the executive but also on others in the work environment - direct reports, managers, colleagues and customers (Kombarakaran et al. 2008) - it is assumed here that coaching of key talents has wider influences on the whole organization. Given that the first pilot article focuses on exploring how and why international executive coaching is utilized in GTM programs, I will next concentrate particularly on aspects of developing global talents.

In regard to global leadership development, there is no universal list of global leadership competencies, because the best performer at one level is not necessarily the best performer at the next (Evans, Pucik & Björkman 2011). Leadership development involves selecting those who have the potential to master transitions, and then developing corresponding leadership skills through appropriate challenges, mobility, coaching and training (Evans et al. 2010). Considerable research suggests important skill changes as individuals move from novice to middle and on to senior leadership levels. Each new role requires different skills from those required in the previous position. Leadership development does not happen naturally, and it is known that leadership develops through challenging opportunities and assignments (Evans et al. 2010). Indeed, several scholars argue that international assignments are the most powerful strategy for developing global leaders (e.g. Caligiuri & Di Santo 2001; Gregersen et al. 1998; Suutari & Mäkelä 2007), and there is evidence that the experience of living and working abroad is absolutely necessary for the development of significant global competencies (Hollenbeck & McCall 2001). For example, Osland (2000) showed that individuals develop as they overcome obstacles and experience paradoxes during an international assignment. Furthermore, Dragoni et al.'s (2014) study indicated that exposure to cultural novelty provides expatriates with a set of cultural contrasts through which they can develop more elaborated cognitive structures that represent more advanced levels of professional competencies. Moreover, research suggests that the amount of competency development that occurs is a function of both the experience's quantity and quality (Caligiuri & Bonache 2016).

In regard to an organizational perspective, Stahl et al.'s (2012) study indicates that companies that excel in talent management are heavily investing in leadership development and also make it an integral part of their culture. In

addition, they involve their senior leaders and line managers, who are supposed to act as mentors and coaches in the process. However, Stahl et al. (2012) argue that talent management practices provide a source of sustainable competitive advantage only if they are aligned closely with all elements of the HR system, are linked to the business strategy, and are embedded in the leadership philosophy and value system of the company. These same arguments have been stated concerning the implementation of coaching in organizational settings (see e.g. Hawkins 2012; Peterson 2011).

Furthermore, it is argued that leadership development interactions, such as executive coaching, have two-fold objectives: to train individuals both about how to better manage and know themselves, and also about how to use that knowledge to better manage others. Building on London's paper (2002), Athanasopoulou & Dopson (2015) suggest that self-insight is a prerequisite for understanding others and the environment. It is also the bedrock for both leadership and leadership development. Further, they posit that coaching is one of a number of interventions that are employed to enhance self-insight. Moreover, there is evidence that executive coaching facilitates the different facets of self-insight (Athanasopoulou & Dopson 2015). Furthermore, Peterson (2011) argues that optimal insight into one's development needs requires an understanding and analysis of knowledge about the person's goals, values, and motivations. Moreover, he states that it is important to know how the person perceives his/her abilities, style, and performance, and how others perceive the person. In addition, it is also valuable to identify the success factors for a given role and what others expect from the person – these issues are typically addressed in an executive coaching process.

There is some evidence about coaching's contribution to talent management. Bersin (2007) studied 62 talent management practices in 760 organizations and this study indicates that having formal or well-established coaching programs had the highest impact of all analyzed practices of talent management. Further, Dagley's study (2006) provided evidence that the top two benefits of coaching for organizations were development of the talent pool and organizational capacity, and talent retention and morale. Moreover, Peterson (2011) argues that organizations that are on a matured level of the Coaching Continuum Stage Model practice strategic coaching, which is driven by an organization's overall talent management strategy (see 2.7 and article 1). So far, very few organizations seem to have reached this level.

It has been shown that coaching positively influences work- and career related attitudes (Bozer & Sarros 2012), and that these attitudes may effect positively

work performance (Athanasopoulou & Dopson 2015). In addition, coaching enhances organizational effectiveness through its potentially beneficial effect on employee's goal directed self-regulation (Grant 2003; Theeboom et al. 2014). Theeboom et al.'s (2014) meta-analytic study also indicated that coaching has, for example, significant positive effects on performance and skills, and work attitudes, and it can be assumed that these results make executive coaching an interesting intervention in the talent and leadership development arena.

In conclusion, although it is suggested that most coaching today is focused on preparing high-potential employees for career advancement (McCauley & Hezlett 2001), as discussed in 1.3.1, relatively few academic papers focus on talent development (Garavan et al. 2011), and even fewer on coaching of talents or high-potentials. Coaching research in regard to GTM seems to be missing. Article 1 is positioned in the evolving literature streams of GTM and international, executive coaching focusing on organizational issues.

As articles 2 and 3 explore executive coaching of expatriate managers from two different and novel perspectives, I discuss the aspects of expatriate research relevant to this dissertation in the next section.

3.2 Expatriation

While the key issues of expatriation research have not changed over the decades, its context has changed dramatically, and in contrast to the previous uniformity; the current picture of expatriation is one of diversity. Today, almost half of company-assigned expatriates are coming from non-headquarters, and the most frequently cited reasons for sending expatriates abroad include filling a managerial gap and building international management experience/career development. Currently, 23 % of the firms identify management development as a primary objective of international assignments. At the same time, the proportions of self-initiated and female expatriates have been growing, and the number of traditional expatriates has been substituted with other less costly and project oriented forms of international staffing (Brookfield global relocation survey 2015; Caligiuri & Bonache 2016).

Traditionally, the research on expatriation has followed the phases of the expatriate cycle consisting of selection, training, relocation and adjustment, pay and performance and return (Caligiuri & Bonache 2016; Dabic et al. 2015; Suutari & Brewster 2001), and scholars have been searching for answers to questions concerning when and how expatriates foster a firm's strategic growth globally, and what are the challenges along the international assignment cycle. A

recent study shows that research on expatriates may be divided into two different but complementary research bodies: human resource management and practices, and international business management (Dabic et al. 2015).

Dabic et al's review (2015:329) on expatriate literature, published in major journals 1970 – 2012, showed that, on the whole, 25 % of the published expatriate research has been focused on HRM practices such as training and development. Generally, in a similar way to talent management, the research on expatriation has been mainly governed by American perspectives (Dabic et al. 2015), although the number of European and Australian studies has also been growing. Moreover, expatriation research indicates that effectively managing expatriation and repatriation is a significant challenge for organizations (Cerdin & Brewster 2014; Schaffer et al. 2012).

As widely discussed in the literature, expatriation is a costly and risky investment with many challenges for the expatriates and for the employing organizations (e.g. Andreason 2003; Deller 2006; Herbolzheimer 2009; Suutari & Burch 2001). Although it is known that managers value an international assignment for the opportunity it brings for skill acquisition, personal development, and career enhancement (Stahl, Miller & Tung 2002), there are several transition points that prompt perceptions of high uncertainty and risk for expatriates (Haslberger & Brewster 2009).

As the organizational support of expatriates is weak, assignees often face various challenges. Many of them, from the individual perspective of the expatriate, may also be continuous, often pertinent well before and well after the assignment (Collings et al. 2011a). Further, the challenges of expatriates tend to occur simultaneously, complementing and reinforcing each other, especially in the early-assignment stages. The challenges may also appear to be ongoing, covering several stages of the assignment cycle, or simply be ongoing. For example, one of the challenges seems to be communication with host country nationals. Constant limitations in everyday communication can turn into a real source of frustration and can have a serious impact on the personal wellbeing of expatriates (Herbolzheimer 2009). In a similar way to corporate expatriates, self-initiated expatriates, individuals who instigate and usually finance their own expatriation, also face stress, but are responsible for overcoming the difficulties on their own, because they do not have a 'home' corporation supporting them (Schaffer et al. 2012).

As stated above, many of the expatriate studies have been focused on cross-cultural training (CCT) issues. In regard to CCT, the research on CCT is seen as important, because there is financial loss associated with expatriate assignments.

It has been recognized that expatriates, their training needs and assignments are different. There is no one-size-fits-all solution and therefore it has been argued that the interventions for expatriates should be tailored to the needs of the expatriate, to the period of adjustment and correspond to the cycle of the assignment (Earley & Peterson 2004; Littrell & Salas 2005). Also, on-the-job learning is seen to be important (Bennett et. al. 2000; Forster 2000; Littrell et al. 2006; Mendenhall 2006). Although coaching literature has distinguished coaching from training (e.g. Feldman & Lankau 2005), executive coaching has been listed among the best practices of CCT, and it has been suggested that it could be delivered in tandem with other training efforts for expatriates (Littrell & Salas 2005).

In addition, much of the research on expatriation has been focused on adjustment, which is a multifaceted concept that refers to the degree of psychological comfort with various aspects of a new cultural setting (Nicholson 1989; Black 1988 cited in Schaffer et al. 2012). This cross-cultural adjustment model consists of individual factors, job factors, organizational factors, and non-work factors, as well as factors related to repatriation (Black et al. 1991). Simply put, it is assumed that factors that reduce uncertainty facilitate adjustment and vice versa. The majority of researchers have adopted a stress perspective in the above research line, and indeed, there is evidence that assignees are confronted with a variety of work role and situational stressors, evolving from both the organization and the foreign culture (Shaffer et al. 2012; Takeuchi 2010).

Further, it has been reported that the expatriate experience inherits several paradoxes (Osland 2000; Osland & Osland 2005). There are paradoxes concerning the relationship with the other culture – becoming comfortable in other countries means sacrificing an unconscious sense of fit within one's own culture. Indeed, it has been found that identity transformations take place and these are challenging for expatriates, because they affect their sense of self and their subsequent attitudes and behaviors toward their organization (Kohonen 2007; Muir 2014; Näsholm 2011; Schaffer et al. 2012). A basic dilemma for expatriates is determining how much of one's identity must be relinquished and how much of the other culture's values must be acquired in order to be acculturated. Another paradox concerns expatriates' contradictory approach to people from the other culture: they may have a positive regard, while being cautious at the same time (Osland & Osland 2005).

Moreover, several paradoxes concerning job-related role conflict also exist. A role ambiguity or role conflicts are typically considered as stressors, which cause stress or lack of adjustment (Takeuchi 2010). For example, an assignee may be

caught between contradictory demands from, on the one hand the headquarters, and the demands of the host country nationals and the local situation on the other. In addition, an expatriate may also be both powerful and powerless. Their role as an expatriate manager includes a lot of power, but at the same time they are dependent upon subordinates for their knowledge of the local culture, business practices and, for example, politics. Although it has been shown that these paradoxes are developmental experiences (Osland 2000; Osland & Osland 2005), they also represent issues that may be important to discuss and work on in an expatriate coaching relationship.

Further, there are different kinds of barriers that expatriates have to overcome (e.g. obtaining work permits and concerns about gender bias among female assignees). Research also indicates that global travel, which is often associated with international jobs, creates physical, emotional, and intellectual stress (Shaffer et al. 2012). Previous research has also shown that expatriates may carry out tasks that are more demanding, and at a higher organizational level than their previous tasks (Suutari & Brewster 2000), meaning that they have to acquire new skills and attitudes in order to manage the new situation, often in a highly complex international environment. In addition, assignees confront career transition problems. For example, one of the greatest concerns for corporate expatriates is managing the transition from expatriate to repatriate assignments. They are concerned specifically with responsibility and autonomy on the job, opportunities for using new skills, career advancement, compensation, and career opportunities for their spouse upon repatriation (Schaffer et al. 2012).

Despite the balancing positive effect of families on expatriate success, several family problems may arise during expatriation (Tung 1998). For example, there is evidence that expatriates experience problems because of the difficulty in obtaining jobs for the spouse, lacking outside contacts and children-related issues (Riusala & Suutari 2000). Also, several work-family conflicts have been reported (Mäkelä & Suutari 2011). All in all, the research indicates that family concerns remain a top reason for assignment refusal and assignment failure (McNulty 2015).

Taking a systemic view, and as can be seen from the above discussion, and based on Wilber's integral framework presented in section 2.7.2, there are various stakeholders and processes impacting the coaching relationship in the expatriate context. This brief introduction to some of the trends, challenges and paradoxes described in the expatriate literature shows that there are a variety of concerns and stressors that influence the private and work lives of different kinds of

assignees, which in turn create different kind of coaching needs that expatriate coaches need to understand and be able to work on with the coachee. In addition, global relocations are strongly connected to several developmental issues related to the competencies that are essential for assignees in a foreign and complex global environment. In the next section, I discuss the literature focusing on international careers and the research on the development of career capital of expatriates.

3.3 International careers and the development of career capital

It is known that internationally operating companies apply international career moves because there is a need for integration, control and coordination, knowledge transfer and managerial development (Caligiuri & Bonache 2016; Suutari & Mäkelä 2007). However, the lack of understanding of the complex nature of international assignments has been stressed recently, exposing the need to know more about both company assigned and other internationally mobile individuals like self-initiated expatriates (Doherty, Dickmann, & Mills 2011). Further, Cerdin and Bird (2008) have highlighted the importance of redirecting the focus of expatriate literature from adjustment to career centric issues. Indeed, the expatriate's career perspective has been one of the developing research areas recently (Riusala & Suutari 2000; Stahl & Cerdin 2004; Suutari et al. 2013), and this applies to both company assigned and self-initiated expatriates. Research efforts have looked at international careers from the perspectives of company assigned (most papers have been focused on single assignments), of self-initiated expatriates, and recently also from the perspective of more long-term global careers.

When looking at international career issues from the organizational perspective, the following development is prominent. With the popularity of the 'new' career models, such as the protean career (Hall 1976, 1996) and boundaryless career (Arthur & Rousseau 1996), there has been a shift towards a more individualistic career management (Baruch 2006). For example, Inkson (2004) argues that organizations should realize that under this new career paradigm, careers are mobile and learning-based, meaning that individuals are keen on opportunities to learn and develop in order to obtain transferable skills. If employees are not provided with challenges and learning possibilities, they look for them elsewhere.

Concerning the role of organizations in the era of these 'new' careers, it is suggested that organizations should not withdraw from active career

management, but they should become differently involved and practise supportive and developmental career management such as coaching (Segers & Inceoglu 2012). Given that mentoring research has already enriched international career research (Feldman & Bolino 1999; Carraher, Sullivan & Crocitto 2008; Mezias & Scandura 2005), executive coaching has been recommended as a promising avenue for future research (Sullivan & Baruch 2009). So far, it has been addressed only sparsely in the career development literature (Ciutiene, Neverauskas & Meilene 2010), and the international perspective is lacking.

Traditionally, careers have been described as the sequence of employment-related positions, roles, activities and experiences encountered by a person. They contain a wide range of sequences of occupational experiences. For example, Arthur, Hall and Lawrence (1989: 8) have defined a career as 'the evolving sequence of a person's work experiences over time'. However, the conceptualizations of career began to change, from the 1990s onwards, as the traditional careers began losing ground, producing increased uncertainties and blurring of career boundaries (Arthur 2008; LaPointe 2011). Changing organizational structures and practices meant that the responsibility for career development shifted from employers to employees (Baruch 2006; Fugate, Kinicki & Asforth 2004), and that careers began to come more customized. Further, this development resulted in multiple new conceptualizations of career: 'boundaryless' (Arthur & Rousseau 1996); 'intelligent' (Arthur, Claman & Defillippi 1995), 'protean' (Hall 1976), 'portofolio' (Handy 1989) or simply 'new' (Arthur, Inkson & Pringle 1999; LaPointe 2011).

Of the above mentioned career models, the protean and boundaryless careers are relevant for the international career context, and therefore also for this dissertation. The boundaryless career concept refers to the increased physical and psychological mobility across different boundaries, such as occupational and cultural boundaries (Sullivan & Arthur 2006). A protean career is described as a mindset or an attitude reflecting freedom, self-direction and making choices according to one's personal values (Briscoe & Hall 2006); it refers to the subjective perspective of an individual careerist facing the external career realities of a boundaryless career (Briscoe & Hall 2002; Suutari & Mäkelä 2007). Stahl et al. (2002) indicated that internal motives such as the search for new challenges and possibilities for development impact the decisions about living abroad. Further, the boundaryless careers are characterized by uncertainty and flexibility (Arthur & Rousseau 1996), and they have been described as 'prototypes for international managers' (Suutari & Mäkelä 2007). Boundaryless and protean career concepts are overlapping, and both of them stress the role of individual

awareness. It is also argued that global careers, which refers to multiple international moves in terms of location and position, are likely to influence the career identities of managers (Suutari & Mäkelä 2007).

There are at least two perspectives when looking at international careers: the employee's and the organization's. From the employee's perspective, a career is portable across organizations and different countries, and this portability depends on the extent of career capital the individual has obtained. Therefore, the different career competencies are seen as important assets that employees are trying to pursue, and consequently, international assignments can be regarded as an expatriate's opportunity to build career capital, and a company's opportunity to generate social and intellectual capital. An international assignment can foster career prospects within the sending organization and/or also create opportunities outside (Larsen 2004; Haslberger & Brewster 2009).

When individuals work in challenging international environments, they need flexibility and related competencies that can be transferred to various contexts. Therefore, the understanding of the development of career capital (Inkson & Arthur 2001), and the transferability of the acquired competencies are of importance both to individuals and to organizations employing them (Jokinen 2010). As discussed in 1.3 and in article 3, the resource-based framework of career capital (Inkson & Arthur 2001) was adopted to analyze the data of article 3; this framework consists of three ways of knowing: *knowing-how*, *knowing-why* and *knowing whom*.

Generally, as stated in 1.3, career capital has been shown to develop during international assignments (Dickmann & Doherty 2008, 2010, Doherty & Dickmann 2009; Jokinen 2010; Suutari et al. 2013). According to Cappellen and Janssens (2005), each new career move develops different skills and relationships. This argument has also been validated by Jokinen (2010), who compared the first and second assignment's impact on career capital. This study indicated that each assignment taught different things and during the second assignment the individual was also able to deepen the competencies acquired earlier. However, there are also contrasting findings in a specific country context and in regard to self-initiated expatriates: Rodrigues & Scurry (2014) argue in their recent empirical paper in a Qatari context, that self-initiated expatriates cannot always accumulate their career capital. Contextual features may impact an individual's efforts to gain career capital and can lead to 'career capital stagnation'.

As stated earlier, career capital comprises of knowing-how, knowing-why and knowing-whom capabilities. *Knowing-how* career capital includes the skills,

expertise, and tacit and explicit work-related knowledge needed to carry out the job successfully (DeFillippi & Arthur 1994; Inkson & Arthur 2001), and is clearly increased by experience in a new context such as an international assignment (Haslberger & Brewster 2009). The study of Dickmann and Harris (2005) indicated that expatriates obtained intercultural skills and a broader perspective. Further, they reported that expatriates gained listening, negotiation, teamwork, and delegation skills. However, at the same time, an assignee may experience some loss of know-how. Suutari and Mäkelä (2007) have shown that having a broad spectrum of responsibilities, the challenging nature of the global environment, a high level of autonomy, and cross-cultural differences all influence the development of knowing-how career capabilities.

Knowing-why career capital describes the person's sense of purpose, motivation, energy, and identification with the world of work (Inkson & Arthur, 2001), reflecting, for example, the values and interests of the individual. In regard to knowing-why, there is evidence that expatriation may strongly impact an individual's identity and future career aspirations (Kohonen 2005; Muir 2014; Näsholm 2011). An international assignment may challenge an individual's own beliefs, create more self-awareness, and also encourage self-reflection, and lead to better understanding of personal strengths and weaknesses (Dickmann & Harris 2005; Suutari & Mäkelä 2007). Similar findings have been reported concerning self-initiated expatriates (Suutari et al. 2013).

Knowing-whom career capital consists of a range of intrafirm, interfirm, professional, and social relations combined in a network. During international assignments individuals meet with more influential people than they would in the home country (Berthoin Antal 2000; Mäkelä 2007); however, an international assignment may also lead to an 'out of sight, out of mind' syndrome (Stahl & Cerdin 2004) indicating a loss of knowing-whom capital back in the home office (Dickmann & Harris 2005). There are also some studies that have compared the competency development of corporate expatriates, self-initiated expatriates, and global travellers (e.g. Bozkurt & Mohr 2011; Jokinen et al. 2008) and there is evidence that corporate expatriates acquire more knowing-whom capabilities compared to self-initiated expatriates. In addition, it has been shown that the professional and personal networks support promotion to the position of global manager (Cappellen and Janssen 2008) and that global managers benefit from the social capital obtained through their earlier international experiences (Suutari & Mäkelä 2007).

Given that international assignments are known to be crucial for global leadership development, and for the development of career capital, it is relevant

to ask how the development of career capital can be enhanced while abroad? As mentioned in 1.3.3, Dickmann and Harris (2005) have suggested that career capital may be enhanced by coaching or mentoring, and Parker and Arthur (2004) have argued that coaching could facilitate both career and leadership development, and that the framework of career capital could provide an organizing framework for the development. However, as mentioned earlier, no empirical studies on the development of career capital through coaching, which is the focus of article 3, in the expatriate context were found. Consequently, article 3 is positioned in the evolving literature streams of international executive coaching, expatriation and international careers, specifically in the research line that is focused on the development of career capital of expatriates.

3.4 International coaching

In this section I present intercultural theories and prominent coaching models and approaches informing executive coaching in an international context, and review the current stage of international coaching literature. As the concept of culture is seen as central for cross-cultural coaching, I start the discussion with this.

In regard to culture, it has recently emerged in the executive coaching literature as an aspect that needs to be actively considered in the executive coaching process (Athanasopoulou & Dopson 2015). The terms international, cross-cultural, multi-cultural and global are often used identically with respect to coaching. Every coaching assignment is somehow cross-cultural, for the reason that all coaching is impacted by various cultural influences such as, for example, community, team, organization, and nation etc. (Abbott 2010:324- 327; Abbott & Salomaa 2016). For example, Plaister-Ten (2009: 77) has defined cross-cultural coaching as ‘working with awareness of cultural difference and facilitating culturally determined steps’. However, concerning cross-cultural coaching, she argues that ‘the coaching profession may never agree upon a common definition and multi-disciplinary literature does little to provide clarity’ (Plaister-Ten, 2009:77). Further, Booysen (2015:242 - 244) suggests that cross-cultural coaching is a meaning-making process in which the coach helps the coachee to surface and address deeply held beliefs and behaviors arising from cognitive schemas and frameworks. In this process a particular focus is on working with schemas shaped by culture and identity construction that underlie beliefs and behaviors that inhibit a coachee’s performance in his or her current context. Moreover, she posits that cross-cultural coaching is indicated when the coachee has problems managing effectively and some of the issues may be related to

culture, and when the coach is of a different nationality from the coachee and the coachee's co-workers. As recipients who benefit from cross-cultural coaching she mentions: expatriate managers; managers working in international organizations; global managers; managers working in multicultural organizations; and managers working in a merger-and-acquisition environment (Booyesen 2015:242 – 243).

Milner, Ostmeier and Franke (2013) point out that an intercultural component of coaching in regard to the coaching topic should be distinguished from an intercultural component in regard to the players within the coaching process. For example, an American manager may receive coaching in order to be better prepared for a new assignment in Japan, or coaching can be used to assist coachees to develop intercultural skills and capabilities.

Generally, intercultural management theories and intercultural researchers have influenced the field of international coaching, and the understanding of cultural dimensions and values, and being aware of one's own cultural assumptions, are commonly stated as requirements for coaches working internationally (e.g. Petterson 2007; St Claire-Oswald 2007). Further, it has been argued that coaching has largely been driven by Western thinking and business practice (Abbott 2010; Lam 2016; McGill 2010). However, coaching engagements that concentrate only on culture are not useful, because there are also other contextual factors impacting the coaching relationship (Abbott 2010:326). In addition, in cases when the coaching context is cross-cultural, particular coaching needs may also include other topics than cultural issues, for example, due to the fact that the coachee is already experienced in a certain country context. Consequently, coaching approaches that integrate culture into a holistic approach to individual and organizational change are finding favor, one of them being the integral model of Ken Wilber (Abbott, 2010; Amstrong 2009; Bachkirova et al. 2010). As mentioned earlier, this holistic model was utilized in article 2 to categorize coaching literature and as an analytical tool.

Next, I discuss intercultural theories and coaching models and approaches informing executive coaching.

3.4.1 Intercultural theories and coaching frameworks informing international executive coaching

Interculturalists, such as Bennett (1993); Hofstede (1997); Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (2012) and others, have provided different cultural frameworks, which coaches can also draw upon (Abbott 2010:325; Passmore and

Law 2009; Van Niewenburgh 2016). When discussing intercultural theories, it is important to recognize that there is no uniform definition of culture, and it has been defined in several ways. For example, Trompernaars and Hampden-Turner (2012) see it as *'the way a group of people solve problems and reconcile dilemmas'*, whereas Hofstede (1997: 5) defines it as *'the collective programming of the mind which distinguishes the members of one group or category of people from another'*. Further, it has been argued that culture is learned, not innate (Hofstede, Hofstede & Minkov 2010). Culture is also not static – cultural interaction results in some degree of change in the cultures of interacting groups (Abbott 2010:326). Based on Hofstede's theory, cultures can be evaluated and understood by assessing them across five dimensions. Like Hofstede, Hamden-Turner and Trompernaars (2000) have also identified common dimensions across which people tend to vary in response to common challenges faced by groups and communities.

Recently, the concepts of Cultural Intelligence (CQ), the capability for consciousness and awareness during intercultural situations (Ng et al. 2009), and the global mindset (GM), a construct consisting of psychological, social and intercultural capital (Javidan et al. 2010) have also been utilized in some theoretical and empirical coaching papers (see e.g. Abbott et al. 2013; Booysen 2015). In Table 4 below I present prominent cross-cultural coaching models and approaches designed by different coaching scholars. As my intention is to give an overview, this review is not exhaustive.

Table 3. Presentation of models and approaches for cross-cultural coaching

Author and topic	Cross-cultural coaching models and approaches
Rosinski, P. (2003) Coaching across cultures. New tools for leveraging national, corporate & professional differences.	A model adapted from Milton Bennett (1999) and further developed by Rosinski, providing a step-by-step method for advancing the ability to recognize and deal with cross-cultural differences, consisting of 7 approaches for coaches.
Peterson, D.B. (2007) Executive Coaching in a cross-cultural context.	The approach consists of 4 steps: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Search for hidden layers 2. Personalize the approach 3. Orchestrate change in a way best suited to the individual 4. Utilize the 'Development Pipeline' consisting of insight, motivation, capabilities, real-work practice and accountability.
Lindsey, D, B., Martinez, R. S. & Lindsey, R. B. (2007). Culturally Proficient Coaching: Supporting Educators to Create Equitable Schools.	The 'Cultural Proficiency' is seen as a continuum where coaches can be at any point between 'cultural destructiveness' to 'cultural proficiency'. By considering factors along a continuum (cultural destructiveness, cultural incapacity, cultural blindness, cultural precompetence, cultural competence and cultural proficiency), it is possible to evaluate the intercultural sensitivity of coaches and their practice.
Coultas, C.W., Bedwell, W., Burke, C.S. & Salas, E. (2011) Values sensitive coaching: the Delta approach to coaching culturally diverse executives.	The 'DELTA' approach is based in an assumption that coaches may move away from established Western-coaching practices. The model includes: determining cultural values, employing typical coaching techniques, looking and listening for motivational needs and deficiencies, tailoring coaching techniques to motivational needs and cultural values, and assessing the effectiveness of these.
Passmore, J. and Law, H. (2009) Cross cultural and diversity coaching.	The Universal Integrated Framework (UIF) embeds five factors: Continuous professional development; appreciation of the cultural environment; coach fluidity and capacity for integration; cross-cultural emotional intelligence; and communication methods and feedback mechanisms.
Plaister-Ten (2013) Raising culturally-derived awareness and building culturally-appropriate development of the cross-cultural Kaleidoscope.	The cross-cultural Kaleidoscope is based on a systems view of cross-cultural coaching. It calls the coach into a consideration of a variety of contextual factors that have cultural implications (history, economics, geography, legal frameworks, religion, and family). The center of the model includes values and self-awareness.

Rosinski (2003; 2010) was the first to combine cultural theories with coaching by utilizing Bennett's (1983) approach. Originally, Bennett's model consists of six stages of development of intercultural sensitivity. Rosinski (2003) developed Bennett's ideas further for the purpose of cross-cultural coaching and added a seventh stage, which is called 'leveraging differences'. Moreover, Rosinski (2003) also created an assessment questionnaire, Cultural Orientations Framework, COF, which is argued to be useful in cross-cultural coaching settings. The COF has also been used in empirical studies (e.g. Carr & Seto 2013; Rojon & McDovall 2010).

Peterson (2007) describes a coaching model for cross-cultural contexts in which he highlights the understanding of culture in coaches' work. He provides general principles for coaching across cultures, emphasizing the importance of using cross-cultural knowledge as a way of customizing coaching to each person. Further, in his approach he focuses on essential conditions for learning - insight, motivation, capabilities, real-world practice, and accountability - and how cultural differences can influence various steps in the coaching process. The third model presented in the table above, is developed by Lindsey, Martinez, & Lindsey (2007). In their model they present 'cultural proficiency' as a continuum, in which coaches can locate themselves at any point between 'cultural destructiveness to 'cultural proficiency'. According to them, this continuum enables coaches to evaluate their intercultural sensitivity. This approach highlights the continuous learning and development of coaches.

