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The appearance of coaching leadership style within marketing industry and marketing teams

Has COVID-19 effected on the managers' used leadership style?

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Title of the thesis:	The appearance of coaching leadership style within marketing industry and marketing teams : Has COVID-19 effected on the managers' used leadership style?
Degree:	Master's Degree
Programme:	Strategic Business Development
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Year:	2021 **Pages:** 66

ABSTRACT:

The perspective of management has evolved significantly over the last few decades. When at first, the focus was only on the companies' managers, nowadays the focus is more on the employees and on the used leadership styles, that they are being lead. There are as many styles to lead a team as there are leaders. Some leadership styles work for some kinds of people or within some industries better than the others, and some leadership styles do not suit at all for some target groups. That is why, it is crucial to find a manager whose leadership style is suitable for the specific company and the team itself.

The definition and the requirements of leadership have in some cases changed drastically over the decades. Some specific leadership styles have become more popular and common than the others. An example of this is a leadership style, where the manager is mostly seen as a coach, an enabler for the team rather than a hierarchical person whose commands are the only ones that matter. Before, a manager was the one who gave the orders without noticing his or her subordinates in the process. The employees were seen as replaceable. Nowadays, these kind of actions would not be considered acceptable.

In this thesis, the aim is to study how this quite modern and in many ways functional leadership style appears in the studied managers' daily actions and gestures. Also, this thesis focuses on analyzing managers who work within marketing field or with marketing tasks somehow. This is because, marketing is ranked to be one of the most creative jobs – and according to multiple researchers, coaching suits in cultures where creativity is supported. Lastly, it will be questioned, if an ongoing crisis, such as COVID-19 pandemic, has had an effect on the managers' used leadership styles. Namely, according to some studies, coaching should have less appearance within organizations in crisis due to its unsuitability for such situations.

KEYWORDS: leadership, management, marketing, coaching leadership, crisis, COVID-19

TIIVISTELMÄ:

Näkemys johtamisesta on muuttunut viime vuosikymmenten aikana merkittävästi. Kun aluksi keskityttiin vain yritysten esimiehiin, on tarkastelu nykyään siirtynyt enemmän työntekijöihin ja esimiesten käytettyihin johtamistyyleihin. On olemassa yhtä monta tapaa johtaa kuin on johtajia. Tietyt johtamistyylit toimivat tietyntyyppisille ihmisille tai tietyille toimialoille paremmin kuin toiset, ja jotkin johtamistavat eivät sovi lainkaan joillekin kohderyhmille. Siksi onkin tärkeää löytää esimies, jonka johtamistyyli sopii kyseiselle yritykselle sekä kyseiselle tiimille, johon hänet sijoitetaan.

Johtamisen määritelmät ja vaatimukset ovat joissakin tapauksissa muuttuneet rajusti vuosikymmenien aikana. Tietyistä johtamistyyleistä on tullut suositumpia ja yleisempiä kuin toisista. Esimerkiksi, nykyään kaivataan yhä enemmän sellaista esimiestä ja johtajaa tiimiin, joka nähdään enemmänkin valmentajana ja mahdollistajana kuin hierarkkisena henkilönä, jonka komentoja kuuluu ainoastaan noudattaa. Aiemmin *johtaja* oli se, joka antoi käskyjä – ei huomiota tai huolenpitoa. Työntekijät olivat kaikki kuin vaihdettavia osia. Nykyään tilanne on toinen, eikä tällaista toimintaa pidettäisi enää hyväksyttävänä.

Tässä tutkielmassa pyritään selvittämään, miten melko uusi, mutta samalla monella tapaa toimivaksi todettu johtamistyyli esiintyy tutkimukseen osallistuneiden esimiesten arkisessa toiminnassa. Nimittäin, tämä tutkielma analysoi ja tutkii valmentavaa johtamistyyliä. Tässä tutkielmassa keskitytään analysoimaan esimiehiä, jotka työskentelevät markkinointialalla tai ketkä toimivat jollakin tavalla markkinointitehtävien parissa. Tämä markkinointi-perspektiivi valittiin tähän tutkielmaan, sillä markkinointi on luokiteltu yhdeksi luovimmista töistä, joita on – ja koska usean tutkimuksen mukaan valmentava johtaminen sopi erityisesti kulttuureihin, joissa tuetaan luovuutta. Tämän tutkielman toinen tavoite on selvittää, onko mahdollisilla kriisitilanteilla, kuten COVID-19-pandemialla ollut vaikutusta esimiesten käyttämiin johtamistyyleihin. Nimittäin, joidenkin tutkimusten mukaan valmentava johtamistyyli ei sovellu kriisitilanteisiin, joten tämän johtamistyylin ilmaantuvuuden oletetaan vähentyneen korona-pandemian ilmaantumisen jälkeen.

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1 Introduction

This thesis aims to solve if a specific leadership style, in this case coaching, is being used in which ways among the people that are named as managers. If there occurs to be components of this leadership style, the goal is to investigate and define, in which all ways this coaching leadership style is being appeared in the daily operations of the analyzed managers. The managers that are being observed in this study have all one common factor: they are either operating within marketing industry or they are responsible of a team that works with some sort of marketing tasks. This thesis focuses on those managers, because it is being claimed that coaching leadership style suits especially within those teams that work with creative working environments and - cultures, and marketing happens to be ranked as the most creative job there is. (Ristikangas & Ristikangas, 2018.)

Before the main subject, coaching, is being covered any further in this text, there must be few other concepts such as 'management' and 'a manager', and 'leadership' and 'a leader' defined first to build a solid basis for the following matters. Firstly, a manager is a person, who gets his or her position by a title. Management is about setting the company's strategy and coordinating the organization's resources in a way with them, the company is able to accomplish its set objectives. (Banker et. al, 2011; Kontes, 2011.) Then, leadership is commonly linked with an individual's characteristics (House & Aditya, 1997, p. 410) and not with a title. Because, leadership is based on a person's characteristics, anyone *could* be a leader (Chandler, 2016; Hulme, 2006). For instance, if someone has the talent to motivate others to move towards a set goal together, he or she is considered to be *a leader* (Ward, 2020). Despite this information, if used the word 'leader' later on in this thesis, it is meant to refer to a person who is also a manager by his or her title.

Just as there can be different kinds of managers: lower level -, middle level -, and top level managers, based on their responsibilities within the company (Lumen, 2020b; MSG, 2020), there are multiple ways to operate as a leader too. For an example, there have

been done some division with used the leadership styles to effect on others. Hence this, a leader can be seen for instance as coercive, authoritative, or even as a coach to his or her subordinates (MacDonald, 2020). In addition to the previous, according to Becker (2020) a leader has eight leadership style to choose from the most suitable ones for him or her modes of operations. These leadership styles will be introduced and analyzed more thoroughly in the following chapter. Even though, management and leadership are their own separate concepts, they are nowadays often needed together to maximize the subordinates' performance and well-being. (Nanjudeswaraswamy & Swamy, 2014; van Prooijen & de Vries, 2016.)

Even though, coaching is considered as a fairly new style to lead people, it has already attracted a lot of attention and praises; coaching is even stated to be an effective and valuable leadership style. Coach-leadership is based on highlighting and utilizing the maximal potentials of individuals. With the help of coaching, a manager should be able to establish strong relationships with his or her team members. Also, when operating accordingly to the coaching's principles, the manager should be able to create a trustworthy atmosphere within the team and by this way, he or she should have the ability to help the subordinates as thoroughly and supportively as possible. Coaching should, in most of the cases, increase the subordinates' commitment and motivation for their jobs, while the manager enables the subordinates to come up with the solutions on their own and giving them the opportunity to take more responsibility over their actions. The managers should operate in a way that leaves room for their subordinates to think and to act alone. Despite this, the managers should not *literally* leave their team members on their own. In coaching, the manager should ask questions that force the subordinates to analyze their problems or issues in a more versatile and thorough way, rather than giving them the 'right' answers or give direct guidance without letting the opponent try to come up with a solution on their own first. The manager's aim in coaching leadership is not even to try give the 'right' answers or alternatives, but to challenge and enable the subordinates to grow while discovering the strengths and opportunities within themselves. To enable this kind of outcomes, the managers that act

accordingly to the coaching's principles, should offer their teams all the required tools and platforms. (Ristikangas & Ristikangas, 2018.) For a manager to be a *good* coach for his or her team members, it requires a lot of soft skills such as listening – and communication skills and social intelligence, but also for instance the ability to perceive entities. It is namely not important if the manager does not know everything of the touched subject, but to listen and to ask the right questions which allow the subordinate to find the solutions. (DiGirolamo & Tkach, 2019.)

Although, coaching has already gotten a lot of attention and praises, the coach-leadership style may still not be the most suitable fit in all companies or for all employees. For instance, coaching is not considered to suit people who are not ambitious or willing to improve themselves. Nor is coaching seen as a suitable choice of leadership in companies that have high hierarchy or that are facing a crisis situation according to Janse (2018). Then again, coaching is stated to be the more practical in those organizations, which cultures support creativity (Ristikangas & Ristikangas, 2018). Here were few examples of situations or environments where the coach-leadership style could or could not function properly, but the reasons why these claims are made will be opened more thoroughly in another chapter of this thesis.

This text focuses on two things: firstly, this thesis aims to find out in which possible ways the coaching leadership style is being appeared in a manager's modes of operations who works with marketing some way or another. This research focuses on managers whose teams function with marketing, because marketing industry and –tasks are stated to be one of the most creative work environments and –task there is, and because coaching is stated to suit creative cultures well (Ristikangas & Ristikangas, 2018). Secondly, while there are studies that support the claims of coaching not being a good choice of a used leadership style in crisis situations, this thesis aims to seek the answer if the studied managers have possibly stopped or reduced using coaching leadership style's principles due to the arrival of COVID-19 pandemic. So, the second goal is to seek information and

examples, in which ways and how do the scholarly data and practice have resemblance or disparity

1.1 The aim of this thesis

The goal of this thesis is to truly understand how different managers working with marketing tasks or within marketing field lead their subordinates or their team members, and to find out if the used leadership style or elements of it can be related to coaching leadership style. Lastly, this thesis aims to understand if the managers have changed their used leadership style during the current global pandemic circumstances, and if so, why.

This thesis' research questions aim to help with clarifying an answer to the research problem and they are the following:

1. How does the managers truly lead their subordinates: in which ways does the coach leadership style appear within teams that function in marketing field or that operate with marketing tasks?

2. Has the managers' used leadership style changed during the COVID-19 pandemic? If so, how?

By, these questions, it is meant to study firstly, which leadership style the manager uses mostly in their daily modes of operation. But because, there is no clear line, when a manager is a coach or something else, that is why his or her actions as a manager is being spitted into smaller key components which are then further evaluated to which category do they truly belong: 'a coach' or 'not a coach'. Even though, the following chapters will introduce other leadership styles as well alongside the coaching, in the chapter where the gathered survey-data will be analyzed, the focus will be again merely on the main subject: the coaching leadership style. So, the manager's actions will be only analyzed in a way that are answers the question: "is the evaluated mode of operation or operation part of the policies defined by coaching or not". If something does not suit within coaching leadership style, this will not bet further analyzed, in which leadership category it would belong to instead. These elements are briefly defined as "non-coaching". Also,

when the actions and gestures are spitted into smaller components, they will be evaluated in a way to see, if there are more or less elements of coaching in their daily activities. If the majority of the analyzed components support the claims of coaching, he or she is considered to act as a coach. And if there are only few elements of coaching, then he or she is using some other leadership style as a manager.

Then, to get an answer to the second research question, the managers that participate in the conducted survey, will be questioned if they have in anyways changed their used leadership style after the COVID-19 arrived. If the answer to this is 'yes', the aim is to find out, in which ways has their modes of operations changed.

1.2   The structure of this thesis

This thesis consists of one introductive chapter, where both the main and supporting concepts are briefly defined and compared with each other to give a clear picture of the studied topic, and to clarify how all the introduced components are linked to each other. Then, there are two *main* chapters, where the focus is on the coaching leadership itself. In these two main chapters, the main subject, coaching, is being introduced more thoroughly. Its history and backgrounds are presented, the ways of its use or functions are listed and lastly, its pros and cons – its strengths and limitations are discussed.