The Delta model by Coultas et al. (2011) proposes a research-based and prescriptive approach to coaching individuals from culturally diverse backgrounds. The model includes five components, which are organized around the acronym 'delta'. Coultas et al. (2011) highlight the awareness and sensitivity to cultural values in their approach. Further, Passmore and Law (2009) have reviewed several models for cross-cultural and diversity coaching. In their article they present the Universal Integrated Framework (UIF) that was originally developed by Law, Ireland and Hussain in 2007 (cited in Passmore & Law 2009). This framework also stresses the continuous professional development for coaches. It includes five aspects, which need to be implemented in practice in order to work successfully in the cross-cultural or diversity context. Moreover, one of the aspects of this model is cross-cultural emotional intelligence, which draws on Goleman's (1995) idea of Emotional Intelligence (EQ). Compared to EQ, the UIF has two extra dimensions: cultural competence and coaching competence with 360-degree feedback.

The last model presented above is the one of Plaister-Ten (2013). In her cross-cultural 'Kaleidoscope' model she highlights the relevance of interacting systems in the cross-cultural context. This model covers a variety of different themes in which both internal and external aspects are seen to impact cross-cultural coaching. According to Plaister-Ten (2013) this model serves primarily as a guide and as an awareness-building tool for coaches.

All in all, there are a variety of intercultural theories and coaching models, which can be utilized by coaches working in international environments and across cultures. These coaching models and approaches have been created recently (2003 -2013), which indicates that coaching follows the current trend of globalization. However, many of these frameworks are still waiting to be tested empirically. It is notable that most of the authors discussing coaching in an international context point out the danger of stereotyping individuals based on generalizations derived from a national culture (Abbott et al. 2013; Filsinger 2014; Passmore & Law, 2009; Plaister-Ten 2009; St Claire-Ostwald 2007). In the next section I move from intercultural theories and coaching frameworks to an overview of international coaching literature.

3.4.2 International coaching literature

In this section my aim is to give an overall picture of the current international coaching literature. In addition to the above discussed theoretical coaching models and frameworks, there are some early stage literature streams exploring some international coaching perspectives, for example, managerial coaching, internationally working coaches, and expatriate coaching. In addition, there are some publications discussing and exploring coaching in a special country context, for example in China and Hong Kong (e.g. Gallo 2015; Lam 2016) and in the Malaysian context (Gan & Chong 2015). Given that coaching is seen to be a Western concept (Lam 2016; McGill 2010), these publications discuss how it is adapted and perceived among local coaches and coachees.

Typically, published cross-cultural coaching approaches and texts are theoretical, although some of them have also been utilized empirically. Many of them have been presented in coaching handbooks as distinct chapters (Bachkirova, Spence & Drake 2016; Cox, Bachkirova & Clutterbuck 2010; Drake, Brennan & Görtz 2008; Riddle, Hoole, & Gullette 2015; Stober & Grant 2006; Wildflower & Brennan 2011), in handbooks devoted to coaching and mentoring psychology (Law 2013; Passmore, Peterson & Freire 2013; Palmer & Whybrow 2014), and in some books devoted to cross-cultural coaching and diversity issues (Rosinski 2003; 2010; Moral & Abbott 2009; Passmore 2009; Stout Rostron 2009).

Further, very recently, the number of cross-cultural coaching papers has also increased in peer-reviewed journals, the majority of them being empirical papers studying cross-cultural coaching from the coach's perspective. The existing body of empirical articles consists mostly of qualitative papers and small sample sizes.

Although the present study does not focus on managerial coaching, there are some studies that have been conducted in an international context and are therefore worthwhile mentioning. So far, most of the published empirical studies on managerial coaching have been comparative studies, which have focused on managerial coaching issues and outcomes between two or more countries (Beattie et al. 2014; Hamling, Ellinger & Beattie 2006; Kim, Egan and Moon 2013; Noer, Leupold and Valle 2007). Vance and Paik 's (2005) research that explored several forms of host country national learning, indicated that it would be useful for host country nationals to receive training on how to coach their expatriates and help them to avoid costly errors due to their cultural unfamiliarity with the host country and company environment. Further, in a recent literature review, Filsinger (2014) looked at managerial, virtual coaching in a cross-cultural context. She concluded that further research is needed in the areas of manager-as-coach relationship, coaching across cultures, and coaching virtually.

As stated above, there are a growing number of empirical articles focusing on coaches working in cross-cultural contexts. For example, Plaister-Ten (2009) examined how 25 coaches conceptualize culture in coaching. She argues that there are certain key qualities that a cross-cultural coach draws on: challenging assumptions, remaining open, cultural self-awareness, and coping with ambiguity. Further, Milner, Ostmeier and Franke (2013) studied critical incidents experienced by German coaches in a cross-cultural coaching context. They found that communication, the coach-client relationship, the coaching setting, and role understanding were perceived as critical. Furthermore, Wilson (2013) studied the global mindset (GM) construct of cross-culturally working coaches, and concluded that the development of GM is a transformative and developmental experience that coaches will increasingly need to understand and tackle in order to manage the growing complexities of a globally interconnected world.

Given that Asia is on the rise as a coaching market, there are already some empirical studies conducted in the Asian context. Nangalia and Nangalia (2010) conducted an exploratory case study of how social hierarchy impacts the coaching relationship in Asia. Based on their study, they presented a framework for cultural adaptation when working with Asian coachees that is useful for cross-

culturally working coaches. They suggest, for example, that Asians see their coaches as respected teachers who are expected to provide guidance, and compared to Western coaching, more time is needed for creation of a trusting relationship so that the actual coaching can be started. Chatwani (2015) discusses the cultural approach and characteristics of the Indian context in coaching. According to Chatwani, the cross-cultural coach, on the one hand, needs an acute level of self-awareness and cultural sensitivity, and on the other hand, needs to avoid a perspective that all coaching issues are culturally imbued.

In summary, as can be seen from the above discussion, previous literature has explored coaching skills needed in cross-cultural settings and the environmental factors of a particular cultural context impacting cross-cultural coaching. Also, an emerging research stream of expatriate coaching exists, something which is of importance for this dissertation and I therefore review separately in the next section.

3.4.3 Expatriate coaching

Although coaching is recommended to international assignees (e.g. Booyesen 2015; Mendenhall 2006), expatriate coaching research is not well developed (Abbott 2006; Herbolzheimer 2009; McGill 2010). For example, McGill (2010) argues that executive coaching seems to be primarily limited to domestic organizations and although it is heavily referenced, many of its claims lack a vigorous evidentiary validation.

Most of the papers concerning expatriate coaching are theoretical. Many papers focusing on expatriate coaching have discussed the issues of adjustment and the benefits of coaching compared to the traditionally used development and support interventions such as mentoring and training for expatriates (see e.g. Chmielecki 2009). Also, Abbott et al. (2006) highlight that although a mentoring relationship has several benefits, a mentor is often not on the ground with the expatriate. Further, his/her leadership style may not be appropriate and his/her foreign experience may be from a totally different cultural context compared to where the assignee is.

Moreover, it is suggested that executive coaching may be effective for assignees because it shares essential features with a successful expatriate acculturation experience. This argument has been explained through the ABC (affective, behavioral, cognitive) model of acculturation by Ward et al. (2001) and the coaching model of Grant (2002) and Grant and Greene (2001), in which change is viewed as an interaction of situational, behavioral, affective and cognitive

influences. Through the interaction of these factors, clients develop their professional and personal goals, and from those goals they develop actions. It is posited that both acculturation and coaching processes operate interactively across the individual's affective, behavioral and cognitive domains (Abbott 2006; Abbott et al. 2006; Abbott & Stening 2009).

As it is known that an expatriate assignment may be daunting for couples and their families, Miser and Miser (2009) discuss theoretically the benefits of couples coaching in the expatriate context. They suggest that a coach can assist couples, for example in problem solving, and redesigning roles and responsibilities.

There are also scholars who discuss the limitations of expatriate coaching. I review them next.

The limitations of expatriate coaching are portrayed in several issues. For example, Abbot et al. (2006) suggest that some managers do not respond to coaching for a variety of reasons. Further, they also posit that there is a risk of a dependent relationship between the coach and the client that might inhibit acculturation. In addition, the time when an expatriate is under most stress, often in early assignment, may not be the right time for coaching. Moreover, there might be a lack of skilled coaches available in developing countries. It is also argued that the high cost of coaching may be a limitation. There is also some empirical evidence (Herbolzheimer 2009) in regard to limitations of coaching in the expatriate context: lack of commitment on behalf of coachees and the cases where counseling is indicated (referral to medical or psychological services).

Herbolzheimer (2009), drawing on earlier German coaching literature, also argues that the amount of time associated with coaching processes has been found to be a barrier to the usage of coaching. Further, a low degree of publicity has an influence on how much expatriate coaching is requested. Although expatriate coaching could supplement or replace cross-cultural training or other support interventions, HR representatives are not familiar with coaching, nor have the power to implement it (Herbolzheimer 2009). In addition, it may be seen as a 'career killer', because some expatriates may think that coaching might be a reason for not being promoted.

Moreover, administrative burdens also exist. HR professionals find it challenging to find qualified coaches. As coaching is not a registered designation, the market is full of various kinds of service providers who offer their services under the

umbrella of 'coaching' (Herbolzheimer 2009). Additionally, although McGill (2010; see also Ng cited in Passmore 2009) argues, based on his study in China, that executive coaching has great potential for supporting and developing both Western and Non-Western international managers, he posits that there might be some limitations because coaching has been derived from Western concepts and practices, which could be culturally at odds with Chinese or Asian cultures. Further, coaching language (assuming it is English and coachees are both Westerners and host-country nationals) may unfairly benefit the Western managers over the local managers.

Next, I review the four previous empirical studies on expatriate coaching found in the literature review.

As stated earlier, given that empirical expatriate coaching articles were not found in peer-reviewed journals, the search also covered also PhD dissertations and peer-reviewed conference papers in the English language. In Table 5 below I present an overview of the four empirical studies found in the literature review focusing on expatriate coaching. They are also discussed in articles 2 and 3. Three of the studies are PhD dissertations (Abbott 2006; Herbolzheimer 2009; McGill 2010) and one is a conference paper (Abbott 2011) using the same data as Abbott (2006). Qualitative approaches were applied in all these studies. Given that in the three previous expatriate coaching studies the researcher has been in the role of the coach (Abbott 2006; 2011; McGill 2010), two of the studies have been China specific (Herbolzheimer 2009; McGill 2010), and two conducted in the Central-American context (Abbott 2006; 2011), it is evident that more evidence is needed.

Table 4. An overview of the empirical expatriate coaching studies

Author & name and year of the contribution	Focus	Source of data	Research approach
Abbott, G. N. (2006). Exploring evidence- based executive coaching as an intervention to facilitate expatriate acculturation: Fifteen case studies.	Explore acculturation of expatriates facilitated by coaching in Central America.	15 case studies.	Qualitative, action-research approach, where the researcher worked in the role of an executive coach.
Herbolzheimer, A. (2009) Coaching Expatriates. The Practice and Potential of Expatriate Coaching for European Executives in China.	Explore what does the expatriate coaching look like and what is the potential of expatriate coaching in China.	31 Semi-structured interviews consisting of HR experts, expatriates and coaches.	Qualitative approach, global and circular analysis.
McGill IV, J. O. (2010). The impact of executive coaching on the performance management of international managers in China.	Explore the impact of executive coaching on the development and performance of expatriates and host country nationals in China individually and as a part of a management team.	11 cases	Qualitative, action-research approach, where the researcher worked in the role of an executive coach.
Abbott, N.G. (2011) Executive based coaching with expatriates: Evidence from the field revisited in the light of a cognitive revolution in international management.	Explore evidence-based executive coaching as a means of supporting and developing expatriate executives through the facilitation of cognitive complexity and meta-cognition.	3 cases	Qualitative, action-research approach, where the researcher worked in the role of an executive coach.

The first study that explored expatriate coaching (Abbott 2006) utilized the action research approach, where the researcher also worked in the role of the coach in the Central American context. Abbott (2006) explored acculturation of expatriates through executive coaching and found that coaching resulted both in improved performance and in improved satisfaction of expatriates. The second study conducted by Herbolzheimer (2009) adapted a global circular analysis and was China specific. Herbolzheimer investigated what expatriate coaching looks

like and what its potential is in China. She found that expatriate coaching could, for example, provide customized support for assignees. Further, it could act as a source of feedback and deal with a broad range of issues. Moreover, she argues that expatriate coaching could replace or supplement intercultural training and facilitate the expatriate's change of perspectives as well as promote attitude and behavior change in them. Furthermore, she also found that expatriate coaching could accelerate the assignee's effectiveness.

McGill's study (2010) was the first exploration of executive coaching for international managers of a single organization, where the participants were a mixture of Western assignees and non-Western host country nationals in China. This action research study indicated that executive coaching enhanced leadership development, increasing happiness and confidence, as well as decreasing stress. The last study presented in Table 5 above (Abbott 2011) explored executive coaching as a means of supporting and developing expatriate managers through the facilitation of cognitive complexity and metacognition. He found that executive coaching enhanced both cultural intelligence and the global mindset of expatriates.

In summary, these earlier studies indicate that expatriate coaching is an efficient intervention for expatriates, but there is a lack of empirical, published research focusing on expatriate coaching. Compared to these earlier studies, the present study applies two different methodological approaches (IPA and narrative analysis) and investigates expatriate coaching from two novel perspectives (antecedents of expatriate coaching's success factors and development of career capital through executive coaching of assignees). The first study of this PhD thesis focuses on executive coaching's implementation in GTM programs. However, the phenomena of GTM and expatriation are overlapping and should be integrated as argued recently by several scholars (Caligiuri & Bonache 2016; Cerdin & Brewster 2014; Collings 2014). Further, given that the data for this study was collected from different nationalities in various countries, it differs from the previous ones in that it does not have a specific country context.

4 METHODOLOGICAL CHOICES

In this chapter I present the methodology chosen for this dissertation and describe the research settings. I begin with a discussion of the chosen paradigm, present the researcher's background, and proceed to outline the arguments for the use of qualitative research approaches adopted in this study. Further, I discuss the chosen methods, the research process, data collecting, analyzing and evaluating processes.

4.1 Philosophical standpoints of the dissertation

It is argued that researchers' basic beliefs and worldviews lie behind their theoretical perspective (Andrade 2009; Cuba & Lincoln 1994), and that the research methodology justifies, guides and evaluates the research method, which produces the data and analysis (Carter & Little 2007). In this study I take that the reality is socially constructed, and that the researchers are the vehicles by which different realities may be revealed (Andrade 2009; Cavana, Delahay & Sekaran 2001). In this study I understand that knowledge is relational, sustained by social processes, through interactions and language use (Burr 2015; Dachler & Hodkingson 1995; Eriksson & Kovalainen 2008; Mäkelä 2009). Further, I assume that there is no single interpretative truth, and that there may be several possible interpretations of the same data (Denzin & Lincoln 2011:13,15; Eriksson & Kovalainen 2008; Gergen 1999). Denzin and Lincoln (2011:101) define the paradigms in positivism, postpositivism, critical, constructivist or interpretative, and participatory, and following them this study is positioned ontologically and epistemologically in the constructivist-interpretative paradigm (Denzin & Lincoln 2011:13). In general, in the constructivist-interpretative paradigm the usual positivist criteria of internal and external validity, reliability and objectivity (Denzin & Lincoln 2011:13) are replaced by other criteria more suitable for qualitative inquiries. Moreover, researchers in this paradigm attempt to gain increased knowledge regarding their study and subjects by interpreting how the subjects perceive and interact within a social context (Lincoln & Cuba 2011:110).

These various philosophical positions form a kind of a continuum from positivistic to interpretative approaches (e.g. see the table in Lincoln, Lynham & Cuba 2011:100), and although my overall approach in this study can be seen as interpretative, the first article of this thesis can be located near critical realism along the continuum. Critical realism agrees with positivists that there is an

observable world independent of human consciousness. At the same time, it suggests that knowledge about the world is socially constructed (Eriksson & Kovalainen 2008:19). During the early stages of my PhD journey I was influenced by both positivistic and interpretative ideas and moved at later stages of my studies toward more interpretative practices.

Although it is stated that qualitative research is fundamentally interpretative in nature (Creswell 2003), qualitative and interpretative research are not equivalent terms. Interpretative research is viewed as a subset of qualitative research (Klein & Myers 1999; Prasad & Prasad 2002:5). The philosophical base of interpretative and constructionist research is in hermeneutics, referring to the necessary condition of interpretation and understanding as part of the research process, and in phenomenology, a philosophy that has influenced social constructionism and is concerned with subjective and shared meanings (Eriksson & Kovalainen 2008:19). Contemporary interpretative research is committed to the broad philosophy of social construction, first introduced by Berger and Luckmann in 1967 (Prasad & Prasad 2002:6), and generally draws its influences from a number of disciplines such as philosophy, sociology and linguistics (Burr 2015: 12 – 17; Eriksson & Kovalainen 2008). Social constructionism comprises various strands: interpretivism, pragmatism and symbolic interactionism (Mead 1934).

There are four basic assumptions of social constructionism: 1) It takes a critical stance towards taken-for-granted knowledge, trying to open it up for discussion. It is assumed that the world does not present itself objectively to the observer, but is known through human experience, which is mediated by language; 2) The categories in language that are used to classify things around us are produced through social interaction within a group of individuals at a particular time and in a particular place; 3) Knowledge is sustained by social processes and conventions of communication; and 4) Knowledge and social action go together (Burr 1995; 2015; Eriksson & Kovalainen 2008: 20).

Given that social constructionism's focus is on relationship, language, meaning making, and the narrative, it is particularly relevant to coaching theory and practice (Harsch-Porter 2011:81), and therefore also for this study. Further, an interpretative approach is useful in this study because it is argued to provide a deep insight into 'the complex world of lived experience from the point of view of those who live it' (Schwandt 1994: 118). In this view the goal of research is to rely as much as possible on the participant's view of the situation. The more open-ended the questioning, the better, as the researcher listens carefully to what participants say (Creswell 2013). This principle also applies to coaching and to my approach in the interviews of this study. Further, the researcher recognizes

that their own background shapes their interpretation and they intend to make sense of the meanings others have about the world. Also, this idea has relevance in coaching, and I understand that my coaching background has impacted my research efforts and that as a coach and as a researcher I must be aware of my own assumptions. Consequently, I discuss my background next.

4.2 Researcher's background

Given that qualitative researchers stress the socially constructed nature of reality, the intimate relationship between the researcher and what is studied (Denzin & Lincoln 2011), it is clear that my background has influenced this dissertation. Further, it is argued that in good qualitative research researchers should specify their personal perspective relevant to the research (Elliott et al. 1999). Since I have over 10 years of experience in executive coaching practice, and a coaching-specific educational background, it means that I have a personal relationship with the phenomenon of coaching, and this has brought both benefits and bias.

The driving force of this PhD thesis has been my curiosity and the need for self-development. My interest in international topics was evoked already in my childhood, and my curiosity led me also to studies during which I conducted several international university-level courses abroad. Further, I also worked abroad and across borders. In 2004, an American coaching company approached me, introducing me to the idea of coaching, and I participated in an individual coaching program. I became a coach, but many questions remained open. Learning the basics of coaching did not answer the questions 'Why does coaching work?' 'What are the principles of effective coaching?' or 'How does the international context impact coaching?' Therefore, I started systematically to educate myself as a coach. I studied change management and work psychology, completed an ICF accredited coach training program, and continued my studies at the Fielding Graduate University's Evidence-Based-Coaching Program in the U.S. Finally, my interests led me to this PhD journey.

My coaching background helped me in several ways in conducting this research project. Through my professional network I got access to interview participants. Further, I was familiar with evidence-based coaching literature and knew where to search for new information. As an experienced coach, I also had a practical understanding of coaching. Moreover, my interview participants had experienced coaching from different perspectives, and thanks to my background, we could understand each other easily. Being able to gain trust secured the collection of rich data on their coaching experiences. Given that in social constructionism

language is recognized as a core process, and words are by-products of social relationships and do not exist independent of the people who use them (McNee & Gergen 1999), it was through using coaching skills and open-ended questions in the interviews that the interview participants and I co-created the stories that serve as data for this study.

On the other hand, my background may be also a source of bias as I may have taken some assumptions for granted. To avoid bias, I chose to study coaching processes that were conducted by other coaches, and during the analyzing and reporting phases I checked my findings and conclusions several times with literature. Also, the analyzing and writing process of article 3 together with a researcher who had a non-coaching background was very helpful in order to avoid bias. I will next discuss why I chose qualitative approaches and how the chosen methods are linked with each other.

4.3 Interpretative and narrative approaches

In this section I argue why I chose to utilize qualitative approaches. I start with a discussion of the benefits of qualitative approaches in the international research context and move on to a discussion of the specific methods.

Van Maanen (1983: 9) has defined qualitative methods as ‘procedures for coming to terms with the meaning not the frequency of a phenomenon by studying it in its social context’. In general, qualitative research is inherently multi-method in focus (Flick 2002; Denzin & Lincoln 2011:5), and it privileges no single method over another. In addition, it does not belong to a single discipline, nor does it have a distinct set of methods or practices that are entirely its own, but it can be understood as a set of complex interpretative practices. Methodologically, I have adopted three different, but linked qualitative approaches, which contribute to the rich and multifold understanding of the phenomena I studied: an explorative multiple-case study in which thematic content analysis was utilized (article 1); an Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) (article 2); and a narrative analysis (article 3).

In regard to coaching literature, there is evidence that the combination of qualitative and quantitative methods has been the most frequent research design in coaching outcome studies (Athanasopoulou & Dopson 2015:82), qualitative studies forming the second biggest body of research papers. Also, case studies have been popular among executive coaching’s researchers in general (Athanasopoulou & Dopson 2015; Joo 2005). For example, in the *International Journal of Evidence Based Coaching and Mentoring*, which is one of the coaching

specific peer-reviewed journals, empirical research is predominantly qualitative, with grounded theory, interpretative and heuristic phenomenology providing the overall framework, and interviews and case studies the commonest methods used (McCarthy 2015). Concerning coaching research in the international context, the previous studies, to date, have utilized different qualitative approaches. Given that it is argued that qualitative research methods are especially suited for studying individualized interventions such as coaching (Passmore & Theebom 2015), and that the constructivist- interpretative approach has a natural appeal to coaches who in their work are interpreting and helping others in the world around them (McCarthy 2015), I chose to follow this qualitative tradition in this study.

Generally, it has been argued that qualitative approaches have several benefits when compared to quantitative approaches in international business and management research (Marschan-Piekkari & Welch 2004), and I assume that these arguments also apply for this study. First, given that international business lacks the sophisticated theory development of a mature discipline, it requires more exploratory and theory-generating research rather than empirical testing. This is certainly also true for international coaching research, which is not matured (Abbott et al. 2013; Booyesen 2015). Second, qualitative research allows for deeper cross-cultural understanding than quantitative approaches, and is less likely to suffer from cultural bias than survey instruments. Third, qualitative research takes a more holistic approach to the research object and studies the phenomenon in its context. Fourth, qualitative research's benefit is that it goes beyond the measurement of observable behavior (the what), and seeks to understand the meaning and beliefs underlying action (the why) (Marshan-Piekkari & Welch 2004: 7 – 8). After discussing these general aspects of qualitative approaches that have influenced my choices in this study, I move on to the chosen methods.

4.3.1 Explorative multiple case-study approach

Qualitative case study research is understood to be a research strategy that addresses complex organizational, managerial, and other business issues, which are considered difficult to study with quantitative methods (Ghauri & Grønhaug 2005:171). Further, Ghauri (2004:109) posits that a case study is both the process of learning about the case and the product of our learning. I chose a multiple-case study approach, because it is expected to advance our understanding of the research phenomenon (Ghauri 2004:109), and because it enabled a deep exploration and understanding of the experiences of key HR

professionals responsible for coaching in the studied MNCs. Further, this method is justified, because it is argued to be useful when the area of research is relatively unknown, and when 'how' or 'why' questions need to be answered (Benbasat et al. 1987; Yin 1994). In addition, a case study allows a holistic (Benbasat et al. 1987) research approach. In this study the research boundaries were set by time and activity (Baxter & Jack 2008; Stake 1995) to include coaching activities conducted between 2000 and 2013 in the chosen MNCs in article 1. Further, the method is argued to be appropriate when the research focus is on a current phenomenon in a real-life context (Ghauri 2004; Ghauri & Grönhaug 2005), as the case was in this first pilot study. Moreover, scholars (Ghauri 2004; Marschan-Piekkari & Welch 2011) argue that the case study is well suited for international business research because it can capture the complexity of cross-border – and cultural settings, and contribute to the evolving areas of inquiry. Moreover, it is argued that case studies can get closer to theoretical constructions and provide much more persuasive arguments about causal forces than broad empirical research can (Siggelkow 2007: 22 – 23). Furthermore, both Stake (1995) and Yin (2003) base their approach to case study on a constructivist paradigm (Baxter and Jack 2008).

Concerning coaching literature, qualitative case study approach has been previously applied in coaching research, for example by Abbott (2006) who utilized 15 individual case studies in the Central American context, and by McGill (2010), whose study focused on a single case study of one organization in China. In contrast to the present study, both of them applied an action research approach.

4.3.2 Exploratory Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA)

Interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) is a qualitative research approach committed to the examination of how people make sense of their major life experiences (Smith, Flowers & Larkin 2009), and it has been developed as a distinctive approach to conducting qualitative research in psychology, offering a theoretical foundation and a detailed procedural guide. As such, it has been already utilized in a burgeoning number of published studies. It is today utilized in disciplines in the human, health and social sciences (Brocki & Wearder 2006:87; Smith et al. 2009). Previously, IPA has also been applied in coaching research, for example by: Gyllensten and Palmer (2007), who studied the experiences of cognitive coaching; Gyllensten et al. (2011), whose study focused on a number of participants' experiences of cognitive coaching; and in cross-cultural coaching research by Plaister-Ten (2009), who explored the possibility

that the coach can facilitate the understanding of cultural worldviews in the coaching relationship. In addition, IPA has been applied in expatriation research (Fitzgerald & Howe-Walsh 2008).

It is stated that phenomenological knowledge reforms understanding and leads to more thoughtful action through constructionism: '...all knowledge, and therefore all meaningful reality as such, is contingent upon human practices being constructed in and out of interaction between human beings and their world, and developed and transmitted within an essentially social context' (Crotty 1998). IPA is held to be phenomenological, because it is concerned with exploring experience in its own terms (Smith et al. 2009:1 – 4), and therefore it is aligned with my view of a socially constructed world. IPA is also seen as an interpretative endeavor, which is informed by hermeneutics, the theory of interpretation. In IPA the human beings are seen as sense-making creatures, and therefore the accounts that interview participants provide reflect their attempts to make sense of their experiences. Further, IPA recognizes that access to experience is always dependent on what participants tell the researcher about their experience, and that the researcher needs then to interpret the narration in order to understand it. Moreover, IPA is idiographic, because it is committed to the detailed examination of the particular case. It wants to know what the experience for this person is like, and what sense this particular person is making of what is happening to them (Smith et al. 2012:1 – 4).

There are several reasons why an IPA approach can be considered to be an appropriate method for studying the factors impacting expatriate coaching's success, which was my focus in article 2. First, I adopted IPA for this study, because this approach has been recommended for use in coaching research by Passmore and Fillery-Travis (2011). According to them, IPA can help us to understand the richness of human interactions in coaching at a deeper level. Second, IPA is argued to be especially useful in cases with complexity, process or novelty (Smith & Osborn 2003). Executive coaching is a process and expatriate coaching is an emerging area of research, and based on my literature review the factors impacting its success had not been explored previously in the expatriate context. Third, IPA is argued to be a recognized method of qualitative research (Fade 2004; Passmore & Fillery-Travis 2011). Given that there are considerable variations in quality and rigor of the methods used in coaching research (McDowall & Short 2011; Peterson 2011:551), it was important for me to choose an approach that is recommended for coaching research and is seen as a rigorous method.

4.3.3 Narrative analysis

Narrative research is the study of stories and over the last three decades the concept of narrative has successfully travelled from literature into several new disciplines such as social sciences, law, psychology, theology and health studies (Hyvärinen 2006; Polkinghorne 2007). Narrative analysis in the human sciences refers to a family of approaches to diverse kinds of texts, which have in common a storied form (Riessman 2005:1). The roots of narrative research in social sciences commonly lay in social constructionism (Eriksson & Kovalainen 2008), and there are several methods and techniques of making narrative research (Eriksson & Kovalainen 2008:217; Riessman 2000). The language is seen as central in narratives and narrative knowing (Eriksson & Kovalainen 2008; Harsh-Porter 2011).

Polkinghorne (1995) has made a distinction between analysis of narratives and narrative analysis. Analysis of narratives means that the researcher collects stories and then uses techniques to analyze its plots, narrative structures, or story types, whereas when doing narrative analysis, the researcher organizes and interprets one or more narratives, and interprets and discusses them (Eriksson & Kovalainen 2008: 217). This study follows the latter method and adopts an experience-centered approach to narratives (Squire 2008), in which a narrative or a story are understood to be 'texts which bring stories of personal experience into being by means of the first person oral narration of past, present, future or imaginary experience' (Patterson 2008). Given that in this view narratives, among other things, display transformation or change and represent experience (Squire 2008), the experience-centered approach is well suited for exploring the development of career capital through coaching in the expatriate context. Generally, it is seen that narratives are the means of human sense-making, and are jointly told between writer and reader, speaker and hearer (Ricour 1991). The assumption is that experience can, through stories, become a part of consciousness and that the context of a narrative plays an important role. Further, the experience-centered approach aims at full interpretation and understanding rather than structural analysis (Squire 2008).

Generally, several arguments favor a narrative approach for studying transitions. First, narrative approach is argued to be well suited for studies of change processes, such as international career transitions, and it is also suggested that stories are highly relevant for the study of careers (Cohran 1990; Cohen & Mallon 2001; Savickas 2001; Bujold 2004). A narrative may be a description of a specific event or process (Flick 2002), such as a coaching process in this context. Second, many narrative scholars posit that the narrative approach may reveal issues that

would not be exposed by using other methods. Third, several scholars suggest that a narrative approach can be very well implemented in management and organizational research (Czarniawska 1997; Boje 2001), and used as a tool in international business research (Gertsen & Söderberg 2011). Fourth, stories that people tell about their lives are also of importance in coaching (Stelter 2013), and therefore it is in line with this study. Moreover, it has been argued that there is an intimate connection between the ways in which people see themselves, the ways they narrate their daily life, and the ways in which they behave. Stories are suggested to be the perfect avenue for exploring these connections because the images they bring to the surface provide material that is indicative of opportunities for inner development and a resource for changing external behavior (Drake 2010:121).

Although narrative approaches in coaching practice are discussed and recommended widely in coaching handbooks (e.g. Stelter 2013), empirical coaching research papers utilizing narrative analysis are scarce. Den Outer (2010) studied coaching and transitions and analyzed seven international students' narratives in order to learn what opportunities a narrative inquiry approach has to offer for use in cross-cultural coaching practice. In addition, in the expatriate context narrative approaches have been previously utilized, for example, in studies exploring identity construction (Kohonen 2007; Muir 2014; Näsholm 2011).

Having discussed the methodical issues of this study, I now present the research process in the next section.

4.4 Research process

In this section I discuss the different stages of the research process of this dissertation. Given that it is recommended to explain how the findings are built (Saunders & Rojon 2014), I start from discussing general aspects of the research process, move on to explain data collection, and then discuss the data analyzing and evaluating processes of this dissertation.

This research process started in May 2010, when I was officially accepted to the doctoral program of the University of Vaasa' Business School, and it ended in August 2016 by completing this entire research report. A qualitative research process is rarely straightforward and linear (Eriksson & Kovalainen 2008), and, in this case too, I moved back and forth during the different phases of the process. This applies also to each of the studies. As I stated earlier, at the beginning of the empirical phase (article 1) of this dissertation I was also

influenced by positivistic ideas, after which I moved on to more interpretative practices (articles 2 and 3). Further, in regard to how I gained knowledge during the process, there are two basic modes of social science research: deduction and induction (Eriksson & Kovalainen 2008). I used both induction and deduction in different phases of a research process (Eriksson & Kovalainen 2008:21).

Given that Alasuutari (1999) argues that qualitative research is a textual process, that requires continuous writing, and that writing is the most important part of a research process, it was through reading and writing literature reviews and conceptual papers that I found the three different conceptual frameworks used in the studies of this dissertation: the Coaching Continuum Stage Model (Peterson & Little 2008 cited in Peterson 2011); the Integral Coaching Framework of Ken Wilber (Bachkirova et al., 2010) (article 2); and the Career Capital Framework (Inkson & Arthur, 2001) (article 3). Aligned with Eriksson and Kovalainen (2008), I see methods as both practical tools for the analysis of the empirical data and as frameworks for engaging with empirical analysis of data. Further, the data gathering and analysis were very closely related and interwoven with each other. Next, I describe data collection procedures.

4.4.1 Data collection

I collected data in two phases between January 2012 and May 2013. Initially, my aim was to collect data so that it would provide material for analysis in all three studies at the same time, but given that the first study (article 1) was focused on a HR perspective, I needed more data and a second round of data collection was appropriate.

Although the purpose of the studies was not statistical generalization, I utilized purposive sampling (Advice 2000). I used snowball and network sampling techniques (Patton 1990), my personal contacts to some MNCs, and groups found in LinkedIn. I had some challenges in collecting data, because some coaches did not want to provide contacts to their clients. In addition, some HR professionals were so busy that, although they promised to participate in the study and also provide contacts to the coached assignees of their organizations, they never showed up when the empirical phase of the study began. Two international coaching journals published my request to find interview participants for a PhD research project in their webpages and through them I got some interview participants.

The main body of data consists of semi-structured interviews (N=28), in which I utilized open-ended questioning (Creswell 2013). Given that the first study is a

multiple-case study, I collected also company specific written documents. I prepared an interview guide (Daniels & Cannice 2004), which covered the main themes. In the interviews I directed attention toward themes, but I gave the interview participants lot of space to tell their own stories. Further, I did some pilot interviews in order to test my interview techniques.

I gathered data from three different stakeholder groups who had been personally involved in coaching: 1) coached international managers, who had been in one, two or several international assignments; 2) internationally working coaches; and 3) HR professionals responsible for coaching in MNCs. In regard to coached managers, they had been on different kinds of assignments. Among them were traditional expatriates, short term, and self-initiated expatriates. Most of the interviewed participants were in the age group of 40 – 55 years, because they were in senior roles.

Given that the objective of qualitative research is to sample the range of views (Gaskell 2000: 41), I used these different stakeholder groups in order to gain a multifold understanding of the phenomenon under investigation. As the table below illustrates, I interviewed HR professionals of the chosen MNCs for article 1. These interviews were focused on the implementation of coaching in GTM programs, and the study participants had been in critical roles while coaching was implemented in their organizations. The majority of the data consists of 28 interviews covering all three stakeholder groups (article 2), from which I excluded the interviews that were focused only in the HR perspective needed for the article 1. For article 3 I used six stories of coached expatriates, which were specifically interesting and rich, and therefore suitable for a narrative study (article 3). The details and demographics of the interview participants are presented below.

Table 5. Demographics of interview participants of the study

EXPATRIATES						Used in article
Position	Nationality	Industry	Location	Gender	Age group	
Managing Director	American	Pharmaceutical industry	Japan/ Korea	Male	40 – 55	2 and 3
Director	Finnish	Pharmaceutical industry	Switzerland	Female	40 – 55	2 and 3
Managing Director	Finnish	Pharmaceutical industry	USA	Male	40 – 55	2
Director R & D	Finnish	Mechanical Engineering	Italy	Male	40 -55	2 and 3
Senior Manager	German	Telecommunication	Finland	Male	40 – 55	2 and 3
Head of Planning & Development	Finnish	Telecommunication	India	Female	40 -55	2
Vice President	Canadian	Semiconductors	Japan	Male	40 – 55	2 and 3
Head of Audit	French	Banking	Japan	Male	40 – 55	2 and 3
Vice President	American	IT	Finland	Male	40 – 55	2
COACHES						
External	Finnish	Coaching	Switzerland	Female	40 – 55	2
External	Romanian- British	Coaching	Switzerland	Female	40 – 55	2
Internal coach and Executive Director	Canadian	Higher education	Qatar	Male	40 – 55	2
External	American	Coaching	Japan	Male	40 – 55	2
External	American	Coaching	Switzerland	Female	55 – 65	2
External	American	Coaching	Switzerland	Female	55 – 65	2
External	Venezuelan	Coaching	Finland	Male	40 – 55	2

HR PROFESSIONALS						
HR Business Partner, internal coach	Finnish	IT	Finland	Female	40 – 55	2
Manager, Learning and Development	Dutch	Mechanical engineering	Netherlands	Female	40 – 55	1 and 2
Director, Learning and Development	Finnish	Mechanical engineering	Finland	Male	40 - 55	1
Senior Leadership Consultant, internal coach	Danish	Banking	Denmark	Male	40 – 55	1 and 2
Senior Leadership Consultant, internal and external coach	Finnish	Banking	Finland	Female	25 - 40	1
Senior Manager, ex. Senior Leadership Consultant, internal coach	Finnish	Banking	Finland	Female	40 - 55	1
HR Director	Finnish	Pharmaceutical industry	Finland	Female	40 – 55	1 and 2
HR Director Asia Pacific	Finnish	Mechanical engineering	Singapore	Male	40 – 55	1 and 2
HR Business Partner, internal coach	Finnish	IT	Finland	Female	40 – 55	2
Vice President, HR, internal coach	Finnish	IT	Finland	Female	40 – 55	2
Country HR Manager, internal coach	Finnish	Hospital & Healthcare industry	Finland	Female	40 – 55	1 and 2
Senior HR Director, internal coach	American	Hospital & Healthcare industry	USA	Female	40 - 55	1 and 2

I conducted the in-depth interviews of coached managers in most cases retrospectively, after the actual coaching had ended. In the data collection and analysis I respected the ethical principles for research as discussed by Eriksson

and Kovalainen (2008:62 – 76). In a pre-interview email details of the research process, of the interviewer and of the interview were given to all of the interviewees. In cases where the nomination of the possible interview participant was made by the HR department, it was highlighted that the participation was voluntary. The interview participants were informed that I was interested in their coaching experiences, and in regard to HR professionals, also in their experiences of the implementation of coaching. I informed all interview participants that I had studied and practiced coaching. At the outset of the interview, I gave the interview participants an opportunity to ask questions about my background and the research process, and asked for a permission to record the interview. I recorded all the interviews. Further, I ensured that the collected data was treated anonymously and confidentially, and that the participants had an opportunity to check the transcription of their interview (Marschan-Piekkari & Reiss 2004; McMillan & Schumacher 2006). I tailored open-ended interview questions according to the different stakeholder groups mostly in the interview situation. The average duration of the interviews was 45 – 60 minutes.

Given that cross-cultural interviews are very context specific as acts of communication (Marshan-Piekkari & Reis 2004), I was aware that my language skills and those of the interview participants, and virtual data gathering might impact the quality of the data. Therefore, I interviewed most of the Finnish participants in Finnish in a face-to-face setting, and used English in all the other interviews. Many of the interview participants were American, some Canadian, and practically all other participants spoke English very well, because English was their official company language, and because these individuals were in senior roles, and worked internationally. Further, for quality reasons, I used a native English speaker for the English transcriptions. The transcriptions included the words, but not any non-verbal features, because the chosen analyzing approaches did not require it. Given that the interview participants were located in many different countries, I interviewed some of the participants using Skype, some over the telephone and some via conference equipment. A few of these recordings posed minor technical difficulties, and as a result, a word or some sentences were not audible and they could not be transcribed verbatim. However, despite these small challenges, I was able to analyze all transcriptions.

My role in the interview situation was to ask open-ended questions and to offer some response-tokens (Silverman 1993) such as ‘mmm’ or laughs in order to show that I was listening to and interested in what the interview participant said. I also used questions such as ‘anything else?’ to keep the interviewee thinking and talking. Given that I interviewed coached managers, and coaches, they were used to this kind of communication, and shared willingly their experiences. In

addition, some of the interviewed HR managers also worked in the role of internal coaches, and as a result they were familiar with open-ended questioning.

Some of the interviewed expatriates had experienced harsh challenges during their expatriation, and therefore they were very thankful that they had an opportunity to speak about them with an external, neutral person in the interview situation. Further, most of the interview participants said that they wanted to participate in the study because they thought that coaching was important and that it needed to be researched. However, not all of their coaching experiences were positive. Some of the coached expatriates also described coaches who did not respond to their expectations.

4.4.2 Data analyzing and evaluating processes

In this section I explain the analyzing and evaluating processes of the studies included in this thesis. I start with the analyzing processes that apply for all three studies.

The recorded interviews were, soon after data collection, transcribed verbatim, and as stated above, sent back to interview participants for a check. Because I wanted to become familiar with the whole corpus, at the first stage, I read the collected material several times and marked the emerging observations in the margins of the documents. I also listened to the recordings in order to remember the atmosphere and other details of the interviews. During this phase I made an observation that many of the interviewed HR professionals were not able to answer in detail some questions, because the coaching relationship between the coach and coachee is confidential and the HR professionals felt that they were outsiders. I also paid attention to the fact that one of the coached managers (who was in a position of managing director at the time of the interview) told his story more from the perspective of the organization rather than from the perspective of his own experiences. This happened probably because he was dedicated to his company and wanted to give a positive picture for me. In order to be able to include this interview in the study, I needed to ask some further clarifying questions.

Because I wanted to gain a visual 'helicopter view' of the data, I utilized big papers on the walls and wrote down different themes by marking each of them with different colors. Given that both Stake (1995) and Yin (2003) recognize the importance of efficiently organizing data, and that it is argued that utilizing a database improves the quality of the study (Baxter & Jack 2008), I loaded the collected materials into QSR NVivo software for organizing and analyzing

purposes (this applies specifically for articles 1 and 3). In all three studies of this dissertation the data gathering, analyzing and writing process were very closely connected and interwoven with each other, and the writing process consisted of several drafts, which helped me to clarify the analyses. For example, I presented earlier versions of the studies as peer-reviewed conference papers. After discussing these aspects that apply for all three studies, I move on to individual analyzing processes of the different studies.

Analyzing the multiple case-study (article 1)

According to Smith (2000) content analysis is the primary method of obtaining information from responses to open-ended questions and in this study I conducted a thematic content analysis. Further, content analysis is argued to be a valid method when the purpose is to provide knowledge and new insights, a representation of facts and a practical guide to action (Elo & Kyngäs 2007; Krippendorff 1980). My approach can be seen as ‘directed content analysis’, in which initial coding started from the characteristics of the Coaching Continuum Stage Model, and during the analysis I immersed myself in the data and allowed additional themes to emerge (Hsieh & Shannon 2005; Zhang & Wildemuth 2010:2). In this process, the theme was the most important aspect (Shank, 2002, 128 – 133).

After the themes of each case were identified, I wrote a case description of each of them. During this phase, analyzing and writing occurred as parallel and overlapping processes. Part of the analysis was that I posed further questions to some of the interview participants, because I wanted to increase my understanding about how and why coaching was used in their organizations, so that I was able better to interpret their stories. This supports the view of social constructionism, in which construction of knowledge is seen as an interactive process (Burr 2015; Cohen, Duberley & Mallon 2004). Further, I compared the cases, and identified differences and similarities. When analyzing the findings on how coaching was used by MNCs in terms of where they were positioned along the Coaching Continuum, I identified the key characteristics that differentiated the cases. Besides differentiating the cases, these characteristics described those areas of development that the companies had experienced as important in their progress toward well-performing coaching activity.

An important part of the analysis was the creation of the table presented in article 1, in which the identified key characteristics of the different three stages of the Coaching Continuum Stage Model are presented. This phase of the analysis forced me to a higher level of abstraction. In addition, the analysis included that I selected suitable text excerpts from the transcriptions in order to give a voice to

all my interview participants in the report. These excerpts also supported the analysis. All in all, the analysis was an interplay between the Coaching Continuum Stage Model, the research questions, and interpretation of the data by writing the cases and the final report.

Evaluating the multiple case- study

Given that, at its best, the case study report should be able to take the reader into the real-life setting of the case, but also to the mysteries of the theoretical issues, I wrote the multiple case -study report so that it would be of interest to both academic and practitioner readers (Eriksson & Kovalainen 2008: 131). Further, Eriksson and Kovalainen (2008) argue that case studies should be significant in one way or another. This study utilized the Coaching Continuum Stage Model empirically, as this had been never done previously, and at the same time it produced practical recommendations useful for companies implementing coaching in their GTM programs. In addition, how and why coaching is used in GTM programs had not previously been studied.

Further, I utilized several approaches in order to secure the quality of the study. First, the MNCs for the first multiple-case study were selected on the basis that these companies used coaching for their key groups of employees, and that the HR professionals interviewed were, or had been, responsible for coaching's implementation. Second, it has been argued that case studies are seen to be more accurate, convincing and rich if they are based on several sources of data (Darke, Shanks & Broadbent 1998; Erikson & Kovalainen 2008), and although the main body of the data of this study consisted of in-depth interviews, I collected different kind of data, and data from different sources, aiming at data triangulation (Eriksson & Kovalainen 2008). These different sources of written data also contributed towards gaining sufficient background information. Third, for organizing and analyzing purposes, the data was loaded into NVivo QSR software. Fourth, I used plenty of quotations to support the analysis, and to give the reader the possibility of evaluating the appropriateness of my interpretation and conclusions.

The fact that the Coaching Continuum Stage Model incorporates four stages in total, and this study presents only three of them, could be criticized. However, I also studied a fourth MNC following the same procedures as described earlier. Because the length of the book chapter where this multiple-case study was published was restricted, I could not include the fourth case description in it without losing important aspects of the different cases. Therefore, I presented a study including four cases later, as a peer-reviewed conference proceeding at the

13th International Human Resource Management Conference in Cracow 2014 (this paper is not included in this PhD report).

Analyzing the IPA study (article 2)

Although this study is presented as article 2 in this thesis, I started the analysis and writing process of my whole empirical work with the aim of studying the antecedents of the success factors of expatriate coaching as my first study. I presented the preliminary findings of this study as a conference paper, but then I had a chance to study coaching's implementation in GTM programs, which was accepted for a publication, and my IPA study had to wait. I must say, that conducting the IPA study was the most challenging part of all of the three articles for me. I say so, because the analyzing phase was a long process that I conducted in two phases. On the other hand, having a pause helped me to see the data with fresh eyes. In addition, it was hard to reduce the number of the themes and transcript extracts, as is required in the IPA process (Fade 2004). However, the integral coaching framework of Wilber (see 2.7.2) helped me to cover the topics of importance in regard to coaching's success, and to structure my analysis and writing. The analyzing work also continued during the review process, which clarified further my thinking and writing.

As it is frequently pointed out throughout academic texts on qualitative analysis that there is no one correct way to analyze or interpret data (Fitzgerald & Howe-Walsh 2008), and that qualitative analysis is a personal process (Smith & Osborn 2008), I followed the IPA method for samples larger than 10, described by Smith et al. (2009: 114-117), and I explored the themes shared between the cases. In the final report I also used some atypical extracts to illustrate contradiction and complexity, which made the analysis specifically interesting for me. For example, some of the coaches had contrasting perspectives concerning the usage of foreign language in coaching, whereas the coachees would have preferred their native language.

The analysis included several stages. After becoming familiar with the whole corpus and marking the emerging themes in the margins of the transcript documents, I wrote the theme titles with a higher level of abstraction on paper, and created a table. I repeated the same process for all the transcripts, and made a final list of themes for the whole group of participants. I prioritized the themes, and categorized them with respect to the integral coaching framework of Wilber and translated them into a narrative account with excerpts of transcriptions to support my analysis. This involved reduction and prioritizing of the data (Fade 2004: 650).

Evaluating the IPA study

As recommended by Langdrige (2007), Shaw (2011) and Smith et al. (2009), I assessed the quality of this study by following Yardley's criteria (Yardley 2000). Yardley's principles for assessing the quality of qualitative research are: sensitivity to context; commitment and rigor; transparency and coherence; and impact and importance. *Sensitivity to context* was shown in the study by using a considerable number of verbatim extracts and by giving a voice to different interview participants in the report. In addition, I showed sensitivity to context through an awareness of the existing literature (Smith et al. 2009:181) in regard to the topic of investigation and the research method by adopting relevant literature and discussing it in the article.

In regard to *commitment*, I used coaching skills in order to create a trustful and comfortable interview situation that represented a degree of attentiveness to the interview participants during data collection (Smith et al. 2009:181). I also attended closely to what the participants were saying (Smith et al. 2009:181). Further, the sample was chosen carefully for relevance to the research question. All interview participants had been involved in coaching, but represented different stakeholder groups, nationalities and industries. This also served the purpose of data triangulation (Whittemore et al. 2001). Moreover, in order to reach *rigor*, and to gain a holistic understanding, as well as to ensure that all possible aspects impacting coaching success were covered, I utilized Wilber's holistic framework in this study. In addition, I analyzed the data systemically (Smith et al. 2009:181).

Transparency and coherence refer to how clearly the stages of the research process are described, and whether the study presents coherent arguments. Typically, these are assessed by the reader (Smith et al. 2009:182). I have discussed how the study participants were selected and how I conducted the interviews. Further, I have explained how I conducted the data analysis, and I also gave plenty of quotations to support my arguments. Thus, it is worth noticing that the interview participants were nearly all of the same age group and mostly Europeans. However, executive coaching is often offered to senior executives, and their coaches are also experienced professionals. The same applies to HR professionals in the sample. Hence, as decision makers, they were in senior roles, and therefore all, almost inevitably, in the 45-55 year age group.

Yardley's final broad principle is *impact and importance*, meaning that a study's real validity lies in whether it tells the reader something interesting, important or useful (Smith et al. 2009:183). The present study is the first of its

kind focusing on the antecedents of successful expatriate coaching, and can hopefully serve as a basis for future studies.

Analyzing the narrative study

In this study the analysis unit was the whole interview. As also in the other studies, the first phase of the analysis began already in the interview situation, and continued during the transcription and listening phases of the recorded interviews. As this study is co-authored together with another researcher, analysis also continued during the individual coding, while selecting text excerpts, and during our mutual discussions and writing processes. The data analysis included five main stages. First, I listened to the recorded stories, read the transcriptions several times, and marked the emerging themes on the margins of the paper version of the transcriptions. Second, I coded the texts by using the framework of career capital (knowing-why, -whom and -how capital) among other themes, and by utilizing the NVivo QSR software. For example, I coded text excerpts that revealed motivational issues under the knowing-why dimension. Third, I created short narratives of the interviews. Fourth, the second author repeated the coding process independently, after which we compared and discussed the findings. Fifth, we constructed a final new narrative of the analyzed stories (Makkonen et al. 2012).

Doing the analysis together with a researcher who had a non-coaching background was very useful, because during the analyzing process we could complement each other's ideas and perceptions about the themes and how the interview participants told their stories. Part of the analysis process was that we had to decide what to include in the study. During the analysis and writing process we had several versions of the study report and, for example, the number of study participants, and the themes highlighted in the report varied. As our aim was to publish this study in a peer-reviewed journal, we had challenges due to the word count of our report. The fact that we had to shorten the report in order to fit it to the requirements of a journal also helped to reveal the core of our interpretation. However, due to the word count limit, although the transcriptions of the stories were very rich, we could not use long text excerpts or make reflections ourselves in the final report.

Evaluating the narrative study

Several scholars have discussed the issues of trustworthiness and quality and various verification procedures in narrative studies (Riessman 1993; 2008; Loh 2013; Moen 2006; Polkinghorne 2007), and generally it is seen that the usual criteria of reliability, validity and generalizability used in positivistic studies do

not apply for narrative studies. Riessman argues (1993:22) that narratives are interpretative, and require interpretation, but researchers' interpretations are partial and alternative truths. Riessman (1993:8 – 15) writes about representation, and posits that the final level of representation comes when the reader encounters the written report.

It is argued that narrative studies can be evaluated, for example by using persuasiveness, correspondence, pragmatic use and coherence (Eriksson & Kovalainen 2008: 224; Riessman 1993: 65 – 67). *Persuasiveness* rests on literary practices and on reader's response and it may change over time (Riessman 1993:66). Further, it answers the question about whether the interpretation is reasonable and convincing (Eriksson & Kovalainen 2008:224). In this study, our aim was to convince our future readers by giving a voice to all our study participants so that the readers may evaluate whether our interpretation is reasonable. In regard to *correspondence*, which refers, for example to member checks, Riessman (1993:66) writes that since the stories are not static, meanings of experiences may shift as consciousness changes, and therefore it is questionable whether the validity of the researcher's interpretation can be affirmed by member checks, and I agree with her.

In this study we take the responsibility for the truths of our interpretation (Riessman 1993:67). Further, Riessman (2008) posits that there are two levels of validity relevant for narrative studies: 1) the story told by an interview participant; and 2) the validity of the analysis, or in other words, the story told by the researcher, the latter being of more importance. In this study the interview participants told their stories to me, a coaching researcher and coach, in a confidential interview context. The interview participants may have told a different version of their stories to a different audience in a different situation. In the interview situation I acted as a co-producer of the story, but later the stories were also interpreted and co-produced together with another researcher. This co-analyzing process together with another researcher can be seen as a credibility check (Elliot et al. 1999:222).

Coherence (Riessman 1993:67 – 68), meaning demonstrating that an interpretation is more than ad hoc, must be as 'thick' as possible. While constructing our interpretation based on the narrative data we tried to stay as close as possible to interview participants' own expressions and use as many quotations as possible from the transcriptions. Further, we discussed the themes from various angles. Lastly, with regard to *pragmatic use*, referring to the extent to which a particular study becomes the basis for other's work, we tried to share information openly about how the interpretations were produced, and made

visible what we did, so that it would be possible for others to determine the trustworthiness of our work (Riesmann 1993:68). However, the final evaluation of our study stays with the reader.

After reviewing the literature adopted in this study and my methodological choices, it is time to present the summaries of the articles of this study.

5 SUMMARIES OF THE ARTICLES

In this chapter I present brief summaries of the articles included in this dissertation. The findings are discussed in more detail in chapter six.

5.1 Coaching of Key Talents in Multinational Companies

Article 1 aims to improve understanding about how executive coaching is used in GTM, the reasons for its use, and the experiences of HR professionals responsible for its implementation. This study is important because it has been argued that the research on GTM and international coaching are not matured, and many coaching scholars posit that the coaching industry rests on a limited research and evidence-base.

So far, most of the few coaching intervention studies reporting on the coaching of talents have been conducted in a domestic setting. The lack of research and evidence-base is surprising, because over the last decade, workplace and executive coaching have become a mainstream developmental activity, and it is argued that today approximately 48 % of all coaching is devoted to talents (Coutu & Kaufmann 2009), and coaching is commonly rated as the most effective talent management activities. Moreover, it has also been argued that although companies use coaching widely, few organizations gain full benefits of it, because coaching has not been implemented in a systematic way (McDermott et al. 2007; Peterson, 2011).

In this study a qualitative, multiple-case study approach was taken, and in order to identify the different characteristics of the different stages in coaching's implementation, the Coaching Continuum Stage Model (Peterson and Little 2008, cited in Peterson, 2011) was applied. The findings indicated that while coaching was used by the studied MNCs to serve leadership development and to transform the leadership culture, the MNCs' needs of strategic talent management never solely dictated coaching's implementation. Coaching was utilized to support key talents in transition situations. However, the coaching varied in terms of quality and length depending on the coach's qualifications, experience and competency. Key talents were also trained in coaching skills, but practicing coaching posed challenges to them. The research indicated that in more developed stages the companies had formulated a long-term integration and implementation strategy.

Altogether, 15 key differences characterizing the different stages of the Coaching Continuum were identified in this study. Neither the industry sector of the MNC nor the duration of the implementation of coaching played a large role in where these companies were located along the continuum. Further, based on the findings of this study, some best practices were also presented. The study indicated that it would be beneficial for MNCs to develop a long-term integration and implementation strategy for coaching, which is aligned with the overall strategy of the company and supported by the top management. In addition, it would be important to create a support team for coaching consisting of members experienced in international business and in living and working abroad, and to hire a coaching champion(s) with a professional coach training background. Moreover, the study indicated that it would be beneficial if the implementation of coaching were business driven. It was found to be important that the coaching and coaching processes were clearly defined at the beginning of the implementation, and integrated into all HR processes. In addition, based on this study, the alignment of GTM and coaching is recommended.

This study contributes to coaching literature by enhancing understanding about how and why coaching is used in GTM programs, and by presenting, as has never before been done, empirical results obtained via the Coaching Continuum Stage Model. Moreover, it has practical implications useful for HR professionals intending to implement coaching in organizations, by describing the characteristics of the different stages.

5.2 Expatriate coaching: factors impacting coaching success

Article 2 aims to shed light on which factors are identified by coached expatriates, internationally working coaches and HR professionals as being critical to coaching success. It has been argued that expatriation in its different forms will continue to be a key component of the international management field (Bonache et al. 2010), and it is known that expatriates confront various kinds of challenges during their assignments. To meet these challenges coaching has been recommended to expatriates as a support and developmental intervention (e.g. Booyesen 2015; Littrell & Salas 2005; Mendenhall 2006).

Although peer-reviewed coaching research has grown in recent years, most of the few papers concerning expatriate coaching are theoretical and only four empirical studies on expatriate coaching were found in a literature review. These studies were not focused on factors underpinning expatriate coaching success, but

support the view that coaching is an efficient intervention in the expatriate context (Abbott 2006; 2011; Herbolzheimer 2009; McGill 2010). According to these previous studies, coaching was related to improved performance and increased personal satisfaction of expatriates. Further, coaching featured unique characteristics, which might be capable of filling at least some of the existing support measure gaps. Expatriates benefitted from coaching because it had, for example a stress reducing effect, and helped expatriates to deal with intercultural differences. Coaching was also found to enhance leadership development, and it is argued that it develops the global mindset (Javidan, Hough & Boullough 2010), and cultural intelligence (Ng, Van Dyne & Ang 2009).

In order to explore the factors underpinning expatriate coaching success, a qualitative Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis was conducted. Further, a holistic framework of Ken Wilber (Bachkirova et al. 2010) modified for coaching was applied to categorize the earlier literature and to ensure that all possible aspects impacting coaching success were covered in the analysis.

In regard to expatriate coaching, the study indicates, for example, that adaptability of the coaching process to the needs of the expatriate, and coachability (the coachee's openness and willingness to be coached) were found to impact coaching success. Further, international experience, including knowledge of the language, culture, business environment and challenging behavior were regarded as critical characteristics of expatriate coaches for coaching success. Also, trust and confidentiality of the coaching relationship were found to be key elements of coaching success. In addition, this study highlighted that coaching language impacts coaching success in several ways. Furthermore, managerial leadership style, a clear contract with objectives, and evaluation of the coaching process underpin a successful expatriate coaching assignment. Moreover, organizational support was identified as important for coaching success. The study indicated that the holistic four- quadrant framework of Wilber functioned well as a categorization tool in the analysis, and that the different factors of the different quadrants interact with each other, and are all essential for expatriate coaching success.