After this, there will be a chapter dedicated to a study that is conducted merely for this thesis. In this chapter, the new study will be presented and its results will be shown. Simultaneously, the collected information of the executed survey's results will be compared with the scholarly articles to analyzed how much or little the theory has in common with the practice. This will be done, because, the aim is to deepen the knowledge of the studied matter and give more insight on managerialism and leadership. Lastly, there will be introduced a conclusion of the executed research and gathered data, and reveal some suggestions on how this topic could be studied even further in the future

2 How does management and leadership affect one another?

This chapter focuses on defining concepts, such as 'management' and 'leadership': who is a manager, who can be a leader, and is a manager always a leader too — and vice versa? Also, in this chapter, it will be explained how these concepts affect one another within an organizational environment. Secondly, to understand the connection between these concepts, the history of management and leadership will be introduced too.

2.1 The history of the management and leadership

The studies of organizations, and of the way people were lead in these organizations started in the early 1900's (Juuti, Laukkanen, Puusa & Reijonen, 2014), but the systematic research on leadership started, as late as, in the 1930's (House & Aditya, 1997.) Before this, the companies' subordinates were only considered as instruments to achieve the managers' set goals. The existing concept of subordinates then was very mechanical, namely, all employees were considered replaceable and only the managers' opinions were significant. (Juuti et al., 2014.) Back then, managers were considered as generals. "They were the supreme commanders in the corporate world and everyone else had to do what they said" (Morgan, 2014, p. 83).

Obviously, the trend of management has changed a lot since those times due to multiple reasons. Firstly, there has been a significant change within the markets: they have shifted from regional to global. Then, there can be seen a change in the peoples' attitudes towards their jobs: when before people 'lived for work', today's people 'work for living' (Ristikangas & Ristikangas, 2018). This has led to the situation that is today. Namely, nowadays activities such as coaching and mentoring have become more popular among organizations. Both coaching and mentoring are leadership's key elements, which again proves the importance of leadership in the modern business environment. It is not enough, if the manager only has the skills to manage people: there is a need for the skill to also lead people. To support the on-going relationship building that both coaching and mentoring require, it is very important for a manager, who uses these leadership

methods, to give feedback to his or her subordinates, but also to get feedback from them. (Hernez-Broome & Hughes, 2004.) This is because, nowadays the ability to be able to develop oneself is even more important than before to keep up with the continually changing world (Morgan, 2014). Over the last few decades, there has been also seen a trend, which supports the empowerment of the employees'. There, managers, who operate as a leader at the same time, encourage their subordinates to improve themselves and to take more responsibility of their work. Even though, there is a trend like this among organizations nowadays, it is also being questioned, if this kind of leadership truly works, because successful companies usually tend to retain some elements of hierarchical control. (Vecchio, Justin & Pearce, 2010.)

Because, the markets are nowadays becoming continually more and more global and uncertain at the same time, this has effected on the managers' requirements of modern companies. For a company to survive in a market like this, there needs to be participation from every level of the organization. Also, the managers should focus nowadays on defining the most suitable leadership style for the whole organization, because it has been claimed to bring competitive advantages for the company. (Asrar-ul-Haq & Kuchinke, 2016). In addition to this, strategic performance management has become a very remarkable subject. There have been numerous studies considering the company's performance and its management. (Chau, 2008.) "It has been recognized that the competitive advantage of a company is important, and so is the way of managing it" (Chau, 2008: 114). This topic is considered important, because there is a noticeable connection between the manager's actions and the company's performance (Chau, 2008.) Because it may be hard to notice one manager's influence on the whole company's performance, the spectrum of a study should be made more specific. Namely, it is easier to study one manager's impact on a team's, or even on one employee's performance rather than the whole company's. (Kaare & Otto, 2015; Soltani, Gennard, van der Meer & Williams, 2004.)

As already stated, with the help of management and leadership it is possible to influence on both employees' acquirements and capabilities, and on their well-being. For this to happen, managers need to also use their leadership skills. Still in the 70's the supervisor was seen as an authoritarian character, who commanded his or her subordinates and was more focused on managing things - not people. This trend was called 'managerism'. This will not work in most of the organizations of today's world. (Juuti & Vuorela, 2015.) These days, there are multiple requirements to a manager: for instance, *good* leadership is one of them. Today, people do not want to be managed as employees, people want to be lead and guided along the way. Employees want to feel that they are important and included. There is a need to develop two-way relationships. Also, when few decades ago, managers did not take their subordinates that much into consideration, nowadays managers have to be flexible and observe people around them. Lastly, according to an article (Green, 2011), managers have to have good communication skills in today's world. Managers have to be present and take time for their subordinates. The managers have to have the interest to listen to their colleagues and help them as well as they can. These will help the companies to get the maximum outcome of their employees and simultaneously give them the feeling that they are important and significant. These were not required aspects or skills of managers before, but now they are one of the most important ones to be able to support a company's employees well-being and motivation towards their work. (Riikonen, 2017; Juuti et al., 2014.)

2.2   What then is management and who is a manager?

Management is liable of setting the company's strategy and ensuring that all the organization's resources are coordinated in a way, that they are able to accomplish their set objectives without any disruptions (Banker, Hu, Pavlou & Luftman, 2011; Kontes, 2011). Being a manager is a positional title of a person within a company. This means, that a manager has the power to command his or her subordinates and to make various decisions on behalf of others. According to Mintzberg (1991), a manager is the person who exercises management's functions. A manager is the representative of the

company he or she works for. And a manager is the one who is responsible for coordinating the company's resources, he or she is also responsible for ensuring that the subordinates' rights are being realized and that they obey the manager's set obligations. Furthermore, a manager is the one, who implements the company's strategies within his or her team, sets goals for its' subordinates, analyses the success of the executed operations, and recognizes the achieved goals. (Johtajuus, 2020.)

There can be different kinds of managers with different kinds of responsibilities within a company (Hofstrand & Anders, 2009; Lumen, 2020a). Usually, managers are ranked to three different levels according to their responsibilities and required capabilities. However, if a company is big, there can be more than three levels of managers, but on the other hand, there can also be less than three levels of managers within a company if it is a smaller one. With the most common division, a company has lower level -, middle level -, and top level managers. The top level managers are responsible for supervising and overseeing the entire organization. They develop goals, strategic plans, and corporate policies and make business direction decisions. In addition, top level managers play a significant role in mobilizing external resources. Namely, top managers are accountable to shareholders and the general public. The middle level managers are accountable to their supervisors, the top level managers, for the departments operations. Middle managers devote more time to organizational and directional activities than top managers. Their role can be emphasized as follows: implementing organizational plans in accordance with company policy, defining and discussing both data and policies from top management to downstream, and most importantly inspire and provide guidance to lower level managers for better performance. Lastly, the lower level managers usually have the responsibility to assign duties to their subordinates, give guidance and supervise the employees' day-to-day operations, ensure that the quality and quantity meets the standards, and lastly, to manage all possible problematic situations. All managers, regardless of the level at which they operate, must oversee the actions of their subordinates, motivate them, help them plan their careers, provide feedback on their performance, and, more generally, oversee the personnel. The

number of these tasks and the way they are performed depends on which level the manager is operating in. The lower the level of management, the more they have to lead people personally, but the higher the level of management, the more responsibility they ultimately have. (Lumen, 2020b; MSG, 2020.)

2.3 What is leadership and who is a leader?

Leadership is a topic that has been trending for a longer period of time now, and it is a highly studied topic. There is no one and only 'right' definition of this concept, and it is evolving at all times. (House & Aditya, 1997.) For almost a decade, there has been need for a change and because of that need leadership styles, such as coaching leadership style has emerged, and it is not coincidentally emerging as a central management mainstream (Ristikangas & Ristikangas, 2018; Hernez-Broome & Hughes, 2004). There are people who are more likely to become leaders, but no one is born as a leader. It takes many years of practice, experience, wisdom and reflection to become a competent leader. "Learning to lead is a lifelong process" (Gallos & Heifetz, 2008: 61). Leadership skills become better and stronger over time, and that is why all managers should start improving theirs as soon as possible. A leader, at least a younger aged leader, needs to be persistent, patient and curios to learn something new at all times. (Gallos & Heifetz, 2008.) Namely, a leader is not a good leader just because he or she has the required characteristics, but a leader should also have the ability to look further and have a vision for the future – and that is why it takes years of practice to become a competent leader (Jones & Pound, 2008).

In contrast to management, leadership is often firstly linked with these 'individuals' characteristics' that separates "leaders from non-leaders" (House & Aditya, 1997: 410). Because, leadership is determined from a person's characteristics, anyone with these special required characteristics *could* be a leader. This means, that an employee on the same level with the other colleagues could be a leader for them. (Chandler, 2016; Hulme, 2006). While a person can become a manager when being given a managerial position

within a company, a leader can be anyone, who is able think different scenarios for the future and to also get people move together towards this joint vision. A leader is someone who inspires and motivates people around him or her. A leader is also someone who is able to understand the current situation, evaluate all the possible risks that may come along the way and can make decisions, whether to continue with the dream or to give up. Then, if the decision is to work for the dream even though all the possible obstacles, a leader is the one who is able to encourage others to fight through these risks too and get people to work with him or her to possibly reach these set goals. Because it usually is not that simple for a person to get other people to work together on a shared mission, it requires various skills from a person to be a leader. (Chandler, 2016; Hulme, 2006.) For instance, emotional intelligence or in other words, the ability to recognize both their own and others' feelings and emotions and the skill to exploit this talent is nowadays highly needed for a leader (Morgan, 2020; Hernez-Broome & Hughes, 2004). With the help of soft skills like emotional intelligence, a leader is able to listen to others, to be empathic towards them and to communicate well to others (Doyle, 2020), and also, able to create relationships with other people. According to Riikonen (2017), this process: to have the needed skills to influence on other people in order to achieve the one person's vision, is called leadership (Riikonen, 2017).

As already stated, leadership is the skill to motivate people move towards a set goal(s) together, and a leader is a person, who is exercising these practices. There are as many styles to lead, as there are people that uses their leadership skills. (Ward, 2020.) There are also many ways to divide leadership styles, for instance, one way to divide leadership styles is to divide them into destructive and constructive leadership styles. In a destructive leadership style, the leaders in a company behave in a harsh, authoritarian way towards their subordinates. Leaders are usually very unpleasant and insensitive. Unlike in the destructive leadership style, leaders that represent the constructive leadership style make the work environment more pleasant for the employees. In an organization where there is being used constructive leadership, the subordinates are

usually dedicated to their jobs and they more usually feel better. (van Prooijen & de Vries, 2016.)

Another way to classify the existing leadership styles, is to divide them into two categories: transformational leadership and transactional leadership (Nanjudeswaraswamy & Swamy, 2014). "Transformational leadership is more like visionary leadership" (Asrar-ul-Haq & Kuchinke, 2016, p. 56). When using the transformational leadership style, leaders take individuals into consideration and create a more open culture within the organization. Whereas, when using the transactional leadership style, leaders appreciate traditions and prefer not to make big changes. When using this leadership style, the organization culture is not as open, and the organization structures are not as low, as in a company that uses the transformational leadership style. (Nanjudeswaraswamy & Swamy, 2014.) There are numerous factors, that effect on the chosen leadership style, for instance, if a company's managers are more concerned of achieving the set goals, transactional leadership is an appropriate choice (Asrar-ul-Haq & Kuchinke, 2016). It is important for the company to have as unified culture for leadership. It is also important to consider thoroughly, which leadership style should be used in the company, because the used leading style is claimed to have a great effect on the employee performance and productivity, and by this way, the used leadership style will also have an impact on the whole company's performance. (Nanjudeswaraswamy & Swamy, 2014.)

"In an article published in the *Harvard Business Review* in 2000, Daniel Goleman identified six leadership styles: coercive, authoritative, affiliative, democratic, pacesetting and coaching," (MacDonald, 2020) which are associated with the various elements of emotional intelligence, the skill that is nowadays highly required of a leader (Morgan, 2020; Hernez-Broome & Hughes, 2004), in different combinations. According to this Harvard Business Review article (Morgan, 2020), four of the six leadership styles are seen to improve the 'climate' of an organization more than the rest two styles. The four more positive leadership styles are claimed to increase the people's commitment,

confidence creativity and help the employees to clarify their purpose within the company's business, and the two other styles are stated to do the opposite for the company. (Parrish, 2020.)

Lastly, according to Becker (2020), these are the most common leadership styles of all time:

1. Bureaucratic Leadership
2. Democratic Leadership
3. Autocratic Leadership
4. Laissez-Faire Leadership
5. Strategic Leadership
6. Transformational Leadership
7. Transactional Leadership
8. Coach-Style Leadership.