This study contributes to coaching literature by shedding light on the success factors of coaching in the expatriate context and by utilizing the integral coaching framework of Wilber. Further, this study has also several practical implications useful for HR professionals implementing coaching in MNCs.

5.3 Coaching for career capital development: A study of expatriates' narratives

The aim of article 3 is to explore expatriates' narratives on coaching and shed light on how coaching of expatriates supports the development of their career capital, in particular capabilities of knowing-how, knowing-why, knowing-whom (Arthur & Inkson 2001). This study is important because the need for internationally competent managers is escalating and it has been argued that the organizations must be able to create a set of development activities, including career related support practices, in order to be able to develop global leaders. Further, it has been suggested that career capital development can be encouraged with development interventions such as coaching or mentoring (Dickmann & Harris, 2005), but so far, expatriates' career capital development through coaching has not been studied. Coaching has been recommended as a suitable development intervention for expatriates, but empirical research focusing on expatriate or career coaching in general is very limited.

A qualitative, narrative analysis was adopted in this study to analyze six rich stories of coached expatriates. A narrative approach is found suitable as a research method for management and organizational research (Czarniawska 1997; Boje 2001), and it has also been adopted in international business research (Gertsen & Söderberg 2011). Further, stories that people tell about their lives are also of importance in coaching (Drake 2010; Stelter 2013), and they are also highly relevant for the study of careers (Cohen & Mallon 2001; Savickas 2001; Bujold 2004). Therefore, a narrative analysis was chosen to explore stories of coached expatriates. Further, the career capital framework (Inkson & Arthur, 2001) was utilized in analyzing the stories and in the analysis the emphasis was specifically on text excerpts that revealed development of career capital capabilities. The model of career capital was selected for this study, because it offers a broad framework for studying the developmental perspective of an employee, and it has been found to be also relevant in the international career context and among expatriates. (Inkson & Arthur 2001; Cappellen & Janssens 2005; Suutari & Mäkelä 2007).

The findings indicate that the coaching processes were mostly seen as helpful development interventions in the challenging international context of expatriates, enhancing the development of their career capital. Further, in some of the analyzed stories, it became evident that career capital development also happened in areas that were not originally prioritized or even expected when coaching was started. Many of the coached expatriates shared experiences in regard to their knowing-how career capital through, for instance, development of

cross-cultural and leadership skills. They also highlighted development, boosted by coaching, in identity construction, enhanced awareness of the self and motivation levels – indicators of knowing-why career capital development. In addition, the study findings strengthen the view that knowing-whom career capital development during the international assignment is not always self-evident (Dickmann & Harris 2005) and development interventions, such as coaching, may encounter some limitations, especially in knowing-whom development, if coaches are not actively posing knowing-whom questions.

This study, being the first exploration of coaching's role in developing the career capital capabilities of expatriates, contributes to existing understanding of coaching's use as a development intervention for expatriates, and specifically to the literature concerning the development of career capital. The practical implication of this study is the need to apply a multifaceted understanding of coaching as a development intervention. For instance, by increasing understanding and knowledge of the career capital concept through training and development among coaches and coach training institutions in future, coaches might be able to adopt the career capital framework as one practical tool for coaching processes. In addition, the present study supports the view that it would be beneficial if coaching did not only focus on culture in an international context, because there might be other factors impacting the coaching engagement (Abbott, 2010:326). Furthermore, the findings suggest that organizations employing expatriates could benefit from using coaching, and, especially, that the people responsible for HRD could use coaching as one possible method to develop their organization's international assignees.

6 CONCLUSIONS AND DISCUSSION

The aim of this dissertation is to make a contribution to the current understanding and literature of international, executive coaching by empirically answering the following research questions: 1) How and why is executive coaching used in Global Talent Management (GTM)? 2) Which factors are identified to be critical to expatriate coaching success? and 3) How does coaching support the development of career capital (capabilities of knowing-how, knowing-why, knowing-whom) of expatriates? In addition, the present study aims to contribute to the GTM and expatriate literatures by studying international coaching in these contexts.

Further, as stated earlier, concerning the practical implications of this study, the intention is to contribute to knowledge in the context of professional practice of coaching that is relevant to internationally working coaches, to coach training and educating institutions, and HR professionals responsible for coaching's implementation. I approached the aims of this study in three empirical articles, which explored international, executive coaching from three novel perspectives, which I summarized in chapter 5 above. In this chapter, I consolidate the results of the three individual studies included in this dissertation and discuss theoretical and practical contributions, limitations, and suggestions for future research.

6.1 Theoretical contributions

First, given that it has been stated that coaching could learn from cross-disciplinary research such as management and Human Resources (McCarthy 2015), the present dissertation utilizes several research bodies, including executive and international coaching, Global Talent Management, expatriation, and research on career capital development of expatriates. In doing so it also combines in this entire PhD report expatriation and talent management research, as several scholars have recently recommended (Caligiuri & Bonache 2016; Cerdin & Brewster 2014; Collings 2014), and studies international, executive coaching in these contexts. Further, the majority of coaching research papers that have been published in peer-reviewed coaching journals (*International Journal of Theory, Research and Practice* and *International Journal of Evidence Based Coaching and Mentoring*) have had a single perspective, that of the coach, with only handful of papers including both coach and coachee (McCarthy 2015).

In contrast to those studies, the data of this dissertation includes different stakeholders of the coaching process (the coach and the coachee, and HR professionals representing organizations), and therefore provides a holistic perspective.

Second, concerning the organizational perspectives, the empirical findings (article 1) provided evidence that organizations use executive coaching as a part of their GTM programs in order to build their managerial leadership and organizational culture, and to serve leadership development, as the literature review suggested (e.g. Al Ariss 2014; Segers et al. 2011; Peterson 2011). This study (article 1) identified altogether 15 different characters of the different stages of the Coaching Continuum Stage Model that described coaching's implementation in MNCs, and because the stage model had not been used empirically previously, the present study contributes to the coaching literature theoretically by developing it further in the international context. Concerning the GTM strategy, the study supported the view empirically that coaching and GTM would benefit from being aligned, as stated earlier theoretically by Peterson (2011), and that it would be beneficial, if coaching were integrated with the HR processes of an organization. Further, the present study indicates that it would be important for the implementation of coaching to be understood as a long-term process.

In addition, the present study provides evidence that it is crucial that the concept of coaching is clearly defined and understood in organizations. Defining it is important both for coaching's successful implementation, as suggested earlier by Feggetter (2007) in a domestic setting, and for gaining full benefits from coaching both at individual and organizational levels (articles 1 and 2). Further, in general, this study also reveals that the organizational support for coaching is still very weak in the expatriate context (article 2), and because it has been shown that organizational support is important for coaching's success (e.g. Hooijberg & Lane 2009:486; Wise & Voss 2002: 8-10), organizations could pay much more attention to providing sufficient support. As the challenges are typically more demanding in expatriate assignments than in domestic settings, the issue of support plays a significant role in an international context. Moreover, the present study also indicates that HR professionals responsible for international coaching and/or acting as internal coaches, and external coaches working with expatriates, need to be experienced in living and working abroad and in international business.

Third, concerning the individual perspectives, this study supports (articles 1, 2 and 3) the view that executive coaching is a well-working support and

developmental intervention for individual internationally-working managers and expatriates, as has been argued in earlier empirical and theoretical studies (Abbott 2006; Herboltzheimer 2009; McGill 2010; Mendenhall 2006; Selmer 1999). The challenging environments and the different phases of the expatriate assignments generate different kind of coaching needs, for which executive coaching is a suitable intervention due to its adjustable nature. However, the specific coaching needs, earlier expatriation experiences and assignment phase of an expatriate needs to be understood at the outset of a coaching process (articles 2 and 3). Further, the present study clearly evidences empirically that there are several interactive stakeholders and different factors influencing expatriate coaching's success that need to be paid attention to in the expatriate context (article 2), culture being only one variable among a variety of other factors.

Some of the factors found in article 2 to impact coaching's success in the expatriate context seem to be generic for all coaching interventions (e.g. creating and maintaining trust in the coaching relationship); some are more context specific (e.g. coach's knowledge of a certain country, culture and language). Therefore, the present study also supports empirically the arguments presented earlier by Cox, Bachkirova and Clutterbuck (2014:156) that the multifaceted nature of coaching, the outcome of it, is dependent on the interplay of four elements: coach and coachee as individuals, coaching relationship, and context. The present study is also in alignment with the suggestion of Bissen et al. (2008:330) that the successful employment of external coaches requires a clear understanding by the company and the chosen coach of the company culture, with particular attention to the cross-cultural and international aspects of that culture.

The findings of this PhD dissertation support empirically the earlier argument of Abbott (2010:326), that focusing only on cultural issues in international coaching is not beneficial, because there might be other contextual factors impacting the coaching engagement (article 3). At the same time, the present study indicates that executive coaching in an international context can be seen as a distinctive practice, requiring some special characteristics, competencies and specific tools, because the absence of, for example language skills and international business background of a coach impact the credibility and therefore trust building of the coaching relationship. This study highlights that the role of language, among other factors, is important in regard to coaching's success in various ways (article 2).

Moreover, this dissertation contributes to international career research by studying the development of career capital through coaching in the expatriate

context (Sullivan and Baruch 2009). The findings of the present study provide empirical evidence and support the theoretical argument presented earlier by Dickmann and Harris (2005) that coaching develops the career capital capabilities of expatriates and it can therefore be recommended as a Human Resource Development intervention for them. The findings show that expatriate coaching supports the development of all three career capital (knowing-how, knowing-why and knowing-whom) dimensions in the expatriate context. In doing so, and being the first study to explore this, it contributes to both coaching and career capital development literature in the expatriate context. It is notable that article 3 shows that the career capital development also happened in the areas that were not prioritized or even expected when coaching began.

The findings of the present study indicate that coaching developed knowing-how career capital capabilities such as, for example cross-cultural and leadership skills. Also, coaching boosted development in identity construction, enhanced awareness of the self and motivation levels – indicators of knowing-why career capital development. In addition, the study findings strengthen the view that knowing-whom career capital development during the international assignment is not always self-evident (Dickmann & Harris, 2005) and development interventions, such as coaching, may encounter some limitations, especially in knowing-whom development. As the importance of knowing-whom career capital has been shown to be very important for successful long-term global careers (Mäkelä & Suutari, 2009), and based on the findings, it would be advantageous if coaches were to work more on knowing-whom aspects in the expatriate context.

Fourth, concerning the utilized frameworks and methodological approaches of this study, the frameworks (the Coaching Continuum Stage Model, the integral coaching framework and the career capital framework) worked well as analyzing and categorizing tools, and because they had not been used in the published coaching literature previously in the international context, their usage can be seen as a part of the novelty that this study brings to the literature of international coaching.

In addition, given that Cox, Bachkirova and Clutterbuck (2014: 156) have argued in their theoretical paper that the outcome of coaching depends on coach and coachee as individuals, coaching relationship and context, this empirical study strongly indicates that it is beneficial to study coaching interventions from a holistic, systemic perspective, as was done in article 2. Moreover, the three different analyzing methods (explorative multiple-case analysis in which thematic analysis was applied, IPA and narrative analysis) adapted in this study

contribute to the multifold and rich understanding of executive coaching in international contexts.

In regard to article 3, which explored the development of career capital of expatriates through coaching and in which narratives were explored, it is in alignment with the argument of Vinkenburg and Weber (2012) that, although the usage of narratives, for example in studies on work role transitions, are scarce, narratives are crucial in enhancing the understanding of the construction of careers due to the emphasis on retrospective sense-making. I understand that this retrospective sense-making is also true also for stories of coaching experiences and for studies on the development of career capital. Therefore, the findings of this study challenge the traditional ways of studying interventions and their effectiveness, and highlight the personal perception of the experience of coaching and its effects on career capital development in the international context.

6.2 Practical contributions

The present dissertation provides several practical implications, which are useful for HR professionals implementing coaching, for internationally working coaches, and for coach training and educating institutions.

First, HR professionals and their organizations can benefit from the different characteristics of the different stages of the Coaching Continuum Stage Model, which were identified in the article 1, and from the best practices described in it. For example, they can be used for assessing where the companies are along the Coaching Continuum Stage Model, for avoiding some mistakes and in planning what measures can be taken in order to access a well-working coaching practice in the international context. In addition, internationally working coaches and consulting companies could use the findings of this study when negotiating with or consulting MNCs that implement executive coaching in their GTM programs.

Second, organizations can utilize the findings of article 2 when implementing executive coaching for their international assignees. It would be beneficial, for example to secure that there is organizational support for coaching, and that internal and external coaches working for MNCs are experienced in international business and in living and working abroad. On the other hand, the study also indicated that it would be advantageous if organizations hired internationally experienced persons, who have a coaching specific education, for steering their international coaching programs.

Third, given, that the demand for international executive coaching is growing, and that it requires understanding of the challenges of international environments, special tools and practices, coach training and educating institutions could consider teaching these aspects in their programs. As the present study shows that it is beneficial to utilize a holistic approach, the integral coaching model of Wilber could also be used by internationally working coaches as a practical tool when coaching international managers and expatriates. In addition, understanding how to utilize the conceptual framework of career capital (Inkson & Arthur 2001) would be advantageous for coaches working in international environments as the framework provides a research-based tool that comprises critical dimensions for expatriate's personal and career development.

Fourth, because this study explored international executive coaching from three novel perspectives, the findings can hopefully serve as a basis for coaching scholars' work in the future. Some ideas on areas of focus for future studies are discussed in the next section.

6.3 Limitations and directions for future research

This study has several limitations concerning its sample, methods and scope that I discuss in this section. As I have taken an interpretative approach in this study, the findings cannot be generalized in a positivistic manner. Some interpretativist scholars such as Denzin and Lincoln, and Marschall and Rossman minimize or even deny any intention toward generalization in qualitative research (Payne & Williams 2005:295).

In the present study the findings and conclusions are based on my understanding and on my interpretations of the stories on subjective experiences of interview participants told to me in an interview situation, and therefore they do not represent one single, objective truth, or give a full picture of the phenomena I studied (Denzin & Lincoln 2011; Eriksson & Kovalainen 2008). For example, the rather small sample size and the fact that the interview participants were Europeans and North Americans is a limitation. The application of other methods, a different timing, and/or different contexts may have produced different results. Therefore, these phenomena should be studied by using, for example mixed approaches, quantitative methods, larger sample sizes and longitudinal study designs. Further, the present study did not have any special country context, but studies exploring international coaching and its implementation from the perspective of a certain country and cultural context

could be interesting in the future and increase our understanding of international coaching.

Overall, several new research areas for future studies arose during this research process. Although managerial coaching was not the focus of the present study, but given that it was exploited in all of the studied MNCs of article 1, and given that the findings indicated that the managers had challenges in coaching their peers and subordinates, it would be valuable to study the reasons for their challenges in the international context. In addition, some of the interviewed expatriates had some negative coaching experiences. Given that the studies reporting negative coaching experiences are scarce (Athanasopoulou & Dopson 2015), studies analyzing negative coaching experiences would be important. These would help to avoid mistakes, and to develop better coaching skills training and implementation programs, both for external professional and internal coaches in the international context. Further, as the present study indicates that international, executive coaching requires special coaching frameworks and tools, it would be beneficial to study which of them are most effective in the international context. This would be beneficial because, based on the literature review, most of them have not been empirically validated previously.

Moreover, concerning expatriates, it would be important to study what would be the right timing to start their coaching interventions, because the present study indicates that their previous international experiences, and for example their exposure to culture shock, impacts coaching and their openness toward it. Also, as coaching may encounter some limitations, especially in knowing-whom development of career capital, this aspect could be studied further.

In general, it would be beneficial to study international coaching from systemic perspectives (Abbott 2010), as they can capture a multifold understanding covering all the different stakeholders of a coaching intervention. As the present study indicates that language plays an important part in coaching success in an expatriate context, and given that published studies concerning the use of language in international coaching literature are, so far, non-existing, it would be important to study this issue in the future. This would be in line with the recent development of international management literature, in which language-sensitive research has gained momentum (Piekkari & Tietze 2011).

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Coaching of Key Talents in Multinational Companies

Raija Salomaa

1 Introduction

This chapter reviews the existing research on Global Talent Management (GTM) and international coaching, and presents the findings of a research study which explored the use of coaching as one of the current interventions used to develop key talents, specifically managers in multinational companies (MNCs).

Over the last decade, workplace and executive coaching has become a mainstream developmental activity, with an estimated annual revenue of two billion USD, according to the International Coach Federation's 2012 Global Coaching Study. Approximately 48 % of all coaching activity is now estimated to be devoted to talents (Coutu et al. 2009). The 2013 Prospects Report of the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development reveals that coaching is most commonly rated among the most effective talent management activities. The survey suggests that larger organisations support their managers in new roles with key international responsibilities by using coaching and mentoring programmes. At the same time, it is claimed that both talent management (Collings 2009) and coaching are under-researched in the global context (Abbott et al. 2013). For example, Garavan et al. (2011) note that talent development represents an important component of the talent management process, but that here is surprisingly little published research on global talent development issues. Further, most of the coaching interventions in studies reporting on the coaching of talents have taken place in a domestic setting. Coaching is frequently recommended for international managers, but it is listed as just one of a number of other development interventions, and the studies lack definitions and empirical evidence. Several critical reviewers of the coaching literature argue that the coaching industry rests on a limited research and evidence-base.

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Even if organisations are using coaching widely, relatively few organisations derive the full benefits of executive coaching by implementing coaching in a systematic way (McDermott et al. 2007). Among the concerns are a lack of clarity and consistency in how coaching is used, a lack of cumulative organisational learning about how to manage coaching, an inconsistent quality of coaching, and a lack of systematic goal setting and outcome evaluation (Peterson 2011). Different kinds of stage models have been developed to describe the implementation of coaching within organisations. Peterson and Little (2008, cited in Peterson 2011) and Peterson (2011) claim that there is a growing use of systematic coaching within organisations—a strategic, programmatic use of coaching to develop talent pools—and have developed the Coaching Continuum Stage Model to describe different stages of implementation (Peterson 2011). The research study described later in this chapter used this model in order to identify the characteristics of the different stages of implementation of coaching within MNCs.

The study aimed to shed light on the following research questions:

- How and why is executive coaching used in GTM?
- What are the experiences of HR professionals in implementing coaching in GTM programmes?

This research is important, since the use of coaching in talent management programmes is increasing and coaching research in the international context is scarce.

The next section briefly reviews the existing literature on GTM. Coaching in general and the Coaching Continuum Stage Model (Peterson 2011) are then described, followed by a discussion of international coaching. Finally, the research study and empirical findings are presented and future research topics and some practical implications are discussed.

2 Global Talent Management

Since the late 1990s, one of the most significant developments in people management has been a focus on effectively identifying and managing the individuals who are the most important to the strategic success of organisations (Schuler and Tarique 2012); and the systematic management of global talent by means of GTM programmes has become increasingly important. There is no consensus regarding the exact meaning of GTM, but there is a growing understanding that it is an emerging field. In this study GTM is defined broadly as:

... systemically utilising International Human Resource Management (IHRM) activities to attract, develop and retain individuals with high levels of human capital (i.e. competency, personality, motivation), consistent with the strategic direction of the multinational enterprise in a dynamic, highly competitive, and global environment. (Schuler and Tarique 2012).

Among the global talent challenges is a shortage of talented leaders who are able to manage in uncertain situations and who possess the organisational and business

savvy, and the cross-cultural skills, needed to run global businesses (Evans et al. 2010). Evans et al. point out that leadership development in MNCs involves first selecting those who have the potential to master transitions to more senior roles and then developing the required skills through the provision of appropriate challenges, mobility, coaching and training. Individuals develop skills as they transition to more senior roles and international assignments are regarded as one of the key development methods through which cross-cultural competencies can be developed. However, these transitions demand a significant change in the individual, which can be supported by coaching. Mendenhall (2006) recommends coaching for international managers because the traditional development programmes cannot anticipate the multitude and variety of cross-cultural challenges. He argues that coaching is (1) highly individualized, (2) focused on the present, and (3) confidential and provides a process in which the individual is free to learn. Garavan et al. (2011) posit that talent development must be increasingly work-based, adaptable and flexible. They also suggest that talent development architecture is not a one-size-fits-all approach but that it should be differentiated, with an emphasis on customising talent development strategies to meet the needs of individuals. Self-directed talent development activities, such as coaching, highlight the need for learner insight, self-awareness and self-confidence.

3 Coaching

This section focuses briefly on what is known about coaching, defines it, and presents the Coaching Continuum Stage Model.

Coaching can be seen as a collaborative and non-directive relationship between coach and coachee for the purpose of professional or personal development. The major of leadership and executive coaching is primarily developmental in nature. Coaching is a cross-disciplinary approach that has its roots in psychology, management, learning theory, theories of human and organisational development, philosophy, and sports. In this chapter coaching is defined as ‘as 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. 2010, p. 1)

The ambiguity of the concept of coaching has led to discourses in which coaching has been contrasted with other developmental approaches in an attempt to gain greater clarity. Coaching has been compared with mentoring, counselling, consulting, training and therapy. The literature on executive coaching differentiates it from these other interventions and some conceptual distinctiveness can be observed. In contrast to consultants, executive coaches do not provide recommendations on specific business issues, nor do they act as technical experts. Coaching also differs from mentoring in that coaching is more structured and formal in nature and is based on an equal relationship between coach and coachee.

Very little has been documented about the specific coaching needs of executive clients and why coaching is used. The reasons for executive coaching that have been identified have tended to be broad in nature, such as for the development of leadership skills and managerial effectiveness (Feldman and Lankau 2005). An HBR survey (Coutu et al. 2009) suggests that coaching is used for developing talents and for facilitating a transition in or up, for acting as a sounding board, and for addressing a derailing behaviour. Burrus (2010) has described the special characteristics and coaching needs of managers who have lived in numerous countries and currently travel, live, and work all over the world. These managers possess attributes that many MNCs seek—innate intercultural instincts, mobility, and adaptability—and have special coaching needs based on, for example, their rootlessness and lack of support structures. Some evidence from coaching research suggests that it is a valuable tool for managerial development in terms of enhancing the transfer of learning from the classroom to the workplace, and in terms of developing and enhancing skills, self-awareness, motivation, personal confidence and impacting well being (Passmore 2009b).

3.1 The Coaching Continuum Stage Model

Today, organisations tend to focus on the coaching of key groups. These initiatives are usually referred to as ‘coaching culture programmes’ and are described as stage models. While the literature on the subject is growing, much of it takes a normative approach and lacks empirical evidence. As in the case of GTM, most of the authors share the opinion that the implementation of coaching ought to be supported by top management, and be aligned with the overall business and development strategy of the organisation.

Peterson and Little (2008, cited in Peterson 2011), and Peterson (2011) have developed a conceptual model for presenting the stages of implementation of coaching. In this model, organisations move through four stages along a continuum, from relatively ad hoc uses of coaching to more systemic and strategic applications, as follows:

In the first ‘ad hoc’ stage most organisations begin to use executive coaching when one individual requests coaching. The request may come from a manager, an HR professional or the potential coachee him/herself. Coaching is reactive and is not implemented in a coordinated manner across the organisation. At the organisational level there is no awareness of who is receiving coaching and what the process involves, nor is there an awareness of the costs and value of the coaching.

The second ‘managed coaching’ stage is driven by a coaching champion. The role of the champion is to manage all of the coaches working in the organisation. Organisations move to this stage either when they notice that they are spending significant amounts of money on coaching, or when they realise that coaching has significant potential value, which they wish to harness in a more structured way. The coaching champion establishes coach selection criteria, screens and keeps track

of coaches, and defines the coaching process. This process may include evaluating coachees' reactions although organisations rarely define who receives coaching nor measure coaching outcomes at this stage.

At the third 'proactive' stage organisations begin to use coaching for groups, such as for onboarding new executives or accelerating the development of talents. This is driven by a business need. The aim is to generate clear organisational value by using coaching to develop talent pools. Organisations start to think more strategically about who provides coaching and who receives it. At this stage, some organisations try to create a 'coaching culture' by enhancing their internal coaching capabilities and limiting the use of external coaches in order to reduce costs. Some organisations define coaching roles for specific needs, e.g. external executive coaching for senior executives, and internal coaching for new hires and middle managers.

At the fourth matured stage coaching is driven by the organisational talent management strategy. Companies at this stage have identified their most critical talent. They have also prioritised where development will make the biggest difference. Stage four organisations have a clear understanding of their talent and their development needs, and have an array of development tools. The solution decided upon may rest on factors such as cost, effectiveness of the method, and the potential business impact of the need. The following section discusses coaching from international perspectives.

3.2 International Coaching

It has been argued that a rapidly changing global business environment accelerates the use of coaching, because traditional management approaches are unable to handle today's faster-paced business processes. Over the last decade, some coaching researchers have started to explore coaching from an international perspective. These approaches to coaching are influenced by international management theories and intercultural research (for a recent literature review see Abbott et al. 2013). Many authors argue that an understanding of culture and cultural differences is of great importance in international coaching. The impact of culture and diversity in coaching has also been discussed from the perspectives of generational, cultural, national and racial difference (Passmore 2009a). Surveys conducted by Bresser Consulting on, for example, coaching within a European context, suggest that there is a great diversity of coaching approaches (cited in Passmore 2009a). There are a number of published papers that discuss coaching in the Asian context and suggest that coaches need to moderate their techniques with Asian coachees (Nangalia and Nanagalia 2010; Sood; Choudhury; Tanaka, cited in Passmore 2009a).

The complexity of the international business environment demands that executive coaches who work with international clientele possess business acumen, combined with organisational and psychological knowledge (Peterson 2011). As distinct from domestic coaches, coaches working with international managers need

to be familiar with expatriate experiences, international management and cultural theories.

Coaching is widely used to develop talents, but most of the research reports lack the international perspective. There is a need for empirical evidence on coaching used in GTM. The criteria of the different stages of the Coaching Continuum Stage Model, presented above, are on a rather general level and could be further developed by utilising the model empirically. Further, surprisingly little is known about talent development issues and the reasons behind the choice of coaching as a development tool. The next section describes and presents the results of a research study that aimed to shed light on these issues.

4 The Research Study

An empirical multiple-case study was conducted with three MNCs, in order to explore how and why these global organisations used executive coaching as a tool for the development of talents and to explore how the implementation of coaching was experienced by HR professionals. This section describes the methodological approach adopted.

4.1 Methodology

As previously mentioned, coaching research in the global context is scarce; consequently, this study is exploratory in nature. A qualitative multiple-case study approach was chosen because the case study approach enabled a deep exploration of the experiences of key HR professionals responsible for coaching. Case studies are well suited to new research areas, and may be preferred when ‘how’ or ‘why’ questions need to be answered and when the focus is on a current real-life context (Yin 1994).

Three case companies for this study were selected on the basis of the fact that all of these international companies used coaching for developing key groups of managers. In order to prevent the study from being too broad in scope, the research boundaries were set by time and activity, meaning that examination of the coaching activities of these case companies was restricted to include coaching conducted only between 2000 and 2013.

After selection of the case companies, data was gathered. The sources of data included interviews, corporate presentations on GTM and coaching, published and unpublished reports on the case companies, one internal company journal article, web pages, and emails. For reasons of confidentiality the case companies are not named but are instead referred to as Cases A, B, and C.

The interview participants ($N = 8$) consisted of several nationalities located in five countries on three continents. The interviewees included seven HR professionals and one line manager who had previously worked in an HR key role. The interviewees were chosen because they had been in important roles with

Table 1 Demographics of the interview participants

Case company	Position	Location	Age group and gender	Nationality
Case A	HR Director, coaching internal global coachees	Finland	40–55, female	Finnish
	Senior HR Director, coaching internal global coachees	USA	40–55, female	American
Case B	Director Learning and Development, global responsibility	Finland	40–55, male	Finnish
	Manager Learning and Development, coaching champion, global responsibility	Netherlands	40–55, female	Dutch
	HR Director Asia & Pacific	Singapore	40–55, male	Finnish
Case C	Senior Leadership Consultant, coaching champion, global responsibility	Finland	25–40, female	Finnish
	Senior Manager, ex. Senior Leadership Consultant, coaching internal coachees	Finland	40–55, female	Finnish
	Senior Leadership Consultant, coaching champion, global responsibility	Denmark	25–40, male	Danish

regard to the implementation of coaching within their organisations. The companies included in the study are described below:

Case A company provides medical healthcare solutions and operates in 38 countries, employing some 50,000 people worldwide.

Case B company is a global leader in mechanical engineering with operations in nearly 170 locations and with 19,000 employees in 70 countries.

Case C company operates in the financial sector in nine home markets and has 31,500 employees.

The demographics of the interview participants are described in Table 1 below:

The semi-structured interviews were conducted in Finnish or in English, face-to-face or virtually. Open-ended questions were used in order to allow relevant topics to emerge. In some cases, follow-up questions were sent by email to the interviewee after the interview in order to gain a deeper insight into the issues that arose. The same issues were discussed further with one other representative of the same company.

The interviews were transcribed verbatim. In order to ensure quality, the interview documents were sent back to the interviewees for approval after being transcribed. The collected material was read several times and the emerging observations were marked in the margins of the documents. The data were loaded into QSR NVivo software for the purpose of analysis. Corporate presentations and other unpublished and published reports were used as background material, and for triangulation purposes. One internal journal article, where representatives of HR and coached international managers were interviewed, was also used for analysis. The cases were then compared, and differences and similarities were identified from the observations. When analysing the findings on how coaching was used by MNCs in terms of where they were positioned along the Coaching Continuum, the

key characteristics which differentiated the cases were identified. Besides differentiating the cases, these characteristics described those areas of development which the companies had experienced as important in their progress toward well-performing coaching activity.