In bureaucratic leadership or democratic leadership style, the manager makes the decisions for his or her subordinates. Although the manager makes the final call, employees may be heard before making the final decision. Bureaucratic leadership style is mostly met within traditional industries and within larger companies. The managers who lead using this leadership style, may reject easily new and more modern strategies, and end up using the more traditional ones' year after year. This resistance might be because the company has already been successful with current processes and trying something new is seen as a waste of time or resources if it does not work, but also the threshold to even try new things is high. This is why, bureaucratic leadership can easily shut down innovation, and is definitely not encouraged for companies who are chasing ambitious goals and quick growth. Then, the democratic leadership is considered as one of the most effective leadership styles. It is a highly used leadership style and it gives the employees of a company more freedom than the bureaucratic leadership style. Namely, the democratic leadership allows also the lower-level employees to exercise authority,

which gives them better experience for the possible future career. (Becker, 2020; Juuti et al., 2014.) This leadership style is "good for: encouraging loyalty, boosting employee morale, improving work, product quality and creativity, but bad for: urgent situations where fast response is needed" (Lesonsky, 2015).

The autocratic leadership style is quite the opposite of democratic leadership style. Namely, the manager makes decisions without asking the subordinates for any advices or opinions. Employees are not considered or consulted before giving instructions, yet they are expected to comply with the decision within the time and pace set by the supervisors. (Lesonsky, 2015.) The autocratic leadership style is "good for: urgent situations, where results must be accomplished quickly, situations where the leader has far more knowledge than the team, new employee training, but it is bad for: creative or knowledge-based jobs, often damages employee morale, initiative and loyalty" (Lesonsky, 2015). Then, the laissez-faire leadership style differs entirely from the previous ones. In this leadership style, the employees, or the colleagues of the superior are let to make their own decisions and be in charge of their own operations. Even though, laissez-faire leadership can empower employees by trusting them to work however they like, it can also limit their development and overlook critical company growth opportunities. This leadership style can be suitable within a start-up company, but it is highly important for the company, where this leadership style is used to specify some ground rules so that no one ends up being truly alone with any questions or problems. (Becker, 2020.) The laissez-faire leadership style is "good for: highly motivated, highly skilled or expert employees. On the other hand, it is bad for: situations demanding quick results; new or untrained employees, employees who refuse to take responsibility, employees who need guidance, or employees who cannot agree". (Lesonsky, 2015.) Even though, this leadership style is being used in some companies and 'employee empowerment' is seen as a trend, it is also being questioned, if this kind of leadership truly works, because successful companies usually tend to retain some elements of hierarchical control (Vecchio, Justin & Pearce 2010). Today, there can be seen another trend within the used and preferred leadership styles, namely, coaching leadership style

has become more popular during the last decade. It has been a timely topic, and for this reason also, it has been studied more. (Munteanu & Raţiu, 2018.) This leadership style will be presented more thoroughly in the following chapters.

2.4 Does management and leadership come always hand in hand?

Even though, there is no unambiguous definition for the concept 'leadership' and even if it is often assimilated with the term 'management', they do not mean the same thing. They are both necessary for a company to succeed in an increasingly complex and unstable business environment, as it is today. (Gallos & Heifetz, 2008.) A manager is not always a leader too. It namely takes more than being named for a managerial position to be a leader. A manager may not even be a leader at all for his or her subordinates. Nevertheless, all managers should be also leaders in this current world. (Pozin, 2013.)

As already stated, a manger gets the power over others because of his or her position in the company, the title. Then if a manager wants also to be a leader, he or she has to be able to get people to follow them and influence them somehow. (Riikonen, 2017.) According to one article, when managers create goals, leaders create a vision, and while managers rather control risks and think more short-termed, leaders think more long-termed and can take easier risks to achieve these future visions (Arruda, 2016). A manager becomes also a leader, when he or she adopts the principle factors of leadership and acts according to these principles. This means, that for a manager to be seen as a leader too, he or she should be able to influence his or her subordinates to move towards the set goal and vision together. As previously stated, this is not tough enough, a leader, also known as a manager too, should be able to communicate with others, create a trusting ambiance and both motivate and support each subordinate always when needed. Nowadays, it is also seen important for the leader to have and show trust for his or her subordinates, and to give them more power to manage their own decisions and actions. Of course, a leader, especially when being a manager too, should not leave his or her subordinates on their own totally. Namely, according to

multiple researchers, people still need the discipline that especially management can give. (Business, 2020; Morgan, 2020; Riikonen, 2017.)

To conclude this chapter, supervisor work is defined through the role's different responsibilities. A company's managers have multiple tasks: they ensure that resources are allocated as needed and that all contribute to the set goals. (Juuti et al., 2014; Riikonen, 2017.) Nowadays, that is though not enough. A supervisor needs to also ensure that the environment is safe and equal to all employees, and that each person working for the company is noticed in the way they are needed to feel good about themselves (Doyle, 2020.). One of the most required assignments of a manager is to take responsibility for their subordinates; aim to get to know them in a deeper level, to build trust between them, and also to encourage them in all aspects of their careers. Even though, these are the tasks are usually required of them when being given that position, these tasks should not be taken for granted. These acknowledgments may have a significant impact on both the employees and also on the company itself. Namely, when an employee is motivated and feel comfortable within their workplace, he or she tends to work harder and give more for the company. Motivated people tend to be more creative and innovative, which may lead to increasing the company's profits and the given dividends. (Juuti et al., 2014; Riikonen, 2017.)

As already stated, managers of a company can effect greatly on how the company performs. For the managers to get the employees motivated and work even harder for the company's mission, nowadays there is also needed for the ability to use leadership's tools. The managers should be able to perform as leaders too. There is no exact right way to do it, but the manager should know his or her audience and the environment where he or she works in, and with the help of these aspects, the manager can use one specific leadership style or a combination of few ones. The aim is to find a solution that suits the company's strategy and the target group the best. (Doyle, 2020; Morgan, 2020.) As an example of this, a modern leadership style is being introduced more thoroughly in the next chapter.

3   Coaching leadership style

In this chapter, the main topics of this thesis will be thoroughly introduced; what is the definition of coaching leadership style, where and for whom does it work, and lastly, how can it be seen in a manager's daily activities? After this chapter, the principles of this quite modern style to lead people should be known.