4.2 Findings

4.2.1 Case A

How Was Coaching Used in Case A?

At the time of the interviews, coaching was offered in development programmes for international managers, including talents, but not in a structured way. The company's HR department launched a one-day global coaching skills training programme for 7,000 managers in 2010, and expected their managers to coach their direct reports. HR representatives were also required to provide coaching services to global, internal coachees. Depending on the geographic area of responsibility, a Finnish HR director may have had internal coachees in, for example, India or the USA. The company had not prohibited the use of external coaches but, because of the investment in the internal coaching programme, it tended not to use external coaching professionals. Most of the coaching could be characterised as a one-time discussion. Here, the interviewed Finnish HR Director described the length of the coaching discussion:

... I guess 80 – 90 % of coaching is a one-time discussion about various challenges.

In some cases, such as in the development programmes for General Managers, coaching consisted of several sessions. Coaching was usually conducted in English.

Why Was Coaching Used?

The company was aiming to integrate coaching into standard managerial practice, and provided coach training to support the initiative. The Finnish HR Director explained:

We expect our managers to adopt a coaching style in their day to day managerial practice.

She went on to say:

We have leadership programmes and talent programmes, and coaching is often one element in them.

Executive coaching was being used to support individual talents who were in career transition to a more senior level or, to support managers who, for example, were being transferred to the USA or who were moving from the USA to other countries. During the interview, the Senior HR Director in the USA described her own work as an internal coach:

I do a lot of my own coaching now with people about the focus of transitions and a lot of the transitions are global... leaders who are leading an organisation for the first time so that has

been a theme. Then with the HR work I have done a lot of work in terms of global movement and global talent as well.

What Were the Outcomes and Challenges?

According to those interviewed, no particular outcomes had yet been achieved. With regard to coach training and experience, there were huge differences between different internal coaching providers. For example, the HR manager in the USA interviewed had studied coaching, was credentialled at a professional level by the International Coach Federation (ICF), and had an extensive expatriate working background. Compared with her colleagues in Finland, who had gone through the same one-day coaching skills training as the line managers, and who had no foreign assignment experience, the US HR manager's ability to coach key talents was on a completely different level. In the Finnish subsidiary, HR personnel found it challenging to coach their global coachees virtually and felt that the coaching was not at a professional level. Virtual coaching in general, coping with different time zones and building trust over the phone were mentioned as problems. The HR director interviewed spoke about her experiences:

Well, let's say that when you are not very experienced in coaching, it makes coaching over the phone very challenging. You have never met your coachee and you do not know him or her. ...different time zones, coaching over the phone are the challenges.

When asked about the challenges in implementing coaching, it was felt that the transition to a more coaching-based management style was difficult for managers. Instead of asking questions, managers typically acted as problem solvers and told their direct reports what to do. The HR Director in the USA spoke about the challenge:

... I would say that a part of it is a cultural shift. We are an organisation that is known for being very results orientated and very execution focused and it is much more of a tell rather than ask culture.

Furthermore, coaching was not evaluated or measured. Aside from the one-day coach training, there were no support structures in place and coaching was not integrated with the HR processes. HR tried to keep records of how many subordinates were coached by line-managers, but there was no follow-up. However, the biggest challenge within this company was that the definition of coaching was unclear; it had never been explicitly defined. Here is an excerpt from an interview with a Finnish HR director, talking about the challenge:

I get a message from my boss: you need to give them some coaching, meaning that I have to tell them what they are supposed to do and not to do. Or then coaching is mixed with some kind of teaching. It is a problem. . . I think that there is a problem around the concept, what it is and what the expectations are from it.

Case A was positioned in the ad hoc stage on the Coaching Continuum, because coaching was not managed in a systematic manner, it was not integrated in the HR processes, and the concept of coaching and coaching processes had not been

defined. The quality and length of internal coaching also varied considerably depending on the professional background of the coach.

4.2.2 Case B

How Was Coaching Used?

The company started to implement coaching by defining what coaching is, and by identifying the optimal coaching infrastructure for the company. It also promoted the positive coaching experiences of key talents, who were located in different business units that had already used coaching. Coaching was supported by the company culture, in which a sharing best-practices attitude prevailed, and was promoted by the CEO and other executives. International leadership programmes, in which coaching was an integral component, were business-driven and co-designed with business representatives. They were offered to different managerial levels and created a learning continuum. The Leadership and Development Director of the company clarified:

We take people from the business units and from different levels to co-design these programmes. We do not want them to be something invented by HR only.

Coach training was not mandatory. When asked about the best practices of the implementation, the Director of Learning and Development recommended that the concept and infrastructure of coaching should be developed before anything else.

Case B offered individual executive coaching to senior managers, conducted by external professionals. The coaching champion in the Netherlands explained the reasons for using external coaches:

It is a quite intensive process and I would say quite a long term process to really get internal people to the stage where they would be able to professionally coach more senior people.

The individual coaching process was defined and consisted of: (1) expectations and target setting, discussed and agreed by the coachee, manager and coach; (2) between four and eight coaching sessions; and (3) a triangle evaluation session between the coachee, coach and supervisor. The participants were asked to keep a learning diary. The role of HR was to discuss the individual's needs with the line manager, find suitable coaches, and match a coach with the coachee. The process was recorded as a learning event in the HR system. In addition to the evaluation of the individual coaching processes, the company used coaching-based assessments, a questionnaire, and a 360-feedback tool. Coaching had been defined as one of the leadership competencies of the company. At the time of the research study, coaching was being incorporated into the Key Performance Indicator (KPIs) process. Overall, coaching was integrated within HR processes.

Coaching was offered in either the mother-tongue language of the coachee or in English. The company tried to find a coach who had a similar cultural background to the coachee and, for example, would not hire a Chinese coach for a Finnish coachee. In addition, the coach was required to have experience of the language, culture and business life of the assignment country of the coachee, and to be credentialled by the International Coach Federation (ICF). References were also

considered and checked. Coaching was conducted in face-to-face or in virtual sessions, or a mixture of both.

Why Was Coaching Used?

Case B's aim was to create a high-performing company culture in order to increase employee engagement and to help to both source and retain talent. The wider implementation of coaching began because of positive reports from some of the business units about their coaching experiences. In parallel, HR started to benchmark and learn about coaching because they had noticed that the use of coaching was a rising trend in the talent development arena. Here the Learning and Development Director speaks about the reasons behind designing different international development programmes for different managerial levels where executive coaching was included:

The content and objectives of these development programmes correlate with the challenges of a certain managerial level. On higher levels the challenges change to more strategic ones. . .

As well as the different development programmes that included coaching, the company had begun to support individual managers in transition using coaching. It was also used for leadership skills development. Here a HR Director explained why he has been using coaching:

When a person has not had the skills required for a position, he or she has not been able to perform well, or from a more positive starting point, a person has got new challenges, and we have been supporting him or her by coaching.

He further stated that one of the reasons that he uses coaching is because of ability, through the coaching process to turn learned skills into action:

I would say that the success rate of coaching is much higher than in other interventions such as classroom style learning events. . . I prefer coaching if the person involved needs to learn leadership skills. . . in a classroom style event you get theoretical frameworks, but if you want to turn it to action, you need coaching to support it.

In a corporate presentation of the coaching offering within the company, the manager of Leadership and Development stated that:

. . . senior managers are guided to the next level of performance by coaching.

What Were the Outcomes and Challenges?

Both the interviews and an internal journal article, for which HR professionals responsible for coaching and coached internationally working managers had been interviewed, confirmed that managers found coaching helpful. They stated that coaching had helped coachees to get better positions and to convert plans into action. Coaching had given them a safe place to reflect on who they were as leaders. It had challenged their thinking. Coaching had also helped them to communicate more effectively and had been a positive experience, after which they had easily been able to share best practices with younger employees.

At the time of the interviews, the company was in a 'honeymoon phase' of the implementation; the people responsible for coaching had not encountered any major challenges. However, in those rare cases when coaching was not successful, the reason was regarded as being related to the level of commitment of the coachee, as suggested by the HR Director:

The biggest challenge is always when a coachee says, OK, I will start a coaching process, but he goes into it by saying it only, and is not committed with his head or with his heart.

There had been many different individual coaching efforts in different countries. The company had begun to formalise its coaching processes. They had tried to identify some global coaching providers, with whom they could enter into a partnership. At the same time, different business units had needed to act in a timely manner and find coaches locally who matched their requirements in the absence of a corporate-wide global network of coaches. The HR Director in Asia spoke about the challenge:

... we lack a network of coaches, so it means that when I have lunch meetings with representatives of other companies, I ask for references...

Case B was located on the proactive stage (stage 3) of the Coaching Continuum. They had hired a coaching champion who coordinated and developed coaching within the company. Executive coaching and the concept of coaching had been defined. The systematic integration of coaching into the HR processes was in progress. They had also defined to whom coaching was offered and what it comprised. Their global talent development offering consisted of different kind of programmes into which coaching had been integrated, and it formed part of a learning continuum.

4.2.3 Case C **How Was Coaching Used?**

The coaching infrastructure within the company had been developed in a very systematic way. Coaching was integrated into all HR processes, and the owner of the coaching initiative was a Senior Leadership Consultant with a coach training background. The next quotation reveals the importance of the international integration of coaching:

All we do here where I am sitting, we are doing in an international context...Development should be aligned through the company internationally...

The coaching champion and the person responsible for GTM worked together in the Leadership and Talent Management Department, under the same manager, who ensured that the two were aligned. The company required that the ICF certify all of the internal leadership consultants. Talents were identified through Annual Personnel Reviews, which included Performance and Development Discussions between the employee and the supervisor; the results were discussed together with HR Partners and entered into the HR system. In order to identify the most skilled high potentials within the company, a ranking of 1–4 was awarded. A person

ranked as talent (4) was supported by an individual development plan, which included mentoring, coaching, career counselling and leadership development programmes. Talents could use also external executive coaches, certified by the ICF.

At the beginning of the coaching implementation process, all the leadership consultants responsible for coaching had to travel abroad to learn what coaching was and how coaching could be implemented. After this phase, the Coaching International Support Team defined coaching and created a coaching infrastructure. Coaching started with pilot groups of middle management, comprising managers ranked as talented leaders. The executive coaching programme was designed at a later stage. The company hired two PhD candidates who researched the coaching processes and outcomes within the company. The research results were also used for employer branding purposes.

The coaching process, and the coaching skills training provided by the company internally, was divided into basic and advanced levels. The training was founded on learning theories with a very practical focus. It consisted of several modules and lasted 2 years. The managers trained in coaching skills were assessed based on the quantity and quality of the coaching discussions and they needed to reach a certain level before they could move to the next module. Both the coaching training and coaching were evaluated. Coaching training was mandatory for all managers.

Why Was Coaching Used?

The implementation of coaching began when a senior HRD director at the headquarters of the company saw an opportunity to use coaching to unite the company after several international mergers and to develop its managers. This initiative was strongly supported by the top management at the headquarters of the company. Coaching was used to support the company's transformation process, for team building, and for achieving business goals. The company also used coaching to improve communication and to meet the individual development needs of its talents. When asked why coaching was used in the talent management programmes, a HR consultant answered by email:

We use it as a leadership approach. . . In some programmes we use coaching as a learning activity.

The line manager spoke about one of her coaching assignments concerning a young talent that joined the company recently:

She is like a bull in a china shop. . . many people have told her that she has been acting in a very tough way, she has also said some things that do not fit with the company culture. She came from another company and said that she did not even understand what she was doing wrong.

In this case coaching was used for awareness building on how to be more efficient in communication and for adaption to a new company culture.

What Were the Outcomes and Challenges?

This company had over 10 years' experience in implementing coaching. The Senior Manager, who had been in a key HR role during the implementation phase stated:

Coaching is part of all our development programmes. . .it is part of our everyday life and tied to our backbone.

Those interviewed felt that while the organisation had already achieved a great deal by adopting a coaching approach, the journey was still continuing. Even though it was hard to measure the actual return on investment, those interviewed believed that coaching had been a critical element in the company's success. However, the company did not separately document the outcomes of their talent development initiatives. They highlighted that the company had received a lot of positive attention for its coaching initiative in the press (over 30 articles internationally), and that representatives and researchers of the company had been invited to speak at different coaching conferences about their coaching initiative. Aside from coaching's positive influence on the corporate employer brand, they had also achieved good business results. The senior manager stated:

We can be proud of our business results. . .We are able to keep the business in the growth area and the turnovers positive. . .When we started to implement coaching, we did not imagine that it would be so powerful. Of course I am not saying that the results only depend on coaching, but it plays a big role. If asked, everybody thinks so.

She noted that the company had been ranked as the best service provider of their industry internationally. Further, she stated that employee retention was high and that the employee satisfaction index was rising and, at the time of interview, stood at the highest level ever.

Although the implementation of coaching was perceived as successful, the company had also encountered challenges in global integration. Although coaching was supported by the top management at the headquarters of the company in Denmark, it took a while before the Finnish organisation's management team showed any interest in it. At first, they refused to meet with the leadership consultants responsible for coaching. A senior line manager noted that:

In this phase, our management in Finland did not buy into it - they were of the opinion that it was just HR mumbo-jumbo.

When pressure came from middle management, and HR could show some positive results, the attitude towards coaching changed. The Finnish management team then insisted that an executive-level coaching programme be developed.

A further challenge was that some of the managers had left the company or were transferred to non-managerial positions during the implementation phase. Coaching was included as an important element of the managerial job description, which some managers had difficulties in accepting. At the time of the interviews, managers were not coaching their subordinates as often as they should have been. The Senior Leadership Consultant in Denmark commented:

It is not used all the time. There is a difference in knowing about and using, as you know, so I have trained people who have said they know a lot about coaching, but when it comes to the actual skills and the group part, a lot of people are struggling.

He went on to say that some managers did not understand in which situations they should coach, nor how to integrate coaching into the business environment. The managers felt that they did not have time for it and they found asking the right coaching questions demanding.

Due to budget constraints, coaching and training had recently been cut, and the leadership consultants interviewed felt that much more could be done to develop coaching further. One of the Leadership Consultants interviewed, who had left the company, but worked as an external coach in a talent management programme noted:

During my time half of the personnel in the leadership and development unit were given notice. The resources were so tight that we had to consider very carefully where to put them. I felt that the development of coaching was not a priority...which was a personal disappointment for me.

She further noted that although coaching and GTM were aligned, the integration could have been tighter. In addition, those interviewed believed that best practices need to be implemented on a long-term basis, and that there was a danger of coaching becoming business as usual and of its continuous development not being a priority. The Senior Manager talked about the concerns:

The basics are now ok, but there is always the danger when coaching becomes business as usual that we do not repeat good practices on a long-term basis. And what I mean by a long-term basis is 7-10 years.

Case C was positioned in the matured stage of the Coaching Continuum. They had a long-term integration and implementation strategy for coaching. GTM and coaching were aligned. They had a coaching champion and coaching was integrated in all HR systems. Coaching was evaluated and measured. This company used both external and internal professionals, and coaching and the processes of coaching had been defined.

Summary and Conclusions

The aim of this study was to answer the questions of how and why coaching was used in GTM by the case MNCs and to examine how of HR professionals experienced the implementation of coaching. When analysing the findings on how coaching was used by MNCs in terms of where they were positioned along the Coaching Continuum, key characteristics which differentiated the cases were identified (see Table 2). Besides differentiating the cases, these characteristics described those areas of development which the companies had experienced as important in their progress toward well-performing coaching activity. Table 2 describes the characteristics identified and the existing situation of each case company in terms of each of these characteristics.

Table 2 Key differences characterising the different stages of the Coaching Continuum exhibited by the case MNCs

Characteristic	Ad Hoc Case A	Proactive stage Case B	Mature stage Case C
1. Long-term global integration and implementation strategy for coaching	No	In progress	Yes
2. Global coaching policy	No	Yes	Yes
3. Concept of coaching defined	No	Yes	Yes
4. The coaching process defined	No	Yes	Yes
5. GTM and coaching aligned	No	No	Yes
6. Integration of coaching in HR processes	No	In progress	Yes
7. Research-based approach to coaching	No	No	Yes
8. Measurement and evaluation of coaching	No	Yes	Yes
9. A Coaching Champion	No	Yes	Yes
10. A learning continuum created in which coaching is integrated	No	Yes (different programmes for different managerial levels)	Yes (different programmes for different managerial levels)
11. Organised coaching skills training	Yes (one day's mandatory training)	Yes (voluntary training)	Yes (mandatory training, length of total coaching training process 4 modules over 2 years)
12. Requirements for external and internal coaches	No	Yes	Yes
13. Use of external coaches	Yes (permitted, but not used)	Yes (external professionals used for executives and talents)	Yes (external professionals used for executives and talents)
14. Use of internal coaches	Yes (as a managerial approach)	Yes (as a managerial approach)	Yes (as a managerial approach+ certified internal coaches)
15. International coach pool	No	In progress	In progress

The research findings indicated that in more developed stages the MNCs had formulated a long-term integration and implementation strategy, which was connected to business needs and supported by top management. The need to link the development of coaching with business strategy is supported by several authors (cited e.g. in Peterson 2011). Walker-Fraser (2011) also recommends

that the way in which coaching is to be integrated into the strategic planning process be clarified at the outset.

The MNCs at the Proactive and Mature stages of the implementation (cases B and C) had a global coaching policy that included a definition of coaching and the coaching process, and defined when, what kind of coaching, to whom and by whom it was offered. The study showed that it was seen as critical to successful implementation that the concept of coaching was clarified and defined at the very beginning, before the development of the coaching infrastructure within the organisation.

The need for alignment of GTM and coaching was also raised up by the interviewees as important to successful implementation. However, only case C demonstrated this alignment clearly. Given that the organisation's mission and business strategy ought to impact the organisation's people development strategy, it would be of benefit, if GTM and coaching are aligned (e.g. Hawkins 2012). At more mature stages the MNCs had also integrated coaching with other HR processes. The integration is important if coaching is managed systematically. In cases B and C coaching processes were recorded as a learning event in their HR systems, they were integrated, for example, with KPIs, and coaching was included in managerial job descriptions.

It was also seen as beneficial to support coaching through adopting a research-based approach to its implementation. In particular, case C had found it necessary to hire researchers who provided HR with arguments in favour of coaching. Measurement and evaluation of coaching on a practical level was found to be important. Cases B and C used coaching based assessments, and, for example, practical evaluation discussions of coaching processes. McDermott et al.'s (2007) study confirms that organisations that coordinate coaching centrally and evaluate its effectiveness report better results. Moreover, the MNCs at more mature stages had hired a coaching champion with a coach training background and whose primary responsibility was the coordination and development of coaching within the MNC. Furthermore, in case C the coaching support team consisted of several people who were, for example, certified by ICF. Also Hawkins (2012) suggests that the coaching support team ought to be broad in nature, since reliance on one person is risky.

Cases B and C had created a learning continuum for coaching. Coaching was integrated into different talent and leadership development programmes for different managerial levels, and it was not regarded as a one-time event. Since all the studied MNCs studied were aiming to create a coaching based managerial practice, a long-term approach was crucial. All the MNCs studied offered coaching skills training, but at the mature stage of implementation this training formed part of a long-term approach, in which the coaching skills of managers were evaluated and measured. For quality assurance case B used one external global provider who was able to offer the training globally, while case C organised the training internally. This meant that key talents were trained in coaching skills, along with other managers, and it was expected that they then coach their subordinates.

As demonstrated by the MNCs at more mature stages, it was also crucial to assure the value and quality of coaching by stipulating global requirements for external and internal coaches. All the MNCs permitted the usage of external coaches for executives and talents, but at the 'Ad Hoc' stage external coaches were not hired in practice, because the company had invested in a one day coaching skills training for managers and this was deemed sufficient. Case B used external coaches, because they found that their internal coaching skills were insufficient for the coaching of more senior managers. Case C also used external coaches for their executives and key talents. Internal coaching practices varied considerably between the cases. In case A, coachees received internal coaching, whose quality varied considerably depending on the professional and international experience of the coach. Case B understood coaching as a managerial approach, but used external coaches to coach their executives and talents, whereas case C, with a cadre of certified internal coaches used both and had defined in which situations internal coaching was to be used. Even if organisations wish to reduce spending on external coaching and to rely only on internal coaches, it is beneficial for them to clearly separate professionally-conducted, executive coaching from 'regular' managerial coaching and to set strict quality requirements for their coaches. This is important since Kombarakaran et al. (2008) argue that managers transfer and model their own positive coaching experiences when coaching their subordinates and peers. They also suggest that investment in well-designed and implemented coaching programmes can contribute to the retention of talent.

None of the studied MNCs had a well-established international coach pool in place, although this was seen as important by the MNCs at the more developed stages of the Coaching Continuum. In support of this, several authors have given advice (e.g. Hawkins 2012) on how to develop an effective cadre of coaches. However, all of the criteria mentioned in Table 2, such as having a long-term global integration and implementation strategy for coaching, defining clear quality requirements and so on, need to be in place before an international coach pool can be established.

Having discussed how coaching was implemented in GTM within the MNCs studied, we next focus on why coaching was used.

In none of the case companies examined was coaching driven purely by the GTM strategy. In all of the MNCs studied, executive coaching was offered as one of the development tools in GTM and the process was tailored to the needs of the coachee. The MNCs used coaching to enable a transformation of their leadership culture. It was used also as a tool to help unify a company after several mergers, to develop managers in leadership and talent management programmes, for better organisational performance, and to support people in career transitions, which could be global in nature (to a more senior role and/or into a new culture). Coaching was also used to turn learned leadership skills into action, for awareness building, for supporting underperforming managers and to enable better communication.

Generally, HR had received positive feedback from global talents, who had received coaching, but no further outcomes of coaching in GTM could be observed. In case C, those interviewed believed that coaching had had an important impact on the overall performance of the company. This study confirmed the earlier observations of McDermott et al. (2007), as evidenced by case A, that most organisations are in the early stages of learning to use coaching in a systematic way. The challenges faced by some of the MNCs in this study were caused because these organisations lacked a long-term integration and implementation strategy for coaching, a clear definition of coaching, any integration between coaching and HR processes, defined requirements and quality assurance of internal and external coaches, a global coach pool, measurement of outcomes and HR personnel experienced in foreign assignments and international coaching.

Overall, this study supports the view that there has been an upward trend in terms of the implementation of coaching within key groups and whole organisations, which has been largely driven by HR in the case of the MNCs studied. Neither the industry sector of the organisation nor the duration of the implementation of coaching played a large role in where these companies were located along the continuum. Case B demonstrated that an organisation can move quickly to a fairly mature stage when the coaching infrastructure is created and managed in a systematic manner.

This study is not without its limitations. The number of interview participants in this study was small; further studies to include members of top management, global talents and coaches working internationally would enrich our understanding of coaching within GTM. Furthermore, some of the interviews were conducted over Skype, which may have influenced the results. Larger-scale multiple case studies including a larger number of interview participants would reveal characteristics of all the stages of the Coaching Continuum and deepen our understanding of the stages. Longitudinal research on the effectiveness and challenges of the processes involved in the coaching of key talents in MNCs is important, such as the influence of the complex global environment, and of utilising virtual technology. Although managerial coaching was not included in the scope of this paper, all the case companies were committed to developing managerial coaching, and it is reasonable to assume that managers working internationally require different kinds of coaching skills than managers working only with domestic teams. This area of managerial coaching is currently under-researched. Since little is known why coaching is used and what are the coaching needs of global talents, it would be important to research it further.

Based on the findings discussed above, some best practices can be summarised as follows:

- Develop a long term integration and implementation strategy for coaching which is aligned with the overall strategy and organisational goals and which is supported by top management
- Define coaching and coaching processes at the beginning of the implementation

- Create a support team for coaching consisting of members experienced in international business and in living and working abroad, and which includes a coaching champion(s) with a professional coach training background
- Align GTM and coaching
- Integrate coaching into all HR processes
- Ensure that the design of coaching programmes and offerings are business-driven
- Specify clear quality requirements for internal and external coaches
- Measure and evaluate coaching
- Clearly differentiate managerial coaching and executive coaching
- Create a continuous learning continuum for coaching consisting of different programmes for different managerial levels
- Cooperate with academia in order to develop the processes and practices and to measure the outcomes of coaching

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ACCEPTED VERSION FOR PUBLICATION IN THE JOURNAL OF GLOBAL MOBILITY

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EXPATRIATE COACHING: FACTORS IMPACTING COACHING SUCCESS

Abstract

Purpose: This study investigates factors impacting successful coaching of expatriates.

Design: Data was gathered from 25 semi-structured interviews of coached expatriates, coaches and HR professionals. Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) was used to analyze and interpret the data.

Findings: Altogether, 16 factors impacting expatriate coaching success were identified. They were categorized with respect to the four-quadrant framework of Wilber. The findings suggest, for example, that coaching success is impacted by: from the coach and coachee as individuals perspective, international experience of the coach; from the coaching relationship perspective, coaching language and managerial leadership style; from the behaviors, processes, models and techniques perspective, a clear contract with objectives and evaluation, and challenging behavior of the coach; and from the systems perspective, organizational support.

Practical Implications: Coaching processes, tools and techniques should be adapted to the needs and situation of the assignee. It would be beneficial if organizations ensured that their coaches are internationally experienced and that their managerial leadership style supports coaching. Coaching should be clearly defined and contracted with goals and evaluation. Coaching tools and techniques suitable for international coaching should be added to coach training programs.

Originality: Given the paucity of expatriate coaching research, and the fact that expatriation continues to be a key component of the international management field, this paper contributes to coaching and expatriate research by identifying factors that give expatriate coaching success and by analyzing and presenting them using Wilber's systemic four quadrant framework.

Key words: Expatriates, Coaching success, Qualitative approach

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Article Classification: Research paper

1 INTRODUCTION

Today, coaching is reported to be one of the key learning and organizational interventions (CIPD 2011 Survey Report) in companies. According to the International Coach Federation's Global Coaching Study (2012), the annual revenue from coaching is estimated to be 2 billion USD, and increasing, due to growing demand from a rapidly changing global business environment (Tompson et al., 2008). Following the trends of globalization, international mergers, acquisitions and growing diversity in the work place, international coaching has emerged as one of the recent phenomena in the coaching literature. However, empirical coaching research in the international context lags behind the practice (Abbott et al., 2013).

Expatriates are one of the important groups of employees in multinational companies (MNCs). Their acculturation processes, development and training have been the focus of academic papers for a long time. The concept of coaching has emerged in the cross-cultural training and expatriate literature during the last decade, but coaching is often just mentioned together with mentoring and the articles lack definition and empirical evidence (e.g. Littrell and Salas, 2005; Deller, 2006; Deng and Gibson, 2009). Given that recent data show an increased use of expatriates - employees who are temporarily working and residing in a foreign country (Dowling et al. 2008), and the fact that expatriation in its different forms will continue to be a key component of the international management field (Bonache et al., 2010), a better understanding of the factors affecting expatriate coaching success is needed. Expatriate coaching, which can be seen as a sub-form of executive coaching, is defined here as 'a human development process of international assignees that involves structured, focused interaction and the use of appropriate strategies, tools and techniques in an international context. It aims to promote desirable and sustainable change for the benefit of the coachee and potentially for other stakeholders' (modified from Bachkirova et al., 2010, 1).

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It is well illustrated in the expatriate literature that assignees confront many kinds of challenges, such as work-family conflicts, challenges related to stress and adjustment (Takeuchi, 2010), and physical, emotional, and intellectual stress related to global travel, identity transformations, career transition concerns and non-work demands (Shaffer et al. 2012). Previous research has also shown that expatriates may carry out tasks that are more demanding, and at a higher organizational level than their previous tasks (Suutari and Burch, 2001). To meet these challenges, coaching has been recommended to expatriates as a support and developmental intervention (e.g. Mendenhall and Stahl, 2000; Littrel and Salas, 2005; Mendenhall 2006).

The amount of peer-reviewed coaching research has grown in recent years, and today it is argued that coaching research has grown beyond its infancy. However, many scholars posit that the industry is still supported by a limited evidence-base (e.g. Passmore and Fillary-Travis, 2011; Peterson, 2011). In the literature review only three empirical studies on expatriate coaching were found. All of them support the idea that coaching seems to be an efficient intervention for expatriate managers. The first of them was conducted in the Central-American context and focused on acculturation of expatriate managers (Abbott, 2006). Two further studies were China-specific (Herbolzheimer, 2009; McGill, 2010). Two of them utilized an ‘action research’ methodology where the researcher also acted in the role of the coach (Abbott, 2006; McGill, 2010).

Herbolzheimer’s study gave a good overall picture of expatriate coaching’s practices and potential in China, but had only five coached expatriates, among other groups, in her data. Given this, the evidence is still very limited.

This study is innovative in three important respects. First, in contrast to previous studies, it focuses on factors underpinning expatriate coaching success. Second, the sample of this study consisted of three different stakeholder groups (coached expatriates, internationally working coaches and HR professionals). Third, coaching research has often been focused on some narrow, but important perspectives of coaching, such as the coaching relationship, coach characteristics and

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so on, while this study aims to apply a holistic view by utilizing Ken Wilber's integral framework modified for coaching. In this model, different stakeholders and contexts are seen to influence coaching process (Williams, 2008; Amstrong, 2009; Abbott, 2010; Bachkirova et al., 2010) and therefore also its success. Previously, Wilber's model has been discussed and used, for example, in counseling, business ethics, and organizational development literature. Wilber's integral theory is a model of human and social development that incorporates many approaches in its exploratory framework. It can be applied within both the personal and social domains (Cacioppe and Edwards, 2005). The model is useful here, because it provides a comprehensive framework for mapping factors impacting expatriate coaching success.