3.1   Definition

Even though, the roots of coaching leadership style are from the ancient times, it has truly made its breakthrough during the past decade. This leadership style has gotten a lot of attention lately, but there can be still seen a limitation in its researches. Also, because there is no sole definition, there may be some differences in its appearance. Usually though, this is due to cultural differences. (Munteanu & Raţiu, 2018.) Even if, there might be various ways to define coaching, there are few specific features that determine it:

Table 1.   Definition of coaching

Sir John Whitmore	Coaching is **unlocking a person's potential to maximise their own performance**. It is helping them to learn rather than teaching them.
DiGirolamo & Tkach (2019)	**Facilitating growth** and change by evoking an individual's own resourcefulness.
Douglas and Morley (2001)	**A short-term developmental relationship** in which a specific and reciprocally constructed goal of performance is created.

Downey (2003)	The ability to facilitate the coachees' performance, **learning and development**.
Fairley & Stout (2004)	**An interactive relationship** between individuals that helps people **identify and accomplish** their **personal and professional goals** faster than they could on their own.

3.2 More about coaching and leadership style

To elaborate the more extensive content of the Table 1 above, a coach challenges the so called 'coachees' to thrive forward and improve themselves without giving the answers to them (Burrows, 2018). According to Grant and Stober (2006), "coaching is more about asking the right questions than telling people what to do, and it is not necessarily concerned with subject-matter expertise or advice giving" (DiGirolamo & Tkach, 2019, p. 197). Therefore, coaching is an activity that is participative by nature where not only energy, but also knowledge is shared and co-created within the relationship. (DiGirolamo & Tkach, 2019.) So, the core idea is that with the help of the coach, the subordinates can improve their performance and reach their full potentials, by unlocking all their possible barriers in their thinking- or action patterns. While the coach is giving the coachees time and space to think and question different matters, but at the same time being there for the possibly needed support, the coachees should be able to come up with the needed ideas and solutions themselves and as an end-result. For this to happen, it requires different coaching skills from the manager itself, but it also requires a specific environment to succeed, which again the coach should be able to create. (Burrows, 2018.) These requirements for coaching leadership style will be furtherly introduced later in this thesis.

Within the coach-style leadership, the manager focuses on identifying and nurturing the individual strengths of each member in his or her team. The manager who uses this

leadership style utilizes the diversity within a group and supports all unique and profitable features. The aim is to maximize each persons' performance and to utilize these potentialities. (Ristikangas & Ristikangas, 2018.) This style offers strong similarities to democratic leadership, but puts more emphasis on the growth and success of individual employees. The manager helps his or her employees to improve their strengths by questioning their thoughts, by encouraging them to try continually new tasks and challenges, and by enabling them all the needed platforms and skillsets. A coach usually aims to educate their coachees without giving them the *right* answers. The work has to be done by the coachee, and the coach is there for both support. (Becker, 2020). Additionally, when deciding to lead people with coaching leadership style, the manager's role switches to a listening enabler, sparrer and to a supporter of the others. The focus is on everyone's growth and enabling all to learn and improve themselves. The manager has to focus on the individuals as they are, and try to creatively treat all as their own individuals. Within this leadership style, the diversity between people is seen as a strength and as a resource for the whole company. (Koulutus, 2020.)

According to Munteanu and Raţiu's article published in 2018, there are five dimensions that should be in place in order to be able to integrate coaching successfully into a team or company. These factors are: open communication, team approach, and value people over tasks, accept ambiguity, and facilitate employee's development. These dimensions are defined according to the need of maintaining balance among key workplace factors, which are: the subordinates, the management, the tasks, and the environment. These dimensions tell, how the culture should be within a company for coaching leadership style to work successfully in it. Namely, according to this theoretical framework, open communication is one of the most articulated key factors for effective coaching. This means, that the managers need to be able to share information and opinions openly, with their employees to provide effective listening and understanding. Team approach refers to the need of the managers to work in partnership with employees. Which means, that the communication cannot be one-sided, and the employees have to be taken into account when making decisions. This will empower and help the subordinates to learn

more. The third dimension is value people over task. It has been claimed that the tendency of the business world, at least has been, more task-oriented rather people-oriented, but there has been seen a change to this towards the people. Accept ambiguity is related to the manager's need to be more open minded to new ideas, to explore multiple solutions and perspectives when solving problems and making decisions in order to make employees to feel more comfortable and encouraged. This is especially important when working in uncertainty. The last dimension, to facilitate employees' development and it refers to the skills of a manager to be able to provide resources to his or her subordinates, to give them feedback, to set goals with them, and for instance, to question their opinions. (Munteanu & Raţiu, 2018.)

Coaching leadership works best within those teams that are more self-driven, motivated to learn new things and willing to challenge themselves (Ibarra & Scoular 2019). And according to Berg & Karlsen (2016), coaching is also seen helpful when being used for people working with projects. Also, coach-leadership style is stated to suit better in those organizations, where creativity is being supported. This is because, the coach-leadership style is said to make fuller use of the potential of the individuals within these creative cultures. (Ristikangas & Ristikangas, 2018.) In addition to these, the hierarchical structure within an organization should be noticed when thinking of choosing coaching as the used leadership style. Namely, if there are high hierarchical structures within the company, it is highly possible that this leadership style would not work well in that company. (Janse, 2018). Then, there are numerous companies and teams that would want to use this leadership style, but still lie between aspiration and practice (Ibarra & Scoular, 2019). So, in the next chapter there will be presented, who could be a coach – and why, and how does the coaching leadership style really appear within companies.

As said previously, there are few skills needed from a manager to be a coach for his or her subordinates. To have success with the used coaching leadership style, the manager has to listen actively, question when needed, give constructive feedback and create a trustworthy environment for the team. (Wachtel, 2016.) In addition to this, the manager

should be able to show empathy towards others' feelings and ideas, and also, he or she should recognize and point out the subordinates' strengths, so that the subordinated can improve themselves even further at the same time that the company exploits their maximum potentials for the company's performance. Even though, the manager would not be a 'born coach' for his or her subordinates, the skills can be learned and improved at all times. (Milner & Milner, 2018.) According to a Harvard Business Review article published in 2018, these factors can be learned quite quickly, if the manager can train in a safe environment:" even a short course targeted at the right skills can markedly improve managers' coaching skills" (Milner & Milner, 2018).

Within coaching, one of the most important characteristics for the managers are the capability to truly listen and question without judging the opponent. The conversations should not be guided into any specific direction, namely, the aim is to draw wisdom, insight, and creativity out of the people they are coaching as freely as possible. The goal is to help the coachees' to learn to resolve problems and cope with challenging situations on their own. It is an approach that can be highly energizing for those being coached, but it does not come naturally to most managers, who tend to be more comfortable in the so called 'tell' mode. (Ibarra & Scoular, 2019). That is why, it is crucial for the manager to know what he or she is doing as a coach to unleash the maximum potential of others. Currently, an effective manager-as-coach is seen as a person who asks questions instead of provides answers, supports employees instead of judges them, and facilitates their development rather than dictates what should be done. Managers should not be only pushing those ones forward that are less experienced, but to motivate all around one. (Ibarra & Scoular, 2019; Janse, 2018.) Namely, as Sir John Whitmore has defined it: "skilled coaching involves 'unlocking people's potential to maximize their own performance'." (Ibarra & Scoular, 2019). So, in other words, coach-leadership is about disseminating knowledge and helping others to discover it for themselves.

Besides, the characteristics and skills, that are required or recommendable to have, there are also some factors about the environment to taken into consideration. "In order

to promote cooperation and build a cohesive team with a synergy effect, the coach must take care of the conditions that would allow employees to express their best personal qualities, and on this basis to develop the cooperation skills relevant for the effective teamwork in achieving a common goal. Those conditions are related to the following workers' needs: self-expression, respect, success as well as the following abilities: independence, initiative, responsibility, sense of risk and purpose, desire for innovation." (Bilas & Masadeh, 2018, pp. 29 – 30.)

3.2.1   Tools for coaching leadership style

Because people tend to be more comfortable in the 'tell' mode, there have been created different models to help managers and people wanting or aiming to work by the principles that coaching leadership (Ibarra & Scoular, 2019.) One of the best ways to get better at nondirective coaching is to try conversing using the GROW model, devised in the 1980's by business coaches Graham Alexander, Alan Fine, and Sir John Whitmore (Burrows, 2018). The GROW model involves four action steps, the first letters of which give the model its name. The four action steps listened in the article of Ibarra and Scoular (2019) are Goal, Reality, Options, and Will:

In the first step, the Goal, the manager's aim is to truly understand what the coachee wants to accomplish at that time from the discussed theme. The goal is not maybe to understand, what his or her goals are for the possible ongoing project or what is his or her role in the organization, but what does he or she hopes to get out of this exact conversation. Namely, people do not tend to do this organically in most conversations, and that is why, they often need help getting the 'core problem' out. An example of a *good* and nondirective question is the following: 'What are you willing to do about this matter?' or 'What would you want to have when you walk out the door that you do not have right now?'. (Ibarra & Scoular, 2019; Janse, 2018.)

In the second step, the Reality, the manager's goal is to ask questions that start with words like: 'what', 'when', 'where', and 'who', each of which forces people to think more

thoroughly and to focus on specific facts. This makes the conversation real and constructive. Noting, that questions with the word 'why' in the beginning should not though be mostly used. This is because asking *why* people demands explore reasons and motivations rather than facts. In doing that, it can carry overtones of judgment or trigger attempts at self-justification, both of which can be counterproductive. In this step, an example of a *good* reality-focused question could be the following: 'What are the key things we need to know?' or 'Which decisions or actions are taking you already towards this goal?'. Also, one thing in where the manager should pay attention is on how people respond in the asked questions. The coachees' should be forced to slow down and think more thoroughly when being asked these open questions, and when people are asked to slow down and think in this way, they often lose themselves in contemplation. This step is critical, because it can stop people from overlooking pertinent variables and leap to conclusions. The managers' job here is just to raise the right questions and then leave room for thinking. (Ibarra & Scoular, 2019; Janse, 2018.)

Then, in the third step, the Options, the manager should open the possible locks that his or her subordinates can face. By *locks*, they are referred to any obstacles of mind that people may run into. For instance, people may end up in a situation, where they can only think the following alternatives: 'There's nothing I can do', or 'I have only one real option' or 'I am torn between A and B'. In these cases, the manager should help his or her subordinates to think more broadly and more deeply. To broaden the conversation, sometimes it is enough to ask something as simple as: 'What has been successful about the previous alternatives that you already have tried?' or even 'If you had a magic wand, what would you do?'. It is such an open question, which gives people so much freedom, where they can then start thinking in more productive ways. Once their perspective is broadened their perspective and discovered new options, the manager should prompt them to deepen their thinking, perhaps by encouraging them to explore the upsides and downsides of each option. (Ibarra & Scoular, 2019; Janse, 2018.)

Lastly, in the fourth step, the Will, the aim is to clear the coachees' next steps towards the goal that he or she wanted to achieve with this conversation. Firstly, the manager could ask the following question: 'What will you do now?'. This encourages the person that is being coached to review the specific action plan that has emerged from the held conversation. If the conversation has gone well, the coachee has a clear sense of what that plan is. If he or she does not have a clear plan, the manager needs to cycle back through the earlier steps of the GROW model. Then, the second part involves asking the coachee about their will to act with a question like the following: 'On a scale of one to ten, how motivated are you to implement this plan?' or 'How likely is it that you will do this?'. If the respond is an eight or higher, they are probably motivated enough to follow through. If the answer is seven or less, they probably will not. In that case the manager needs to cycle back through the earlier steps of the process again in an effort to arrive at a solution they are more likely to act on. Also, the manager could ask the coachee to specify in what timeline she or he will do as planned so that the manager can follow the process better. Lastly, it is important to ask if the coachee has something to aks or if she or he needs more support from the manager. By this way, they will have the feeling that they are more taken into account which increases their motivation and performance. (Ibarra & Scoular, 2019; Janse, 2018.)

An alternative model to GROW is the OSCAR Coaching Model. It is focused on the solution based coaching techniques. The OSCAR Coaching Model was developed by Andrew Gilbert and Karen Whittleworth in 2002. The model builds on the GROW model and is particularly useful for managers seeking to adopt a coaching style. It takes the following structure: **O**utcome, which stands for helping the coachees' to clarify their outcomes. **S**ituation, which stands for the establishment of were the coachee is now. **C**hoices and **C**onsequences, which means helping the coachees' to generate as many choices as possible and to highlight consequences of each potential choice. **A**ctions, which stands for helping the coachees' to establish their next steps, and encouraging to take responsibility for their action plan. And lastly, **R**eview, which means the ongoing

dialogue of review and evaluation, and the ensuring that the coachees' are on course."
(Burrows, 2018.)