The paper aims to answer the following research question:

- Which factors are identified by coached expatriates, internationally working coaches and HR professionals to be critical to coaching success?

Coaching success means here that the different stakeholders have experienced coaching as a successful intervention in which the coaching goals are achieved in the expatriate context. It is worth noting that the perception of success may vary greatly between different individuals and stakeholder groups. Among scholars there is currently no agreement regarding what constitutes a successful coaching outcome and it is argued that the study of coaching outcomes is in its infancy (Stewart et al., 2008; de Haan et al. 2011; 2013).

Although this study does not focus on the core competencies of coaches, it is relevant to note that there are several professional associations for coaches, which have their own credentialing systems and defined core competencies, for example the Association of Coaching (AC), the European Mentoring and Coaching Council (EMCC), and the International Coach Federation (ICF). It has been argued that there are differing perceptions of core competencies, a lack of clarity between the different credentialing organizations, and no explanation of the process used to create the competencies (Gray, 2011; Maltbia et al., 2014; Blumberg, 2014). Also, research on the

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validity, for example, of the eleven ICF core competencies is still very limited (Griffiths and Campbell, 2008). In addition, how these core competencies apply to the international context has not been sufficiently discussed.

This paper aims to expand the knowledge base of expatriate coaching by applying an Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA). IPA is a recently developed approach to qualitative inquiry, whose use is rapidly growing in the human, social and health sciences.

In summary, there is little coaching research in the expatriate context, and previous studies have not focused on expatriate coaching success. This paper has the following structure: review of the coaching literature; discussion of the research design; presentation of findings; discussion and conclusion.

2 Literature Review

This section briefly reviews the coaching literature, especially that reflecting the emerging international perspective. The literature review covers peer-reviewed journal articles, book chapters and PhD dissertations, all in the English language.

Coaching research in general

Although coaching has been defined in various ways, most of the authors share the view that coaching is a collaborative and non-directive relationship between coach and coachee. Coaching is known to be a cross-disciplinary approach that has its roots in psychology, management, learning theory, theories of human and organizational development, philosophy, and sport (Brock, 2008). Increasingly, evidence shows that coaching has positive effects on performance and skills, well-being, coping, work attitudes, and goal directed self-regulation (Theeboom et al., 2014).

Coaching has been compared, for example, with mentoring. The concepts overlap, but the

literature on executive coaching has differentiated coaching from other helping interventions and

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some conceptual distinctiveness can be observed (Feldman and Lankau, 2005; Joo, 2005; Bond and Seneque, 2012). Usually, a mentor has been in a similar role to the mentee and mentoring is characterized by giving advice. Compared to mentoring, coaching relationships are usually shorter-term in nature; also, coaching sessions are more structured than mentoring meetings and scheduled on a regular basis.

Before moving to the issues of international coaching, it is useful to have a brief look at the current state of coaching research in general. According to the Annotated Bibliography gathered by the Coaching Psychology Unit at the University of Sydney, which covers peer-reviewed scholarly papers drawn from PsychINFO, Business Source Premier, and Dissertations Abstracts (DAI), a total of 634 papers were published between 1937 and January 2011, of which 231 were empirical studies. Altogether, there have been 234 outcome studies published since 2000, of which 131 were case studies and 14 randomized studies (Grant, 2011). Research during the 1990s consisted of descriptive studies and single-case studies with little empirical evidence (Grant, 2014). Peer-reviewed coaching research has escalated since 1995, and most of it is less than 10 years old. Kampa-Kokesh and Anderson (2001) found six themes in coaching research: 1) definitions and standards; 2) purpose; 3) techniques and methodologies; 4) comparisons with counseling and therapy; 5) credentials; and 6) recipients of coaching. Today, there is still no professional consensus about what constitutes effective coaching and, until very recently, there were no component analyses of what specific element of the coaching intervention is responsible for positive outcome (MacKie, 2007).

Recently, a line of research that aims to identify the factors associated with the coach-coachee relationship that contribute most significantly to coaching outcomes, has emerged in the coaching literature (McKenna and Davis, 2009; De Haan et al., 2013; Grant, 2014). There has been a growing understanding of the difficulties involved in evaluating the effectiveness of coaching and it is

argued that it is important to identify the ‘active ingredients’ or ‘common factors’ that predict the

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effectiveness of executive coaching. The present study aims to contribute to this emerging research area by presenting an explorative study in the expatriate context that goes beyond the coach-coachee relationship.

The international perspective

Simultaneously with the development of the above research focus, an international perspective has begun to emerge in the coaching literature; intercultural management theories and intercultural researchers have influenced the field. Typically, international coaching has been discussed in handbook chapters and in a few articles in which the understanding of cultural dimensions and values are commonly stated as requirements for international coaching. Philippe Rosinski pioneered the field by combining coaching with cultural theories and by introducing the Cultural Orientations Framework, a questionnaire for assessing and comparing cultures in a cross-cultural coaching context (Rosinski, 2003; 2010). His work has been followed by many others (e.g. Peterson, 2007; Abbott and Rosinski, 2007; Drake et al., 2008; Chmielecki, 2009; Plaister-Ten, 2009; Moral et al. 2009; Passmore, 2009; Coultas et al. 2011; Abbott et al. 2013, Milner et al, 2013; Wilson, 2013; and Barosa-Pereira, 2014).

Abbott and Stening (2009) have described the conceptual Ten-Phase Expatriate Coaching Framework, which integrates the cognitive, behavioral and affective domains of the expatriate manager. Working with this framework supports the expatriate in different phases of the assignment cycle. Other coaching frameworks suitable for international coaching have also been developed. In contrast to Wilber's holistic framework, which is used here to categorize the factors impacting coaching success, these frameworks are designed to guide the actual coaching process in a cross-cultural context (Handin and Steinwedel, 2006; Coultas et al., 2011; Plaister-Ten, 2013). Some conceptual texts discuss how expatriate coaching supports couples from the perspective of satisfactory adjustment (Miser and Miser, 2009), and how coaching can support the acculturation

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process of expatriates, for example by supporting them during navigation of the uncertainty and complexity in the new assignment country (Abbott et al. 2006;). Further, Abbott (2011) has shown that executive coaching of expatriates develops the global mindset, a construct consisting of psychological, social and intercultural capital (Javidan et al., 2010), and cultural intelligence, the capability for consciousness and awareness during intercultural situations (Ng et al., 2009). Generally, the texts discuss international coaching from the perspectives of multinational organizations, global virtual teams, gender issues and coaching approaches needed in different regions and countries. For example, it has been stated that coaching needs to be adapted to local cultural values in the Asian context (Ng; Tanaka cited in Passmore 2009; Nangalia and Nangalia, 2010). **The next section presents some existing empirical expatriate coaching research studies.**

Empirical expatriate coaching research

At the time of writing, the author has found three empirical studies of expatriate coaching. The first study (Abbott, 2006) explored evidence-based executive coaching as an intervention to facilitate expatriate acculturation of expatriate managers, based on fifteen case studies in El Salvador. The coaching applied sound models from coaching and acculturation and an action-research methodology was applied. Because of the cross-cultural context, particular attention was given to the theory and practice of executive coaching from a cultural perspective. A cross-case analysis provided evidence that coaching seemed to be related to improved performance and increased personal satisfaction for expatriates.

The second study (Herbolzheimer, 2009) focused on the practice and potential of expatriate coaching for European executives in China. According to this study, coaching featured unique characteristics, which might be capable of filling at least some of the existing support measure gaps adapted to the circumstances of expatriates. Herbolzheimer's research results revealed that HR representatives were hardly familiar with the existence and practice of expatriate coaching, although

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some companies offered it as a preparatory measure. Coached expatriates benefitted from coaching because: 1) it provided a professional dialogue partner; 2) it was tailored to individual needs; 3) it had a stress reducing effect; and 4) it raised awareness of, and helped participants deal with, intercultural differences. According to the study, expatriates assumed that coaching could alleviate pre-departure uncertainty, increase expatriates' effectiveness, and support the repatriation process.

The third study (McGill, 2010) explored the impact of executive coaching on the performance management of international managers in China. It was an action research study. This study was the first exploration of executive coaching for international managers of a single organization, where the participants were a mixture of Western and non-Western, host-country nationals. The findings suggested that coaching enhanced leadership development and managerial effectiveness by increasing the emotional intelligence capabilities of self-awareness, emotional control, communication strategies, self-reflection and empathy. Executive coaching boosted levels of happiness and confidence in participants and decreased stress. Based on the findings of the study, executive coaching was recommended for international managers regardless of cultural origin or host-country location.

Summary

All in all, international coaching is an emerging and evolving area of interest in the coaching literature. Empirical studies are scarce - no studies analyzing factors impacting expatriate coaching success, as such, were found. In order to gain a general understanding of factors impacting expatriate coaching success, the following section uses a quadrant model as an aid in reviewing the relevant existing literature.

3 A framework for understanding the factors which impact expatriate coaching success

This chapter presents Ken Wilber's integral coaching framework and uses it to categorize the Raija Salomaa, (2015), "Expatriate coaching: factors impacting coaching success", *Journal of Global Mobility*, Vol. 3 Iss 3 pp. 216 - 243. Permanent link to this document: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1108/JGM-10-2014-0050>

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factors found in the literature review that impact on coaching success in the expatriate context. Bachkirova et al. (2010) posit that coaching has been described and explored in four major dimensions: 1) the individual experiences of the coachee and coach; 2) their mutual relationship, including cultural and linguistic aspects; 3) the behaviors, techniques and models used in coaching that are observable and measurable; and 4) the systems, the complexity of factors influencing coaching processes, such as organizations, families and societies. These dimensions correspond to the four quadrants of Wilber's framework (Bachkirova et al. 2010). Wilber's framework, modified for coaching, is illustrated in Figure 1 below.

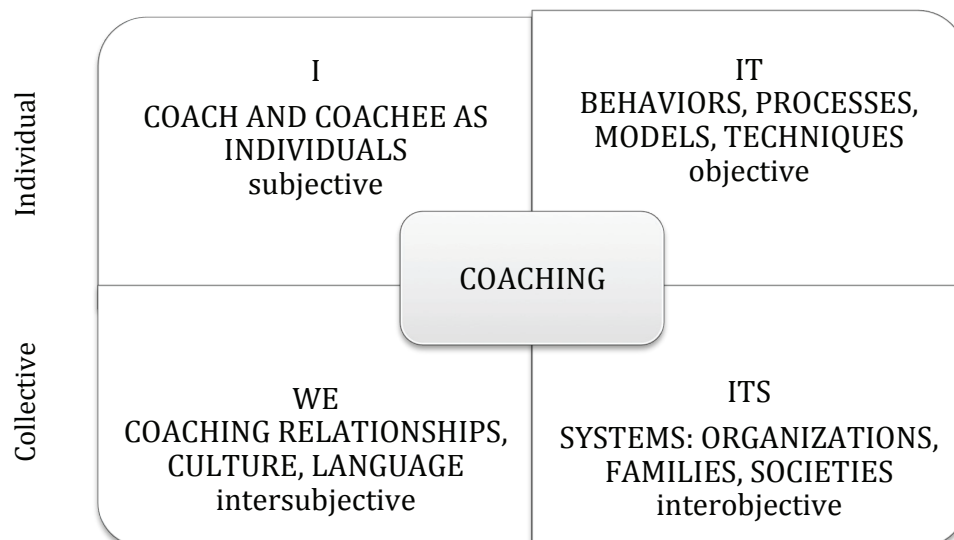


Figure 1: Wilber's coaching framework (modified from Bachkirova et al., 2010, 5, and Williams, 2008, 16)

The core concept of Wilber's framework is that the four quadrants are an important way to illustrate and describe all entities (Cacioppe and Edwards, 2005). In Wilber's framework, human experience is placed within a quadrant map, based on distinctions between the individual and the collective, the subjective and the objective. These dimensions are interconnected. It is argued that

Wilber's model can be very useful in understanding the origin and context of specific client issues

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(Williams, 2008). Integral coaching has its roots in the theory of Ken Wilber (Wilber, 2000; 2001). In the integral coaching framework, the coachee is seen as a participant in a whole system that includes culture, systems and the social context of their situation (Amstrong, 2009; Abbott, 2010). In order to gain a holistic understanding, and to ensure that all possible aspects impacting coaching success were covered, Wilber's framework was utilized in the present study. Since there is a paucity of international coaching research, findings from executive coaching research in domestic settings were also utilized. It has been argued that the executive coaching process in domestic organizations could also be applicable to international contexts, though with some caveats mostly related to the role of culture (McGill, 2010), and it is assumed here that the findings of domestic outcome studies may also apply, with some alterations, to the expatriate context.

The factors impacting coaching success found in the literature review are presented below, categorized with respect to the four dimensions of coaching in Wilber's framework. This study extends Bachkirova et al's (2010) conceptual categorization of coaching research literature by including executive coaching literature relevant to this study in the categorization, and by presenting the empirical findings of this study with the aid of Wilber's framework, later in this paper.

Coach and Coachee as individuals – I-perspective

It has been found that especially high-achievers appreciate being challenged and stretched by coaches (Jones and Spooner, 2006). Further, it has been shown that commitment to the coaching process by the coachee is one of the determinants of coaching success (Bush, 2005). As the critical literature reviews on executive coaching show, the willingness of the coachee to learn and change is also one of the factors influencing coaching's effectiveness; it is known that some executives are more open to coaching than others (Passmore and Fillary-Travis, 2011; Peterson, 2011). Stewart et

al. (2008) have found positive correlations between application of coaching development and Raija Salomaa, (2015), "Expatriate coaching: factors impacting coaching success", *Journal of Global Mobility*, Vol. 3 Iss 3 pp. 216 - 243. Permanent link to this document: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1108/JGM-10-2014-0050>

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conscientiousness, openness to experience, emotional stability and general self-efficacy. Jones et al.'s study (2014) showed that the coachee's personality matters. They found a significant positive relationship between extraversion and perceived coaching effectiveness. Generally, little is known about the needs that underpin the coachee's willingness to be coached, as shown by the review of the executive coaching literature conducted by Feldman and Lankau (2005).

In a study of cross-cultural coaching in a German context, Milner et al. (2013) found that issues such as expecting friendship with a coach, idealization of the coach, reservations about the coach's gender and culture, and difficulties in establishing trust occurred as critical factors in a cross-cultural coaching relationship.

When there is a lack of empirical evidence, it has been suggested that the coach should be aware of his or her own cultural background (Abbott et al. 2009). Foreign country experience and a solid base of culture-related knowledge are seen as essential characteristics of expatriate coaches (Herbolzheimer, 2009; McGill, 2010). The coach's credibility and confidence also contribute to her/his effectiveness (Hall et al., 1999; Sue-Chan and Latham, 2004; Ianiro et al., 2013). Further, McGill (2010) suggests that international coaches need to be knowledgeable about international business and Human Resource (HR) issues in order to foster a greater level of success. He proposes that, for example, expatriates leading subsidiaries abroad have added pressures and their coaches need to understand these special challenges. Different characteristics of coaches are needed in different regions of the world: for example, Asian coachees prefer to work with coaches who are senior to them in age, experience and qualification (Nangalia and Nangalia, 2010).

Coaching relationship – we-perspective

The quality of the coaching relationship has been found to be one of the key factors contributing to coaching success (e.g. Bluckert, 2005; Gyllensten and Palmer, 2007; Boyce et al. 2010; Ely et al., 2010). A well-functioning coaching relationship is commonly described in the literature as

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consisting of empathy, positive regard, collaboration, trust and confidentiality. Grant's (2014) study suggests that, in addition to the above factors, goals are central to both the coaching enterprise and the coach-coachee relationship. He posits that a goal-focused coaching relationship has significantly more impact on the successful outcomes of coaching than anything else.

The need for a good match between the coach and coachee has been emphasized. For example, Sherman and Freas (2004) have discussed in their conceptual article the concept of matching coach and coachee, based on relevant demographic characteristics such as educational and professional experience. Evidence from an Asian context indicates that international coaches need to adapt their style to be culturally congruent with the local culture. For example, this means that it is necessary to have a deeper emotional connection with the coachee before the 'real coaching' can begin and that the establishment of trust may take much longer than in a Western context (Nangalia and Nangalia, 2010). For this reason, the we-perspective might be more important for coaching success in the **collectivist cultures rather than individualistic cultures.**

Behaviors, processes, models and techniques – IT-perspective

The identification of the key competencies and behaviors of effective coaches has been the focus of several research papers in domestic settings; the ability to empathise, reflect and listen has been found to be essential for coaches (e.g. Hall et al., 1997; Passmore, 2010). Further, coaches need to provide candid feedback and to foster self-awareness in the coachee (Luebbe, 2005). Ianiro et al. (2013) have shown that a coach's confident behavior is beneficial for goal attainment and impacts coaching success. Furthermore, Peterson (2007) argues in his conceptual paper that the giving of feedback needs to be culturally adapted, because in collectivistic or high-context cultures feedback is likely to be viewed as a personal criticism or even an attack. It is also suggested that the coach should focus exclusively on the needs of the coachee (Hall et al., 1999; Jones and Spooner, 2006).

Coaching literature highlights a sequence of four major activities that occur in a coaching process: Raija Salomaa, (2015), "Expatriate coaching: factors impacting coaching success", *Journal of Global Mobility*, Vol. 3 Iss 3 pp. 216 - 243. Permanent link to this document: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1108/JGM-10-2014-0050>

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data gathering, feedback, implementation of the coaching intervention, and evaluation (Feldman and Lankau, 2005). Tompson et al. (2008) posit that the longer the coaching process lasts, the more highly associated it is with coaching success. Baron and Morin's (2009) findings suggest that the number of coaching sessions received was a significant determinant of the coach-coachee relationship. Although the phases listed above are fairly standard, the coaching approaches vary widely (Feldman and Lankau, 2005). It has also been suggested that the ability of the coach to employ many techniques, to use them well, and at the right moment, are critical to coaching success (De Haan et al., 2011).

Systems – ITS-perspective

Organizations that use central coordination of coaching, evaluate its effectiveness, and focus on positive performance outcomes report better results than those that do not (McDermott et al., 2007). The clarity of the coaching purpose also counts – the clearer the reason for coaching in the company is, the more likely it is that the coaching process is viewed as successful. Further, making coaching a stand-alone activity is not correlated with success, and coaching should be integrated in other HR systems (e.g. Tompson et al., 2008; Kombarakaran et al., 2008). Natalie and Diamante (2005) note that beyond the coach and coachee, the key stakeholders in a coaching assignment are the coachee's manager, HR department, peers, direct reports, and other people in the coachee's life. The organizational support, in particular that of the coachee's manager, is very important to coaching success, and it is worth taking time for managerial support and positive communication about coaching throughout the organization, in order to gain maximum benefits from it (McGovern et al., 2001).

In addition, other systems such as, for example, society and family, may have an impact on expatriate coaching success. As Wilber's model suggests, there might be interplay between several different systems that are present in the expatriate coaching context at the same time.

However, no empirical studies were found in the literature review concerning any other

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systems than the organizational perspective. Given that there is more and more evidence that the successful adjustment of expatriates' spouses and families goes hand in glove with the success of international assignments, Miser and Miser (2009) have argued in their conceptual article that, for example, coaching for expatriate couples would represent a sound investment in the success of expatriate assignments. It could be that expatriate couples would contribute to each other's coaching experiences and therefore also to its success.

In summary, some research on coaching success exists, but in many respects this still lacks empirical evidence in the international context. In particular, the knowledge base in relation to expatriate coaching success is limited. In order to fill this gap, a qualitative study was conducted.

4 Methodology

An Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) was adopted for this study, because this approach has been recommended for use in coaching research by Passmore and Fillery-Travis (2011). They posit that IPA is a recognized method of qualitative research and it can help us to understand the richness of human interactions in coaching. IPA has been applied previously to coaching, for example, by Gyllensten & Palmer (2007), and Gyllensten et al. (2011). It has been also been applied in expatriation research (Fitzgerald and Howe-Walsh, 2008). IPA is especially useful in cases with complexity, process or novelty (Smith and Osborn, 2003). The sampling of IPA is purposive, and IPA research is concerned with the detailed examination of lived experiences by means of in-depth interviews. Consequently, the sample sizes of IPA studies tend to be small (Smith et al., 2012; Langdrige, 2007; Fade, 2007).

In order to collect multiple perspectives the sample consisted of a total of 25 interviewees, including 9 coached assignees, 8 international coaches, and 8 HR professionals responsible for coaching in MNCs. The demographics of the interview participants are illustrated below.

EXPATRIATES					
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Position	Nationality	Industry	Location	Gender	Age group
Managing Director	American	Pharmaceutical industry	Korea	Male	40 – 55
Director	Finnish	Pharmaceutical industry	Switzerland	Female	40 – 55
Managing Director	Finnish	Pharmaceutical industry	USA	Male	40 – 55
Director R & D	Finnish	Mechanical Engineering	Italy	Male	40 -55
Senior Manager	German	Telecommunication	Finland	Male	40 – 55
Head of Planning & Development	Finnish	Telecommunication	India	Female	40 -55
Vice President	Canadian	Semiconductors	Japan	Male	40 – 55
Head of Audit	French	Banking	Japan	Male	40 – 55
Vice President	American	IT	Finland	Male	40 – 55
COACHES		Coaching			
External	Finnish	Coaching	Switzerland	Female	40 – 55
Internal coach and Senior HR Manager	American	Hospital & Healthcare industry	USA	Female	40 – 55
External	Romanian-British	Coaching	Switzerland	Female	40 – 55
Internal coach and Executive Director	Canadian	Higher education	Qatar	Male	40 – 55
External	American	Coaching	Japan	Male	40 – 55
External	American	Coaching	Switzerland	Female	55 – 65
External	American	Coaching	Switzerland	Female	55 – 65
External	Venezuelan	Coaching	Finland	Male	40 – 55
HR PROFESSIONALS					
HR Business Partner	Finnish	IT	Finland	Female	40 – 55
Manager, Learning and Development	Dutch	Mechanical engineering	Netherlands	Female	40 – 55
Senior Leadership Consultant	Danish	Banking	Denmark	Male	40 – 55
HR Director	Finnish	Pharmaceutical industry	Finland	Female	40 – 55
HR Director Asia Pacific	Finnish	Mechanical engineering	Singapore	Male	40 – 55
HR Business Partner	Finnish	IT	Finland	Female	40 – 55
Vice President, HR	Finnish	IT	Finland	Female	40 – 55
Country HR Manager	Finnish	Hospital & Healthcare industry	Finland	Female	40 – 55

Table 1: Demographics of interview participants

Interview participants were recruited by publishing announcements in coaching journals, by contacting several coaches found in LinkedIn, by using a snowballing system, and direct contacts to HR departments of MNCs. These interviews were gathered as part of a larger scale research project in 2012 and 2013 (N=33) by the author. **Some of the interviews were not**

analyzed for the purpose of this paper, because they focused more on the implementation of

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coaching from a HR perspective. However, these interviews did provide useful background information for the present study.

The in-depth interviews were conducted retrospectively, after the actual coaching had ended. In a pre-interview email details of the research process, of the interviewer and of the interview were given to the interviewees. They were informed that the researcher was interested in their expatriate coaching experiences and that the interviewer had studied and practiced coaching. At the outset of the interview, participants were given an opportunity to ask questions about the research process, and the interviewer asked permission to record the interview. Further, the interviewer ensured that the collected data was treated anonymously and confidentially and that the transcriptions were sent to the interview participants for approval (McMillan and Schumacher, 2006).

The interviewer used an interview guide, which helped orientation to the topical domains, for which answers were required. The interviewer also had a coaching background and hence a wide knowledge base about the research topic (Flick, 1997). The topics included the dimensions of Wilber's framework: 1) coach and coachee as individuals; 2) behaviors, processes, models, and techniques, 3) coaching relationships, culture and language; and 4) systems, organizations, families, and societies. Semi-structured, open-ended questions were used in order to optimize data gathering. For example, questions such as 'How did you experience your coaching process?', 'What kind of techniques were used in your coaching process?', 'Which factors contributed to the success of coaching in the international context?', 'What was the role of culture and language in your coaching process?', and 'Which parties were involved in your coaching process?' were asked. When needed, further clarifying questions were posed. Questions, such as 'Anything else?' helped the interviewee to think and speak further about the topic.

The interviews were completed in Finnish or English in face-to-face meetings, over the telephone and by using virtual equipment. The average duration of interviews was 45-60 minutes.

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The interviews were recorded and transcribed verbatim. In cases in which Finnish was used, the verbatim quotations were translated into English by the author.

In this study, the IPA method for samples larger than 10, described by Smith et al. (2012, 114-117), was utilized and the researcher explored the themes shared between the cases. Even though the analysis was primarily at the group level, the themes are illustrated with examples taken from individuals (Smith et al., 2012, 106). Some atypical extracts may also be used to illustrate contradiction and complexity. Elliot et al. (1999) posit that in good qualitative research researchers should specify their personal perspective relevant to the research. In the present study, the researcher has both studied and practiced coaching. This might have influenced the analysis. In order to avoid bias, the researcher decided to collect data from expatriates who had been coached by other, internationally working coaches, and to check the findings against the literature several times during the analysis phase.

The analysis included four stages. First, the researcher read the transcripts several times. Second, Emerging themes were marked in the margins. Third, the theme titles with a higher level of abstraction were written on paper, and a table of themes was created. The same process was repeated for all transcripts and a final list of themes for the whole group of participants was made. Fourth, the themes were prioritized, and categorized with respect to Ken Wilber's framework and translated into a narrative account with excerpts of transcriptions to support the analysis. This involved reduction and prioritizing of the data (Fade, 2004, 650).

The incompatibility of the terms validity and reliability, as used in quantitative research, with the underlying assumptions and tenets of qualitative research has resulted in the redefinition of these terms for greater harmony with the interpretative perspective of qualitative research; numerous scholars have contributed to the synthesis of validity criteria for demonstrating the rigor and legitimacy of qualitative research (Whittemore et al., 2001). As recommended by Langdridge (2007), Shaw (2011), and Smith et al. (2012), the quality of the present study is discussed here by

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following Yardley's criteria (Yardley 2000). Yardley's principles for assessing the quality of qualitative research are: sensitivity to context; commitment and rigor; transparency and coherence; and impact and importance. These can be established in various different ways. For example, sensitivity to context is shown here by using a considerable number of verbatim extracts and by giving a voice to different interview participants in the report. Lincoln and Guba (1985) argue that it is important that the results reflect the experience of participants in a believable way. Authenticity is closely linked to credibility of qualitative research and involves research that reflects the meanings and experiences that are lived and perceived by the interview participants (Sandelowski, 1986). During the data collection the researcher showed commitment in the degree of attentiveness to the participant by creating a comfortable interview environment for the participants. This was evidenced by the fact that many of the interview participants found the interview to be a useful opportunity for reflecting upon their experiences, and they thanked the interviewer for this. The participants were very open about reflecting upon their experiences.

The sample was chosen carefully for relevance to the research question – all interview participants had been involved in coaching, but represented different stakeholder groups, nationalities and industries. This also served the purpose of data triangulation (Whittemore et al., 2001). **Thus, it is worth noticing that the interview participants were nearly all of the same age group and mostly Europeans (out of 25, 11 were Finnish). This might have an influence on the findings. However, executive coaching is often offered to senior executives, and their coaches are also experienced professionals. The same applies to HR professionals in the sample. Hence, as decision makers, they were in senior roles, and therefore all, almost inevitably, in the 45 – 55 year age group.**

Before the analysis, the transcripts were sent back to participants for their comments. The qualitative research process and writing consisted of several drafting and re-drafting phases, which helped to clarify the analysis.

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5 Findings

In this section the factors impacting coaching success that were identified in the analysis are discussed. The findings are presented using Wilber's framework, as discussed above, and by giving illustrative verbatim citations.

Coach and Coachee as individuals – I-perspective

In the analysis, three main factors were found to impact coaching success: *adaptability of the coaching process* to the coachee's needs; *coachability* of the coachee (defined below); and *the international experience of the coach*.

The *adaptability of a coaching process* to the needs of a coachee was emphasised by both the coaches and coachees as an important ingredient of coaching success.

***'I prefer to talk about individual situations that are going on.'* (American male expatriate in Korea)**

***'I truly believe that the coaching brings the agenda into coaching and that we work on the coachees' agenda, so a lot of that depends on what is their agenda.'* (American female Senior HR manager and internal coach in the USA)**

Coaching needed to be responsive to the complexity of the assignee's international working and business environment, which included, for example: cultural and language challenges; new areas of responsibility and of strategic levels at the on-boarding phase of the assignment; and working with virtual teams consisting of several nationalities. Thus, it was seen to be necessary to clarify the expectations and goals of the coaching assignment at the outset of the coaching process.

Clear needs for developing new skills, such as leadership or business skills, could be observed in all of the transcriptions of the expatriates. Further, the needs included career-related and cultural issues, as well as support in complex international working relationships. Support in identity construction was emphasized by most of the interviewed expatriates. They revealed that their coaching processes consisted of different layers and various needs:

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'...he would ask me questions that would lead me to deal with the issues I needed to deal with, it helped me tremendously..' (Canadian male expatriate in Japan)

The findings suggest that adaptability of the coaching process to the coachee's needs impact coaching success.

Second, the *coachability* of the coachee is discussed. In this context, 'coachability' describes how open the coachee is to being coached. Expatriates' openness, internal motivation, ability to trust and commitment were identified as important factors influencing coaching success. All of these attributes are ingredients of coachability. The next excerpt illustrates the aspects of openness and commitment as important elements of coachability:

'When receiving coaching, there is something like a safe net that is handed out. If you are open, you can grab it, and it will help you to get out of the situation. Now, it is your work to do that...also to put the right energy from your own perspective to ensure that you do what is needed.'
(A German male expatriate in Finland)

Different kind of challenges experienced by the assignees impacted their coachability. For example, whether or not the expatriate had experienced culture shock was seen to have an impact on their motivation for receiving coaching:

'...I think it would be better for them to have a bit of culture shock first and then become more open to coaching.' (Romanian-British female coach in Switzerland)

From the HR perspective, the coachability of the coachee plays an important role because coaching is expensive in terms of skills, time and money – investments that are wasted if the coachee is not committed enough:

'The biggest challenge is always when a coachee says, OK, I will start a coaching process, but he goes into it by saying it only, but is not committed with his head or with his heart.'
(A Finnish male HR Director in Singapore)

The openness and willingness of their coachees to be coached were also crucial for the coaches.

Third, the interviewees emphasized that the *international experience* of the coach was critical to coaching success. The coached expatriates suggested that understanding the culture and language of the assignment country, combined with international business experience, were important factors affecting coaching success:

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‘One would obviously be understanding the local business, culture and climate, the does and don’ts. If my coach did not understand that, there would have been a problem. As I said earlier I felt that I had a personal strength already, but definitely my coach would not have credibility with me if he did not understand those things as well. Understanding the local language is also paramount. Another thing that helped me was that my coach had his own international business experience from working from Japan and working from other locations. So he could draw on personal experience to understand what I am was dealing with and sometimes provided examples. So the three things that would come to my mind: language understanding, cultural understanding and business experience.’
(Canadian male expatriate in Japan)

However, representatives of HR pointed out that coach and coachee should not be too different in their cultural backgrounds:

‘Well I think that the role of culture is so significant that I would not hire a Chinese coach for a Finn...If the coachee is European we need a person who has spent long enough time here and knows the local culture here...’ (A Finnish male HR Director in Singapore)

Remarkably, all of the coaches had been exposed to multiculturalism since their childhood or period of formal education. All were at least bilingual and most of them had lived and worked in several countries. This had influenced their decision to become coaches and, especially, to work with people in international transitions. A deep understanding of the needs and situation of their coachees was based on their own experiences of living and working abroad. However, many of the coaches recognized that this deep understanding should be coupled with positive regard and empathy. International experience was found to be one of the important factors influencing expatriate coaching success:

‘I have clients in the Middle East, in Asia, in Africa, in Russia, everywhere. Expatriates living here, I am headquartered in Switzerland but also quite a lot of clients who are here but do not understand the culture very well or who want to learn about a global culture, so its kind of European because I live here, American because I am from there and global because that is what I consider myself, a global citizen.’ (American female coach in Switzerland)

International experience helped coaches to adapt to the different worldviews of their coachees and, as one Venezuelan coach noted, it added ‘a third dimension’ to the cross-cultural coaching process.

These factors also increased the credibility of the coach.

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Coaching relationship – WE-perspective

The main themes found in the data shown to impact the success of expatriate coaching were: *trust, confidentiality, coaching language, managerial leadership style, and clear definition of coaching* in the sponsoring company.

First, the analysis indicated that *trust* was a key element in the coaching relationship and a strong predictor of coaching success:

‘He (coach) pushed me to think differently and I respected him enough to really go along with it...he gained my respect by the way he would push me and I would be thinking about it for days after. So I think the key to us is that I really trusted the guy. After about six or seven sessions I really trusted the guy and felt that I could tell him just about anything’.
(An American male expatriate in Korea)

The creation of trust often took several months. All of the coaches expressed the need to be deeply connected with the coachee and put a lot of energy into the creation of trust, specifically at the beginning of the coaching relationship. For example, coaches noted that after they had established trust they were able to challenge their coachees in a safe place. Generally, the HR professionals were aware of the importance of a trustful coaching relationship, and spoke about the match between the coach and coachee. In order to ensure the ‘match’ and that needs were met, they left the coachees to choose their own coach.

Second, the importance of *confidentiality* is discussed. When an organization sponsored a coaching program, most of the coaches were very strict about confidentiality. Confidentiality was seen to be a prerequisite of coaching success, because it influenced the openness of the coachee and impacted the coaching relationship. Confidentiality was also an important issue for some of the interviewed assignees and some of them noted that in order to maintain confidentiality in the coaching relationship they had hired external coaches.

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***'I made my decision based on that I didn't want my conversations to be known within the company so I preferred to have a coach from outside.'* (French expatriate in Japan)**

'The client can trust that the support is authentic, honest and totally confidential'
(A Finnish female coach in Switzerland)

Third, the *coaching language* was found to be an important factor of the coaching relationship and contributed to coaching success. Some coaches and coachees had contradictory views about the coaching language: it was usually English, but expatriates would have preferred their native language. When using English, adequate language skills played a role:

'...you need to be pretty fluent, your language skills must be on a good level so that you can get the most out of it. You need to be able to communicate your feelings...'
(A Finnish male expatriate in the USA)

Coaching in the native language was perceived also as 'a safe harbor' in the midst of the challenges of the expatriate life:

'...coaching in Finnish was a kind of a secure place for me as I was in a fairly turbulent situation.'
(A Finnish female expatriate in Switzerland)

Some of the interviewed coaches were of the opinion that coaching in the native language gave the coachees a greater freedom of expression. HR representatives also supported this view. However, a contradictory opinion was presented by some of the coaches:

'I have only ever coached properly in English. I speak German, French and Romanian as well but haven't actually coached in them...but all the coaching would be in English, I think to a certain extent it allowed to keep professional and personal separate...In the first instance it kind of gave them a sort of comfort zone, being in the professional language...'
(A Romanian-British female coach in Switzerland)

All of the coaches were at least bilingual, but three of the interviewed coaches said that they coach in English only. Being a foreign language to both parties, the use of English in a coaching relationship could be perceived as helpful:

'...I am coaching in English and all my engagements are in English, the fact that I am not a native English language speaker, I also use that to my advantage with the interaction with my client...it is OK not to be fluent...It is a comfortable environment for the person to open up.'
(A Venezuelan male coach in Finland)

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Strongly bilingual coaches used another language as a support mechanism in their coaching. For example, an American coach used metaphors or words common in the Japanese business jargon to help his American coachees to understand the Japanese culture and perform better in their day-to-day work. Different languages represent different ways of thinking, and as one coach expressed it, understanding different languages opens up new worlds in a coaching relationship and contributes therefore to its success.

One of the interviewees brought up the idea that the cultural inheritance of a country where the spoken language is a vehicle for conveying knowledge can be very helpful in a coaching relationship:

'...the great thing about the Islamic world in an Arab state is that there is such a conversationalist culture, everything is through conversation.'
(A Canadian male coach in Qatar)

These findings suggest that coaching language impacted coaching success in several ways. Coaching in the native language enabled a deeper interaction in the coaching relationship. The ability of the coaches to speak several languages helped them to work with different cultural assumptions and bilingual coaches used different languages to foster understanding and cultural learning in their coachees. A country's conversationalist culture functioned as an excellent platform for coaching discussions.

Fourth, *managerial leadership style* of the sponsoring organization also had an impact, which might be negative or positive, on coaching success. The managerial leadership style of the sponsoring company may influence the overall understanding of what coaching is, the coachability of the expatriate, and the support given to a coachee by their manager and the organization:

'...the biggest problem you will find with many companies is that the whole business model has been very much about tell rather than ask.'
(An American female coach and HR Director in the USA)

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Fifth, whether or not coaching was *clearly defined* by a company also impacted coaching's success. Companies that failed to provide a supportive and coaching-friendly culture also often failed to provide a clear definition of coaching.

'I think when coaching doesn't work is when you have someone who is very busy telling and that is what I would call advising or managing or telling versus coaching but they think it is coaching. I think part of it is having a very clear context on what coaching is.'

(An American female coach and HR Director in the USA)

'... the whole concept it is not clear what it really is and what are the expectations from it.'

(A Finnish female HR Director in Finland)

The interviewed expatriates confirmed this finding. One of them noted that in his company many people mix mentoring and coaching.

Behaviors, processes, models and techniques – IT-perspective

Six themes were identified that impact coaching success with regard to behaviors, processes, models and techniques used in expatriate coaching: a *clear contract*, *internal versus external coaching*, *coaching techniques adapted* to the coachee's situation, *structured process nature* of coaching, *challenging behavior of the coach*, and *self-generated ideas*.

First, a *clear contract*, consisting of objectives and evaluation of the process, was seen to contribute to coaching success:

'That's important to have as an objective or some purpose for the engagement...I think together we came up, I think part of the engagement was right up-front, he required that we have an objective to meet, and we agreed to that it would become as part of the contract and in terms what the objective was and then there would be an evaluation to be sure that our objective was met...'

(A Canadian male expatriate in Japan)

This perspective was also confirmed by the HR professionals. When asked about negative coaching experiences, one HR director described her observations during an evaluation discussion about an unsuccessful coaching assignment in which the coachee felt that he did not get anything from his coaching process because goals had not been set.

Second, *internal vs. external coaching* was highlighted as a factor impacting coaching success.

Many of the interviewed assignees said that they preferred external, professional coaches. Beyond Raija Salomaa, (2015), "Expatriate coaching: factors impacting coaching success", Journal of Global Mobility, Vol. 3 Iss 3 pp. 216 - 243. Permanent link to this document: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1108/JGM-10-2014-0050>

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the problem of confidentiality, one of the problems of internal coaching was that it was conducted on a voluntary basis, in which the relationship was not perceived as professional. Further, one expatriate pointed out that the quality of internal coaches may not be high enough. She was concerned about internal coaches who acted as advice-giving consultants:

'Some coaches feel that beyond asking questions they are allowed to give advice. I think it is wrong, they should not do it...If you have a sort of consulting feeling, it is rather unpleasant, and that happens, especially when there are internal coaches who do not have a professional coaching training...'

(A Finnish female expatriate in India)

Third, *adaption of coaching techniques* impacted coaching success. The coaches used various tools, including: Emotional Intelligence and value assessments; special assessments such as the frameworks of Milton Bennett and Hofstede; stage models such as culture shock; data gathered from subordinates and managers, including feedback, shadowing and so on:

'If I work with expatriates there is again a benefit. I mean I describe the expatriate experience, as a rollercoaster there are so many ups and downs...Sometimes it is understanding where you are.'

(An American female coach in the USA)

Most important for the coaching success was that the techniques and coaching tools were adapted to the coachee's needs, rather than used mechanically:

'I tend to use anything that might work for that client. I do like to have an introductory conversation to see what might suit them best, so I use everything from Milton Bennett to certain values, attitudes and Hofstede...'

(A Romanian-British female coach in Switzerland)

The main techniques used by coaches were questioning and active listening. Even in the interviews that were done retrospectively, after the coaching itself, some coachees were able to remember a powerful question verbatim. Cultural differences made the coaches even more focused on their listening, compared to a monocultural coaching situation:

'...I will do a lot of active listening, particularly in the first session, so that I am understanding what they are saying and if it is in English and for example they are German or Scandinavian...'

(An American female coach in Switzerland)

Fourth, the *structured process nature of coaching* was also important, because it helped to implement action and change. Therefore, this structure was crucial to the success of coaching. Usually, the interviewed coaches worked with their coachees for 6 – 12 months, since achieving a desired change within a shorter period was usually not possible. The HR professionals confirmed this:

'Usually our coaching processes last 8 – 10 months. Personally I do not believe in short coaching processes, it really takes 8-12 sessions to achieve results.'
(A Finnish male HR Director in Singapore)

Further, most of the coaches used some kind of homework because they believed that change occurs between the coaching sessions, and homework assignments help their coachees to reach their objectives.

Fifth, *challenging behavior* by the coach was perceived as an important factor of coaching success. Leaving the coachee with the sense that they had really struggled during the coaching session was valuable, because challenge generated a degree of self-reflection that resulted in learning. The importance of strong challenging for coaching success was very clear:

'He pushed me so hard that it left me a little unmotivated sometimes, so I'd walk away from the session thinking there is so much stuff that I won't be able to get my arms around it. I always felt like it was done for a reason because after a couple of days my thinking settled and my answers become a little bit clearer. I know that sounds vague but it's a process I came to appreciate... Overall I think it was extremely positive for my motivation and it kept me going on... His ability to keep challenging me was built on trust, credibility and everything.'
(An American male expatriate in Korea)

However, it is critical to note that all the coached assignees of this sample were Westerners and strong challenging does not work similarly in all cultural contexts:

'There is a lot more listening in Asia in the early stages. When you have people who are used to coaching or are from a Western background it is much more challenging, giving some pushback to what people are saying rather than just listening.'
(An American male coach in Japan)

Last, *self-generated ideas* that were *actively encouraged by the coach*, were highly valued by the

coachees and contributed to their positive coaching experience. Even though it might have been Raija Salomaa, (2015), "Expatriate coaching: factors impacting coaching success", Journal of Global Mobility, Vol. 3 Iss 3 pp. 216 - 243. Permanent link to this document: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1108/JGM-10-2014-0050>

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difficult for them, they appreciated that they were coached to take the lead and take ownership of their own problems. The coach's neutrality and ability to work without a pre-set agenda clearly affected the successful experience of coachees. This was supported by the coaches who said in the interview that they are non-directive and let their coachees find their own solutions.

All of the themes discussed above occurred in the sample to an almost equal extent.

However, the challenging behavior of the coach was mentioned most frequently by the expatriates, as a requisite for their personal growth, and thus contributed significantly to coaching success.

Systems- ITS-perspective

The main themes concerning the factors impacting coaching success in the data were *organizational support* and *adequate resources*. First, HR managers stated very clearly that the top management should support coaching and that *organizational support* is important:

'I think it is very important that let's say there is a supported management approach towards initiating coaching processes and coaching programs...the results can be better...'
(A Dutch female HR Manager in the Netherlands)

Many of the interviewed HR professionals said that the supervisor usually discusses the objectives together with HR and takes part in the evaluation of a coaching process. Even though many of the HR professionals were of the opinion that organizational support is important to coaching success, the coached expatriates interviewed were only vaguely aware, if at all, of any support from HR and management within their organizations. In most cases it was the assignee who introduced the coach to the HR department. One assignee had himself paid for the coaching process and he was totally without the organization's support.

Second, *adequate resources* were a concern and impacted coaching success. For financial reasons companies may try to shorten coaching processes or use internal coaches who are not well trained.

Also, it was pointed out that coachees couldn't open up with internal coaches because there might

be issues that cannot be shared. These factors may influence the quality of coaching negatively:

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'In the age of cutting budgets, thought that 1 or 2 sessions were enough to resolve all the problems in the world that ever existed and then are surprised when they don't quite have the results...'
(A Romanian-British female coach in Switzerland)

Given that the role of the expatriate's spouse and family is known to be important for successful assignments, it is interesting that only one coach mentioned in the interview that individual expatriate coaching could be supported by coaching of his/her family members. Further, some of the coaches also suggested that individual coaching processes could be more successful, if peer coaching programs or team coaching could support them. No other systemic themes arose in the interviews. One explanation could be that the coaching processes of this sample took place in an organizational setting that influenced the thinking of the interviewed individuals.

6 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

This research was aimed at finding factors that impact expatriate coaching success. The main factors found in the analysis are presented in Table 2 and discussed below. The transcriptions included many sub-themes, for example, the different characteristics of coaches, but only the main themes are presented here, since the analysis involved prioritizing of the data. **All in all, the holistic model of Wilber functioned well as a categorization tool in the analysis. As can be observed from the results presented below, the different factors of the different quadrants impacting coaching success in the expatriate context interact with each other. They are all essential for expatriate coaching's success.**

<p>Coach and coachee as individuals – I perspective:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adaptability of the coaching process • Coachability of the coachee • International experience of the coach 	<p>Behaviors, processes, models and techniques – IT perspective:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A clear contract with objectives and evaluation • Internal versus external coaching • Coaching techniques adapted to the coachee’s situation • Structured process nature of coaching • Challenging behavior of the coach • Self-generated ideas
<p>Coaching relationship – WE perspective:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trust • Confidentiality • Coaching language • Managerial leadership style • Clear definition of coaching 	<p>Systems –ITS perspective:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organizational support • Adequate resources

Table 2: Factors impacting expatriate coaching success

Adaptability of the coaching processes to the needs of the coachee and *coachability*, the expatriate’s openness and willingness to be coached, were found to impact coaching success. In the expatriate context, Herbolzheimer (2009) has identified different types of expatriate coaching (transition, emergency, repatriate, and culture-focused coaching), but the present study strongly

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suggests that the coaching processes of expatriates consist of several layers and different coaching needs that evolve during the coaching processes. Therefore, it is crucial to coaching success that the coaching processes are adapted to the needs of the expatriate.

The challenging working environment of expatriates, which also influenced the internal motivation of expatriates to receive coaching, generated clear coaching needs. *Coachability* of the expatriate was found to be important with regard to coaching success.

International experience, including knowledge of the language, culture and business environment of the assignment location, was regarded as a critical characteristic of expatriate coaches for coaching success. It was also a prerequisite for the credibility of the coach. The present study suggests that deep understanding of the expatriate was based on the coach's own international business and coaching experiences, combined with empathy and positive regard. According to many modern psychological traditions, empathy and connection make people more cooperative and open to change (Stober, 2006). In a turbulent expatriate context, empathy and positive regard can be seen as even more important ingredients of the coaching relationship than in other contexts. This study strongly indicates that, in contrast to coaches working in domestic settings, successful expatriate coaches need to have a well-developed global mindset (**Javidan et al., 2010**) and they have to be savvy in international business.

The analysis indicates that *trust* was one of the key elements of the expatriate coaching relationships. This finding supports previous findings in domestic settings (e.g. Luebbe, 2005; Boyce et al., 2010; Gyllensten and Palmer, 2007). Alvey and Barclay posit (2007) that trust develops in executive coaching over time and as a result of the complex interaction of several factors (e.g. coach's credibility, neutrality and challenging behaviors). They suggest that confidentiality was essential to trust development and that trust impacts the perception of value and outcome of goals in coaching. In the present study, trust was also found to be linked with the ability of the coach to challenge coachees out of their comfort zones, with credibility, and with the fact that

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a coach should avoid advice-giving and work without a pre-set agenda with the coachee, focusing on his/her needs. Further, *confidentiality* was perceived as an important ingredient of the expatriate coaching relationship. Confidentiality was also closely linked with the establishment and maintenance of trust in the expatriate context. Trust and confidentiality seem to be generic issues relevant to all successful coaching interventions. Even though the majority of the findings of this study are also applicable to the domestic setting, their importance and relevance may differ in the international setting, given the distinctiveness of the expatriate context. As a truly novel finding, this study indicated that *coaching language* impacts coaching success in several ways. No other studies of the impact of coaching language, in an international context, on coaching success were found in the literature review.

Managerial leadership style of the sponsoring organization impacted coaching success. Alvey and Barclay (2007) argue that the coaching relationship is influenced by contextual factors such as the organizational context as perceived by the coachee, and this may contribute or limit trust formation during a coaching process. The group of coached expatriates in the present study demonstrated a clear lack of supporting organizational structures and practices. Also, this study suggests that in order to create an understanding of what coaching is, there needs to be *a clear definition of coaching* in the organization. Otherwise, coaching is confused with other developing interventions and its objectives may not be reached.

A clear contract with objectives and evaluation of the process underpin a successful expatriate coaching assignment. Also, the *structured process nature of coaching* helped to implement changes and had an impact on coaching success. It can be assumed that goals are very important for expatriate managers because they are expected to perform well and be productive in challenging circumstances abroad. This finding supports some earlier studies: Bush (2005) has found in domestic settings that the structured process nature of coaching is important to its success, and

Grant (2014) has argued that goal setting is the foundation of successful self-regulation and effective coaching.

Further, *internal versus external coaching* played a role in coaching success. When working with internal coaches, the coaching relationship was not perceived as being so professional as with external coaches and it was experienced that internal coaches were not well trained. Often, internal coaches have duties in addition to coaching and their knowledge of the foreign working environments of expatriates may be limited. Furthermore, the *adaptation of coaching* tools to the needs and situation of the expatriate was important in regard to coaching success. They should be customized rather than used mechanically.

Furthermore, the present study strongly suggests that expatriate coaches would benefit from *adopting challenging behaviors* with their Western coachees, **because this behavior enhances learning and contributes to the credibility of the coach.** This study also empirically supports Peterson's (2011) earlier arguments that challenging increases the cognitive and affective demands on the coachee and helps them to learn and change, and that the giving of feedback (2007) needs to be adapted in certain cultural contexts. Further, to be successful coaches, industry-specific expertise is not needed: they are expected to act as neutral discussion partners. *Self-generated ideas* were found to be important for successful coaching. Acknowledging and respecting the coachee's agenda and holding him/her responsible for his/her own solutions are seen as key concepts of a humanistic coaching perspective (Stober, 2006) and also important behaviors for expatriate coaches.

Organizational support was identified as important for coaching success. Luebbe (2005) and Bush (2005) have also found in domestic settings that organizational support impacts coaching success. Furthermore, *adequate resources* given to coaching were found to be important, since cutting budgets may lead to coaching processes that are too short, or to the use of unqualified coaches. As a result, the quality of coaching can suffer.

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As mentioned in the introduction, the core competencies of coaches have not been sufficiently discussed in the coaching literature. The current core competencies of ICF are: Meeting ethical guidelines and professional standards; establishing coaching agreement; establishing trust and intimacy with the client; active listening; powerful questioning; direct communication; creating awareness; designing actions; planning and goal setting; managing progress and accountability (ICF, 2015). A comparison between the findings of this study and the above core competencies reveals the following agreements with those factors also identified by this study: *Adaptability of the coaching process, trust and confidentiality, a clear contract, self-generated ideas, and coaching techniques adapted to the coachee's situation.* Barosa-Pereira (2014) has suggested that 'cultural competency' could be included as one of the core competencies for coaches. As mentioned above, this study indicates that coaches working internationally need a well-developed global mindset and experience in international business.

This research is not without limitations. As a qualitative study it had a limited sample size. **Further, most of the interview participants represented the same age group.** Utilizing quantitative methods in a future study could confirm the findings. It is also possible that only those expatriates who had positive coaching experiences volunteered for this project and that the use of virtual equipment in the data collection influenced its quality. The data included only Westerners, and wider samples are needed in the future to study expatriate coaching success.

Based on the above findings and observations from the international coaching literature, some ideas for future research are suggested. Given, that there is a need for standardization of a common global coaching policy framework and code of ethics for professional coaching (Gray, 2011), further research is needed on the international perspectives of effective core coaching competencies in general. When looking especially at the expatriate context, it would be important to investigate the optimal timing for expatriate coaching. Further, since the language aspect of international coaching has not been researched previously, and since English dominates coach-training programs

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and is often used as a *lingua franca* in MNCs, further studies of the coaching language and its impact on coaching success in a cross-cultural coaching context are highly recommended. Since little is known empirically about the specific coaching models, techniques and tools of expatriate coaching and their contribution to coaching success, this area too should be a priority for further research.

This study has also several practical implications. First, in order to be successful, expatriate coaches need to adapt their coaching processes, techniques and tools to the needs and situation of their coachees. Second, organizations offering coaching for their expatriates should ensure that the expatriate coaches are internationally experienced; if internal coaches are used, **then those who have previous international experience should be selected to work with expatriate employees.** Third, expatriate coaches need to spend enough time in the creation of trust at the beginning of the coaching assignment and it is beneficial for them to strongly challenge their Western coachees out of their comfort zones. Generally, challenging needs to be adapted to the specific cultural context. Fourth, since the coaching language impacts the coaching relationship in several ways, the issue of language should be discussed with the coachee at the outset of the coaching assignment. Fifth, organizations would benefit from ensuring that their managerial leadership style supports coaching and that coaching is clearly defined and understood within the organization. Further, adequate resources should be allocated when expatriate coaching programs are implemented and HR representatives responsible for coaching should ensure that the coaching goals are clearly set. Sixth, in the era of globalization, it is recommended that coaching tools and techniques suitable for international coaching are included in coach training programs.

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Coaching for career capital development: a study of expatriates' narratives

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Abstract

This study explores, through stories, how coaching supports the development of expatriates' career capital; it is the first empirical investigation in this area. A narrative analysis was conducted to explore semi-structured interviews. Coaching was perceived to support the development of career capital capabilities ('knowing-how', 'knowing-why' and 'knowing-whom'). When coaching expatriates, it is important to review their needs, previous assignment experience and phase of expatriation. As a practical implication, organizations should consider coaching support for expatriates. The career capital model is recommended as a tool for institutions training coaches, and for coaches, when coaching executives in international transition situations.

Key words: Expatriates, career-capital, coaching, narratives

Introduction

In the globalized economy, leaders who are able to cope with the different kinds of tasks and challenges in international business environments are a valued asset for their organizations. Expatriates, employees who leave their home country to work abroad, are an important group of employees, especially for multinational companies (MNCs). The need for internationally competent managers is escalating (Caligiuri & Tarique, 2012) and it has been argued that organizations must be able to create a set of development activities, including career-related support practices, to be able to develop global leaders (Suutari, 2003).

In general, international assignments have been found to be very developmental for the expatriate, but at the same time also very challenging (Caligiuri & Di Santo, 2001; Suutari & Mäkelä, 2007). For example, expatriates are often reported to work with more challenging and broader tasks abroad than in their home country (Suutari & Brewster, 2000), and the international assignment can be seen as a mutually beneficial episode, which fulfills both the organizational need to gain competitive advantage by generating social and intellectual capital for their employees, and also the need for individual development by building the expatriate's career capital (Larsen, 2004; Haslberger & Brewster, 2009).

Career capital is a concept covering a broad set of competencies that employees need to be successful in their employment paths (Suutari, Brewster & Tornikoski, 2013). Career capital (Inkson & Arthur, 2001) consists of three elements: 'knowing-how' (e.g., technical skills), 'knowing-whom' (e.g., social networks), and 'knowing-why' (e.g., motivation).

Generally, little research exists on the development of career capital during an international assignment, but earlier studies have shown that career capital develops during an expatriation assignment and is, at least to some extent, transferable from the first assignment to a second one (Jokinen, 2010). Moreover, it is suggested that the development of career capital is the sort of process that can be facilitated with external support, such as coaching or mentoring (Dickmann & Harris, 2005).

Earlier literature has recommended coaching as suitable support and development intervention for expatriates and international managers at a general level (Booyesen, 2015; Mendenhall, 2006) but so far only four empirical studies (Abbott, 2006; Herbolzheimer, 2009; MacGill, 2010; Salomaa, 2015) focusing on coaching of expatriates have been found. However, those studies have provided evidence that coaching appears to be beneficial for expatriates. Although coaching is widely used, there is no consensus on its definitions or contents (Athanasopoulou & Dopson, 2015). For the purpose of this study, expatriate coaching is defined here as ‘a human development process of the assignee that involves structured, focused interaction and the use of appropriate strategies, tools and techniques in an international context. It is aimed to promote desirable and sustainable change for the benefit of the assignee and potentially for other stakeholders’ (modified from Bachkirova et al., 2010, 1). This definition has guided this research project from the search for and selection of interview participants to the data analysis and discussion of our findings. Further, coaching is understood here as a one-to-one, action-oriented and goal-driven process, facilitated by an external, professional coach.

However, even though the rapid change in the global business environment accelerates the use of coaching (Tompson et al., 2008), coaching research in the international context lags behind the practice (Abbott et al., 2013). In addition, coaching has been addressed only sparsely in the career development literature in general (Ciutiene, Neverauskas & Meilene, 2010). In the light of the above it is obvious that more empirical research is needed about coaching as a potential development method for expatriates’ career capital development. Therefore, the aim of this study is to explore expatriates’ narratives of how coaching has supported the development of their career capital, in particular their capabilities of ‘knowing-how’, ‘knowing-why’, and ‘knowing-whom’. This study is important, because it is the first study to focus on the development of career capital capabilities of expatriates through coaching. Next, we will review the relevant literature on career capital and executive coaching in an international context.

International careers and career capital

The nature of careers in the age of globalization has undergone major changes (Thomas et al., 2005). Contemporary career patterns are described as flexible, non-linear and self-driven. Also, current organizations are less rigid, but not totally fluid in their career management systems, as individuals tend to take more control of their own careers, which have shifted towards being more boundaryless and protean (Baruch, 2006; DeFillippi & Arthur, 1996). Career actors are viewed as individuals who consciously gain portable capabilities, actively construct social networks, and enhance their careers. They identify their own drives and motivations, and apply these in their work context (Inkson & Arthur, 2001; Suutari et al., 2013).

The concept of career capital is closely linked to the idea of these contemporary careers and the importance of the different kinds of capabilities that people develop and need to build and maintain their chosen career. Career capital consists of the following sub-dimensions: First, *'knowing-how'* is an integrative term that combines explicit knowledge, implicit experiences, soft skills and technical expertise into a specific form of career capital. Second, the *'knowing-why'* career capital dimension consists of the motivation, confidence, and self-assurance to pursue a certain career path. Third, *'knowing-whom'* involves a person's work relationships and includes occupational and internal company connections that can support an individual's career; it also incorporates broader contacts with family, friends, fellow-alumni, and professional and social acquaintances (Inkson & Arthur, 2001). The model of career capital offers a broad framework for studying the developmental perspective of an employee, and it has been found to be also relevant in the international career context and among expatriates. (Inkson & Arthur, 2001; Cappellen & Janssens, 2005; Suutari & Mäkelä, 2007). Further, when individuals work in challenging international environments, they need flexibility and related competencies that can be transferred to various contexts, and therefore the understanding of the development of career capital, and the transferability of the acquired competencies are of importance, both to individuals and to the organizations employing them (Jokinen, 2010).

'Knowing-how' capital competencies have been found to develop during expatriation through the development of cross-cultural and general management skills, listening, negotiation, teamwork and delegation skills, and through the capacity to learn (Antal, 2000; Dickmann & Doherty, 2008). International assignments have also been found to develop 'knowing-why' capital by improving expatriates' sense of their potential, their self-awareness, and by increasing their self-confidence. Expatriation is an experience that challenges one's beliefs, and influences an individual's identity and future career aspirations. Further, it also impacts on one's values and interests (Kohonen, 2004; Dickmann & Harris, 2005; Suutari & Mäkelä, 2007; Dickmann & Doherty, 2008; Jokinen et al., 2008). In addition, 'knowing-whom' career capital is found to be strengthened because assignees expand their professional networks while on an assignment (Antal, 2000; Mäkelä, 2007). However, findings are contradictory: there is also evidence that 'knowing-whom' career capital suffers as a result of working abroad (Dickmann & Harris, 2005). In addition, it has also been shown that contextual features may reduce an individual's opportunities to gain career capital during their expatriation (Rodrigues & Scurry, 2014). A very recent study indicates (Dickmann et al., in press) that none of the three career capital areas becomes obsolete, even if individuals spend a long time in their home country after being on an international assignment.

While Dickmann & Harris (2005) have suggested that career capital development can be encouraged with development interventions, such as coaching or mentoring, so far, expatriates' career capital development and its accumulation facilitated by coaching have not been studied. Coaching has been recommended as a suitable development intervention for expatriates (Booyesen, 2015; Mendenhall, 2006). However, empirical research focusing on expatriate coaching is very limited and in the next section current literature focusing on international and expatriate coaching is reviewed.

International and Expatriate Coaching

An international perspective on executive coaching has gained growing attention among coaching practitioners and scholars (Abbott et al., 2013; Booyesen 2015), and it has been argued that executive coaching is now entering a period of globalization (Barosa-Pereira, 2014). Coaching is commonly seen as a collaborative and non-directive relationship between the coach and the coachee for the purpose of attaining professional or personal development outcomes. As coaching research has grown beyond its infancy, there is more evidence that coaching has many positive effects on, for instance, employees' skills, well-being and performance (Theeboom et al., 2014). However, many coaching scholars posit that the profession still lacks an evidence-base (Feldman & Lankau, 2005; Peterson, 2011), and this is especially true for the evolving field of international coaching research.

Over the past decade, coaching scholars have started to study coaching from an international perspective. Terms such as international, cross-cultural and global coaching are often used interchangeably, and the coaching approaches have been influenced by cross-cultural and international management theories. Rosinski pioneered the field by combining coaching with intercultural theories in 2003, and by introducing the Cultural Orientations Framework (COF), which has also been utilized empirically (e.g. Carr & Seto, 2013; Rojon & McDowall, 2010). Currently, a holistic approach to integrating culture into mainstream coaching is emerging (Abbott, Stening, Atkins & Grant, 2006; Abbott, 2010; Abbott et al., 2013). So far, most of the literature concerning international coaching has been theoretical. The literature has covered topics such as multinational teams, gender and diversity issues, culture, and different coaching frameworks and approaches suitable for international contexts (e.g. Booyesen 2015; Rosinski 2010; Peterson, 2007; Passmore, 2009; Moral & Abbott, 2009; Coultas et al., 2011; Plaister-Ten, 2013). Since we focus here on expatriate coaching as a potential development intervention to support the career capital development of assignees, we next review the existing expatriate coaching literature in more detail.

Earlier literature has suggested that expatriate coaching is likely to be efficient because, like the expatriate experience itself, coaching is a connected process that impacts interactively across the individual's affective, behavioral and cognitive domains (Abbott et al., 2006). Some studies have presented theoretical models (Abbott & Stening, 2009) for how coaching may support expatriates in different phases of the assignment cycle, or how expatriate coaching may support couples' adjustment (Miser & Miser, 2009). Specific needs for coaching of female expatriates (Burrus, 2009a) and global nomads (Burrus, 2009b), individuals who have lived in different countries since their childhood and have global careers, have also been discussed.

Based on our literature review only a few empirical studies on expatriate coaching exist; these studies have shown that executive coaching is an intervention that facilitates expatriates' acculturation and helps them to deal with intercultural differences and pre-departure uncertainty, as well as supporting the repatriation process (Abbott, 2006; Herboltzheimer, 2009). It has also been reported that coaching increases expatriates' emotional intelligence capabilities of self-awareness, emotional control, communication strategies, self-reflection and empathy (McGill, 2010). Moreover, coaching has been found to increase expatriates' effectiveness and performance (Abbott, 2006; Herboltzheimer, 2009; McGill, 2010), and enhance their leadership development (McGill, 2010). Executive coaching is reported as

boosting the levels of happiness, personal satisfaction and confidence of expatriates and decreasing their stress (McGill, 2010). Furthermore, it has been found that coaching is perceived as beneficial because it provides a professional dialogue partner (Herbolzheimer, 2009) and is tailored to expatriates' individual needs (McGill, 2010; Salomaa, 2015). International experience, the behaviour of the coach and organizational support are also found to be essential factors for the success of coaching. A clear contract with objectives and evaluation of coaching appear to be important in regard to coaching success (Salomaa, 2015).

In summary, it can be concluded that both international coaching and the development of career capital during an international assignment are developing areas of research. Existing theoretical and empirical studies of expatriate coaching show that coaching could be beneficial for career capital development. This study differs from earlier ones by utilizing the narrative approach. Further, the earlier studies (Abbott, 2006; Herbolzheimer, 2009; McGill, 2010) were conducted in Central-American and Chinese contexts, and none of them focused on the development of career capital. Research focusing on coaching as a support intervention for career capital development for expatriates is lacking; this study aims to remedy this. Having reviewed the relevant earlier literature on the career capital of expatriates, coaching, and expatriate coaching, we will next describe the empirical data and methodological approach adopted for our study.

Methodology

A narrative analysis was chosen to explore the stories of coached expatriates because: 1) A narrative approach has been found suitable as a research method for management and organizational research (Czarniawska, 1997; Boje, 2001), and has also been adopted in international business research (e.g. Gertsen & Söderberg, 2011); 2) A narrative approach has been already applied to expatriate research, providing in-depth understanding of change processes in international career transitions, for instance, focusing on expatriates' cultural learning processes and cultural encounters (Gertsen & Söderberg, 2010), and expatriates' identity and career aspirations (Kohonen, 2007); 3) Stories that people tell about their lives are also of importance in coaching (Drake, 2010; Stelter, 2013), and because there is an intimate connection between the ways in which people see themselves, the ways they narrate their daily life, and the ways in which they behave. Further, stories are suggested to be the perfect avenue for exploring these connections because the images they bring to the surface provide material that is indicative of opportunities for inner development and a resource for changing external behavior (Drake, 2010:121); 4) Stories are highly relevant for the study of careers (Cohen & Mallon, 2001; Savickas, 2001; Bujold, 2004).

A narrative can be a description of a specific event or process (Flick, 2002), such as an expatriation or a coaching process. As narrative research offers no automatic analyzing steps, we recognize that there is considerable diversity in the definition of personal narrative and a large methodological variation within narrative theory (Riessman, 2000). Therefore, we next define some central concepts of this study. We position this study in the social-constructivist paradigm, and adopt an experience-centered approach to narratives (Squire, 2008). We build on Patterson's (2008 cited in Squire 2008:19) definition of experience-centered narratives, and understand a narrative or a story to be 'texts which bring stories of personal experience into

being by means of the first person oral narration of past, present, future or imaginary experience'. We use 'narrative' or 'story' interchangeably. According to Squire (2008), the experience-centered approach assumes that narratives are: 1) sequential and meaningful; 2) definitely human; 3) represent experience, in the sense of reconstructing it as well as mirroring it; and 4) display transformation or change, and therefore it is well suited for exploring the development of career capital through coaching. Sequence is embedded in dialogue, and meaningfulness is located in interviewer-interviewee interaction. Narratives are the means of human sense-making, and are jointly told between writer and reader, speaker and hearer (Ricoeur, 1991). The assumption is that experience can, through stories, become a part of consciousness and that the context of a narrative plays an important role (Squire, 2008).

We assume here that the personal stories of expatriates are just one of the many truths, since storytellers choose to connect events and make them meaningful for others. A story is an interpretation of the past rather than a historically exact reproduction of it (Czarniawska, 2004; Riessman, 2005; Polkinghorne, 2007). The experience-centered approach aims at full interpretation and understanding rather than structural analysis. Narrative analysis takes seriously both the content and the context of storytelling and the notion of 'story' always entails 'audience' as well as 'storyteller' (Squire, 2008). In this study, the interviewees told their story to the researcher, and they knew that the data would be used for analyzing purposes and that the research results would be written down and published for a wider audience.

Data collection

The data of this study consists of narratives told by coached expatriates during six semi-structured interviews because most experience-centered narrative interviewing is semi-structured (Squire, 2008). These interviews were gathered in 2012 by the first author. Participants were recruited by publishing announcements in the web pages of two coaching journals, through LinkedIn, and by using a snowballing system and direct contacts to Human Resource (HR) departments of Multinational Companies (MNCs). The only criterion for participation was experience of coaching by an external professional coach during expatriation. During the data collection and analysis strict ethical guidelines, as required in good scientific practice, were followed (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008). For example, before interviews participants were informed that the researcher was interested in their expatriate coaching process and that the interviewer had studied and practiced coaching. At the outset of the interview participants were given the opportunity to ask questions about the research process, and the interviewer asked permission to record the interview. The participation was voluntary, and the interview participants gave permission for the data to be analyzed and used for scientific publications. The interviewer assured participants that the collected data would be treated anonymously and confidentially. No ethical issues arose during the research process.

The interviews were conducted in English or Finnish using a variety of media (Skype, conference equipment, mobile phone) and in a face-to-face meeting. The average duration of interviews was 45-60 minutes. The first author carried out loosely structured interviews. Open-ended questions were used in order to gather rich narratives of the coaching experiences; for example, the interviewer asked 'how did you experience your coaching?' or 'Anything else?' aiming to give the interviewee space to think and speak further. In order to avoid misunderstandings and bias, a native English speaker transcribed the interviews verbatim. The

transcribed texts were sent back to the interviewees for checking (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006), and the final texts were analyzed. When Finnish was used, we have translated the text excerpts into English. For confidentiality reasons, we use pseudonyms. The demographics of our interviewees are shown in Table 1 below.

Pseudonym	Age-group	Home-country	Host-countries in narratives	Industry	Position	International experience when coached	Timing of coaching
Peter	40-55	USA	Japan/ Korea	Pharmaceutical	Managing Director	1st and 2 nd international assignment	Onboarding
Michael	40-55	Germany	Finland	Telecommunication	Senior Manager	Several assignments in many countries	Later during an assignment
Anni	40-55	Finland	Switzerland	Pharmaceutical	Director	2 nd international assignment	Onboarding
David	40-55	Finland	Italy	Mechanical engineering	Director R & D	1 st international assignment	Several times during a long-term assignment
George	40-55	Canadian	Japan	Semiconductors	Vice President	Several assignments	Onboarding
Nicholas	40-55	French	Japan	Banking	Head of Audit	Several assignments	Later during an assignment

Table 1: Demographics of the interviewees

Data analysis

Given that in this study it is assumed that the reality is socially constructed (Burr 2015), the analysis had already started during the interview, in which the interviewer and the interview participants co-created the stories in a confidential interview situation, and it continued when the two researchers wrote an interpretation of the analyzed stories together. In addition, the analysis also continued during the review process. The data collection, analysis and writing processes were closely interwoven with each other, and the researchers wrote several drafts, which helped to clarify the analysis. The data analysis included five main stages. First, the first author listened to the recorded stories, read the transcriptions several times, and marked the emerging themes on the margins of the paper version of the transcriptions. Second, the first author coded the texts by using the framework of career capital ('knowing-why', -whom and -how capital) among other themes and by utilizing the NVivo QSR software. For example, text excerpts that revealed motivational aspects were coded under the 'knowing-why' dimension. Third, the first author created short narratives of the interviews. Fourth, the second author repeated the coding process independently, after which the findings were compared and discussed. Fifth, the researchers constructed a final new narrative of the analyzed stories (Makkonen et al., 2012). While constructing the interpretation the researchers tried to stay as close as possible to interview participants' own expressions and utilize excerpts from the

interviews in order to give a voice to the interview participants. However, since we consider reality as a socially constructed phenomenon, we also acknowledge that the findings we present here are interpreted again by the reader of this study. Thus his/ her own background is likely to create new nuances to the evaluation of the narratives represented here. This supports our belief that there is no ‘one single truth’ about how the stories told by the study participants are represented as research findings. However, as described above, we have followed a structured and organized method of conducting our research in order to ensure that our study findings are as reasonable and convincing as possible (Riessman, 1993).

Findings

This narrative is the interpretation of the stories told in the interviews by coached expatriates who work in senior managerial positions and are located in different countries. The narrative sheds light on how expatriates constructed the supportive role of coaching for the development of their career capital dimensions, in particular, ‘knowing-how’, ‘knowing-why’ and ‘knowing-whom’ capabilities.

Narration of coaching supporting the development of knowing-how

‘Knowing-how’ development played a major role in our participants’ stories when they referred to how coaching has supported their career capital development. There was also a difference between the stories told by participants who have been engaged in coaching during the transition process (relocation and/ or new job) and those who have engaged in coaching due to other reasons.

Our study participants, George, Peter and Anni, said that they received coaching in order to get support for transition to a new country and/ or new job. This kind of transition process appeared to be a situation when coaching had a high potential to support development of ‘knowing-how’ capabilities, both in terms of how these participants narrated their original motivation and need for coaching, and also when they talked about what they gained from their coaching process. The need to develop ‘knowing-how’ capabilities became clear in Peter’s story as he described his international assignment (from US to Japan) as a *challenge* and said that his motivation to start coaching was strongly related to the need to learn about a culture and habits that were very different from Peter’s home-country. Anni moved from Finland to Switzerland, and she had previously worked in Sweden. Development of cross-cultural skills with the help of coaching represented an essential role, both in Anni’s and Peter’s stories. As an example, Peter said that coaching ‘*was to introduce a kind of cultural pitfalls and traps that I might fall into and also give me tools I needed to get the most out of my team.*’ Peter mentioned that coaching included discussions about Japanese metaphors that helped him to understand local culture and be more effective in the Japanese business context.

Further, Anni said that the coaching process helped her to gain different kind of cross-cultural skills such as how to succeed in cooperation with the US headquarters, and lead branches located in sixteen European countries. However, country-specific cultural knowledge was highlighted more often in Peter’s story compared to Anni’s, probably because there was not such a drastic difference of cultures between the countries Anni was relocating between. In addition, in Anni’s story coaching represented a means of support, especially in onboarding to

a new, higher level position; this was also the case in George's story. The following excerpt from George shows clearly that cultural issues were not his priority in coaching, because he was experienced in Japanese culture:

'I was not looking to my coach to help me on cultural basis. I felt that was one of my strengths, my most, my greatest strength, but I felt that there were many other things that I was lacking that we were focusing on and addressing.'

This indicates that coaching should not concentrate only on culture, because there might be other contextual factors impacting the coaching engagement. Both Anni and George strongly related the coaching process to the development of: their explicit knowledge, for instance, the construction and implementation of a business plan (George); and soft skills, e.g., how to work together with her multicultural team (Anni) - these being capabilities related to 'knowing-how'.

Moreover, Peter's story revealed a change in his development and learning needs during his assignment. In particular, after describing how coaching supported the transition process to a new country and a new job, the discussion moved from culture-related issues towards much more general topics. Narration in Peter's story was also very positive in nature when he described how his coaching process adjusting well to his changing needs. The following quotation from Peter's story illustrates this change:

'in the very beginning we set ground rules and the kind of overall things we wanted to achieve and over time the overall coaching shifted from peer culture to more cultural/leadership coaching. So in the end those [original] goals and objectives went out the window.'

Peter's description of change is in line with the stories told by three other participants (David, Michael and Nicholas) who had been involved in coaching later on during their expatriation (not during the transition process to new location and/ or job). The development of managerial and leadership skills, capabilities closely linked to 'knowing-how' dimension of career capital, were the most often presented as reasons for starting coaching. These 'later-phase' expatriates described coaching as: supporting their managerial skills, especially by providing them with different tools or process models to do their job; and also as challenging their current ways of thinking and teaching them how they could be more 'creative' or 'step out of their comfort zone'. David, who had been working in Italy for a long time and used the services of his coach several times, spoke about his coaching experiences:

'It has worked very well for me. It was tailored to meet my needs, it supported me, helped to navigate into a certain direction, and pushed me out of my comfort zone...I am sure that I would not be in this position without the help of my coach.'

Common for all our participants' stories was that the coaching process was strongly related to development of the ability to adopt a new way of doing business and leading people. It can also be said that the more diverse the international experience that expatriates had, the less they spoke about development of country- or culture-specific knowledge due to coaching. For example, Peter described that, with the help of his coach, he learned many 'knowing-how' related skills, such as new techniques to focus his mind and clarify his thinking processes. Moreover, coaching helped Michael and Nicholas to develop their own coaching skills to the

extent that they were able to coach their subordinates and peers. George highlighted that coaching helped him to implement previously learned skills into practice:

'Critical thinking, my previous employer (X) has given me a lot of tools and experience in thinking critically, but coaching helped me to use these skills not just for a specific role but for guiding a business. Those were all areas that I lack.'

Moreover, several of our participants also reported positive 'secondary' consequences for 'knowing-how' development, which did not occur immediately, but happened later on during the coaching process. For example, Michael stated that coaching introduced him to the idea of stronger co-operation across different departments in his own organization, and because of that he was able to learn a lot about tasks and processes that were beyond his own expertise area, and he also gained a much wider understanding of the different ways the business could be built and supported by different departments in the organization.

'...I volunteered to work on two projects in our sustainability department, although it is not part of my job description. [...] This helped me understand what they are trying to achieve. They asked me to bring their social initiative into the business context and it gave me suddenly this aspect that there is much more that I can learn beyond my traditional area. And it is not about forgetting what I have done and learning something new, it is about enriching and cross-fertilizing the two areas...'

Participants' representations of these 'secondary consequences' of coaching can be interpreted as being a testimonial of satisfaction and of finding that the coaching is useful for 'knowing-how' capability development.

To summarize, the 'knowing-how' related discussion was the most dominant in our participants' stories - especially when they talked about their motivation for starting coaching. However, reference to 'knowing-why' related capabilities also had a strong role in our participants' stories and we therefore next turn our focus to that dimension of career capital development and its support by coaching.

Narration of coaching supporting the development of 'knowing-why'

'Knowing-why' relates to individuals' motivation, confidence, and self-assurance in pursuing a certain career path (Inkson & Arthur, 2001). These issues were especially present when participants were talking about the benefits gained from coaching, though they were hardly ever mentioned in connection with the original motivation to start coaching. This finding may indicate that it is much easier and more socially acceptable to justify the need for coaching by listing the skills that can be seen as beneficial for business life and the employer (c.f. 'knowing-how'), compared to skills that can be seen as more beneficial for the individual as a person (cf. 'knowing-why').

In the stories told by the three transition phase expatriates, culture-related issues were again more frequently present, compared to in the other three stories. For instance, Peter's story (first time assignee in Japan) illustrates very well the challenges that a culturally distant working environment may create, especially for the less experienced expatriate, and how coaching was presented as a helpful process in developing 'knowing-why' related issues during

the transition. Peter described very openly how the Japanese working environment and his inability to understand the language sapped his strength and how he, for example, had to use a translating device to be able to follow and lead in meetings. Peter described his normal working day to be *'like sitting in front of a very loud television with a very loud earphones playing something different in his ear'*. Even though coaching did not help Peter's language skills ('knowing-how' capability), it did help him to put things into the right perspective. Through coaching, he gained a better sense of balance, so that he was able to solve problems in this new cultural context.

Culture specific issues were more often mentioned by our three 'transition phase' participants than by the ones who engaged in coaching later during their expatriation. Otherwise, all six stories contained very similar kinds of elements and coaching was highlighted as a satisfying and helpful process for 'knowing-why' development. These parts of the stories were at a very personal level and participants shared very sensitive thoughts with the interviewer. Most of our participants worked with their coaches, focusing on questions such as *who I am as a leader and what is my role in this organization* and also *who am I as a person living in a foreign country* –all these questions can be seen as a part of identity construction and development of 'knowing-why' capabilities.

Other, very similar, patterns were also identified from the stories: most of our participants said that, with the help of coaching, they have processed their career aspirations and recognized their own strengths, weaknesses and values. This, in turn, has helped develop their self-awareness and self-confidence. The following quotation from Anni illustrates this well: *'Coaching's role was to help me acknowledge my strengths, to see that my capabilities, knowledge and experience were enough'*. Further, as Nicholas, a French expatriate in Japan with a wide international experience stated:

'Thanks to coaching I developed a strong appetite to push my development into new areas and I have done that not only in my career but also in my personal life. It has been so powerful, it is normal for me to do that now'.

Moreover, all of the stories involved mentioning how motivation and energy were boosted by coaching, bringing joy and new perspectives to the coachees. For example, through the development of 'knowing-why', Michael started to enjoy his life in a new way:

'Most shocking part for me was really the aspect of values and bringing sort of the emotional side of the brain into play, not just the analytical data driven decision making part, but you know, if you are not happy, you would not – perform- well- kind- of- thing was a real revolution for me and gave me a lot additional ammunition to my work.'

Coaching was described as helpful, especially in a challenging environment or situation. This can be seen, for example, from an excerpt from George's story: *'... my coach helped me to find internal motivation, which I sometimes struggle with...'*

All in all, coaching was very strongly linked to personal level development, that is, 'knowing-why' capabilities, in the stories told by our participants. Even though 'knowing-why' related issues were not mentioned so often as 'knowing-how' capability development, it can

be said that the tone in their description can be interpreted as being thankful and that the participants valued the support gained from coaching for these personal level issues very highly. Next, we will show how our participants narrated the role of coaching linked to their ‘knowing-whom’ development.

‘Knowing- whom’

Even though ‘knowing-how’ and ‘knowing-why’ career capital development appeared to be very successfully helped by coaching, ‘knowing-whom’ career capital, referring to a person’s work and private relationships and networks, seemed not to play as an important role as the ‘knowing-how’ and -why dimensions in our expatriates’ stories. Some expatriates said that coaching supported their ‘knowing-whom’ career capital development because their coaches provided them with some business contacts; for instance, Peter’s coach introduced him to some Western contacts in Japan. Also, Michael and Anni highlighted the development of ‘knowing-whom’ career capital due to coaching and in both of their stories coaching was described as something that ‘woke them up’ and helped them to understand and acknowledge the importance of the relationships they were surrounded by, both in their work and personal life spheres. This is illustrated by the following quotation from Anni:

‘I feel that my ability to capitalize information from human networks grew exponentially. ...in that my coach helped me to notice that I could utilize my team members to gain information or my coach asked if there were other colleagues nearby who could help me, this was something that I had never thought about before.’

Further, as discussed earlier, coaching introduced Michael to the idea that he could work across the different departments within his company, and by starting to do that, Michael’s social networks within the company extended and, therefore, in addition to developing his job-related knowledge (cf. ‘knowing-how’) he was also able to develop his ‘knowing-whom’ career capital.

Again, as a ‘secondary’ consequence of coaching, we can see that, for instance in Michael’s and Nicholas’s stories, acting as coaches themselves (‘knowing-how’ capabilities developed by coaching) expanded their social networks. As Nicholas described: *‘So I decided to make use of my new skills as a coach around me. The first available environment was my company so I built a lot of relationships from the coaching internally.’* Moreover, Michael said that he also wanted to make use of his coaching skills and business expertise outside his own organization. Therefore, he started, as a volunteer, to contact young entrepreneurs and offer them his help. Michael’s ‘knowing-whom’ career capital developed because he felt that he was able to create a much wider social circle and new relationships. He saw that this activity formed a beneficial bridge between his company and these entrepreneurs who were full of fresh ideas. *‘... not just internal [our company] relationships, but also external relationships. I extend my network to outside this company, and it included young entrepreneurs.’*

Altogether, ‘knowing-whom’ capability development did not have a very strong role in these six stories, compared to how the other two types of capabilities, ‘knowing-how’ and ‘knowing-why’, were narrated. Moreover, we could not find any difference between the stories told by participants who have engaged in coaching in their ‘transition phase’ or later during

their expatriation, as was the case with the two other career capital capabilities. Next, we continue to our discussion and conclusions.

Discussion and Conclusion

The aim of this study was to explore expatriates' narratives about how coaching has supported development of their career capital - in particular, capabilities of 'knowing-how', 'knowing-why', and 'knowing-whom'. Our study, being the first investigation of this area, contributes to our understanding of coaching, as well as of career capital knowledge and current understanding of interventions, which may be useful in the context of expatriation. We discuss each of these areas below.

First, our study findings contribute to coaching literature by showing that the coaching processes were mostly seen as helpful development interventions in this kind of challenging international context, enhancing the development of career capital. Our study supports previous studies by showing evidence that coaching is beneficial for expatriates (Abbott, 2006; Herboltzheimer, 2009; McGill, 2010; Salomaa, 2015). Further, in some of the analyzed stories, it became evident that career capital development also happened in areas that were not originally prioritized or even expected when coaching was started. It is also important to notice that the effect of coaching was sometimes narrated as being 'secondary', that is, something important for career capital development was said to have happened due to issues the expatriate has learned with the help of coaching. Therefore, coaching appears to be a very suitable development method for expatriates, as it flexible and can be tailored for the changing needs in different phases of expatriation, or for the expatriates with different amounts of international experience.

Second, our study findings advance career capital literature by confirming that coaching appears to be a suitable Human Resource Development (HRD) method to support the development of career capital (Dickmann & Harris, 2005). As we can see from the stories told by our coached expatriates, many of them shared experiences in regard to their 'knowing-how' career capital through, for instance, development of cross-cultural and leadership skills. They also highlighted development, boosted by coaching, in identity construction, enhanced awareness of the self and motivation levels – indicators of 'knowing-why' career capital development.

In addition, our study findings strengthen the view that 'knowing-whom' career capital development during the international assignment is not always self-evident (Dickmann & Harris, 2005) and development interventions, such as coaching, may encounter some limitations, especially in 'knowing-whom' development. As the importance of 'knowing-whom' career capital has been shown to be very important for successful long-term global careers (Mäkelä & Suutari, 2009), and based on our findings, we suggest that it would be beneficial if coaches were to work on 'knowing-whom' aspects in the expatriate context. Accumulation of career capitals from several international assignments may also advance the development to the level that expatriates would be more willing to put effort intentionally into developing their 'knowing-whom' if involved in the coaching process.

There are also limitations, which should be acknowledged. Firstly, these personal stories do not provide a complete, or even a definitive, picture of the issues occurring in expatriate coaching. Fundamentally, the narrative of the personal stories interpreted and represented in this study is, first and foremost, about evocations and perceptions from the participants' perspectives, and thus gives only a partial view of the coaching process and career capital development. Secondly, the narrative is the researchers' interpretation of these stories as told during interviews. Third, some may find the number of interviewees as a limitation. However, narratives told during the interviews were very rich and the aim of the narrative studies is not to provide one truth, but instead, reveal novel perspectives on the studied phenomena. Fourth, the scope of this study was limited to exploration of the development of career capital through coaching in the expatriate context. Therefore, future studies focusing especially on intercultural questions would be beneficial. For example, utilizing the GLOBE study's (see e.g. Dorfman et al. 2012) societal cultures and global leadership scales or other intercultural frameworks would enrich our understanding of the development of career capital, and reveal if there are differences, for example, in the 'knowing-whom' dimension between collectivist cultures compared with individualistic cultures. Despite the limitations of this study, relating to its sample, scope or method, the findings challenge the traditional ways of studying interventions and their effectiveness, and highlight the personal perception of the experience of coaching and its effects on career capital development in the international context. Future studies should also apply different study designs, for instance, diary studies or longitudinal quantitative surveys, to provide evidence concerning the causal relations between career capital development and the role of coaching. In addition, studies using broader samples and different methods might better illustrate how transferable (cf. Jokinen, 2010), and to whom and to what purposes, coaching can be most beneficial in the expatriate context.

The practical implication of this study is the need to apply a multifaceted understanding of coaching as a development intervention. For instance, by increasing understanding and knowledge of the career capital concept through training and development among coaches and coach training institutions in future, coaches might be able to adopt the career capital framework as one practical tool for coaching processes. Furthermore, based on our findings, organizations employing expatriates could benefit from using coaching, as our findings indicate that career capital development enhances expatriates' ability to perform better in their challenging jobs. Therefore, the people responsible for HRD, in particular, should see coaching as one possible method to develop their organization's international assignees. The present study supports the view that coaching should not only focus on culture in an international context, because there might be other factors impacting the coaching engagement (Abbott, 2010:326). Particular coaching needs may include other topics than cultural issues, for example, due to the fact that the coachee is experienced in a certain cultural context. Therefore, careful evaluation of the current skills, the acquired career capital of the expatriate and the assignment phase should be done in order to better understand the coaching needs.

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