3.3 Pros

Although this leadership style has been questioned with the examples presented in the next chapter, the coaching leadership style is also seen as an excellent way to" maximize individual and organizational growth" (DiGirolamo & Tkach, 2019, p. 201.) Coaching is seen as a way to increase learning and reflection within a company's personnel (Berg & Karlse, 2016.) Namely, within coaching leadership style, the manager helps his or her employees to identify their strengths and weaknesses. The manager encourages the employees to set and attain goals, providing regular feedback to assist them to improve their performance. This style works well with those employees who acknowledge the lacks in their performance and wish to improve themselves. This style of leadership can be truly empowering for those who take full advantage of it. (MacDonald, 2020.) Namely, the aim of the coaches is to inspire others by fostering hope and creating a positive vision of the future (Hicks & McCracken, 2011). According to Miller (2020) people who follow the coaching leadership style have one unique characteristic that other leadership styles do not offer: instead, as in many other leadership style, of showing directly on how to do something, in coaching, the manager encourages people to try and learn always something new. This only increases the skillset available to the individual workers, which can create competitive advantages even for the whole company.

In addition to these, in those teams, where the managers have and use their coaching skills, there usually is noticed" higher team-member engagement, better working relationships, and reduced intention to quit" (DiGirolamo & Tkach, 2019, p. 195). This is because, the coachees are kept updated so that the employees know what is expected of them and they feel more taken into account with the done decisions, but also because the employees know that the manager is always present for them when needed and they feel supported at all times. This increases satisfaction towards their job and raises

their willingness to perform better and commit to this team stronger. (DiGirolamo & Tkach, 2019.) Also, coaching is nowadays seen as a tool to develop the whole company further. Because of these, the concept of coaching leadership has even been definitional as 'an evolution'. (Ibarra & Scoular, 2019.)

3.4 Cons

Even though, the roots of coaching leadership style are in the ancient times, the idea as it is according to today, was presented in the middle of the 20th century for managers to use it within their teams. Although, the idea has been existing for a longer period of time, the idea began to take hold in the business field in the 1970s. (Brock, 2008.)" Recent reports suggest that the use of coaching skills by managers and leaders has become increasingly popular in organizations" (DiGirolamo & Tkach, 2019, p. 195). Despite this trend, there has been done only a marginal amount of research of this topic. This means, that there is no one common way to conceptualize 'coaching', but there is also neither one best measuring tool to use for this leadership style (DiGirolamo & Tkach, 2019). Commonly referred to managerial coaching, many researchers still debate how to conceptualize and define the phenomenon and for which situations it should be best for (Hagen, 2012; Beattieet al., 2014). Namely," existing research also suffers from a number of limitations including scales with questionable validity and reliability, weak correlations, and inconsistent results" (DiGirolamo & Tkach, 2019, p. 196). And, as Berg and Karlse states: "there is still a shortage of empirical research evaluating the practice of coaching" (Berg & Karlse, 2016, p. 1123).

As previously stated, there are still some limitations and ambiguities when it comes to this rather new leadership style. And because of these factors, some other leadership styles such as mentoring can be mixed up with coaching. These two leadership styles are in multiple ways much alike, but there are some specific characteristics that distinguish them from one another. According to Grant (2001), the key difference between these two leadership styles, is that "mentoring traditionally involves an individual with expert knowledge in a specific domain passing on this knowledge to an individual with less expertise" (DiGirolamo & Tkach, 2019, p. 197). Then again, in coaching, there is no need

for the coach to be the expert. Namely, the coach usually is the one that "facilitates the learning" with him or her and the coachee. (DiGirolamo & Tkach, 2019, p. 197.)

According to DiGirolamo and Tkach (2019), there can be other problems seen within the coaching leadership style in addition to its lack of researches and the limitations of its definitions. Namely, when coaching leadership style is based on a relationship of trust, there can be seen few aspects where the confidentiality may be questioned. For instance, according to some researchers, the lack of structure in a company and in the managers' actions may hurt the coaching process. Instead, they recommend that the managers should pay attention on the ways they meet their subordinates especially, when aiming to teach the coachee and to build trust with them. To this, the solution would be to arrange more structured session in addition to the used casual conversations. Also, it is being questioned if a manager truly can be a coach for his or her subordinate because of the possible conflict of interest. Namely, "managers are often responsible for the achievement of organizational goals, which may come in conflict with team members' agendas of growth and self-development" (DiGirolamo & Tkach, 2019, p. 199.) It is also being questioned, how the relationship looks like in a coach – coahcee-relation. Namely, normally in a manager and a subordinate – relationship, there will always be hierarchical, whereas in a coach – coachee-relationship, they are more one of equals, which is again inconsistent with the first set-up. (DiGirolamo & Tkach, 2019.)

In addition to these, this leadership style may not work for people, who are not self-driven or motivated enough (Koulutus, 2020). This leadership style is not seen to inspire those who do not recognize any parts of improvement, or wanting to develop themselves. Rather, this leadership style may feel oppressive to them. (MacDonald, 2020.) Also, not all people want to take much control over their job and not all people are excited about open dialogues (Salminen, 2019). Additionally, coaching requires a specific culture within the company to work successfully, so it requires multiple aspects to be suitable for this leadership to work well. Also, coaching leadership style may take

time to operate as wanted. This is because, for a manager to create a trustworthy atmosphere where all feel safe and taken into account, it does not happen overnight. Besides, for the manager to truly understand and to be able to coach their subordinates, it requires from the managers to get acquainted with his or her team for a longer period of time. This is one of the reasons why, coaching approach is not seen to be effective in crisis or in situations where there are too many variables. (MacDonald, 2020.)

3.5   Coaching leadership style in crisis situations

Nowadays, the word 'crisis' is merely associated with events or experiences that have a negatively effect on economic factors. But, crisis can be also referred to a variety of factors that have an effect on peoples' leadership styles, which lead to decisions that are something else than ordinarily, and much more demanding than normal day-to-day management work. (Niemi, 2011.)

Over the years, there has been multiple 'crisis situations' for companies, and the world to face. They are not all inevitable, but companies can effect on how much these crisis effect on themselves and how these situations are handled. The first, and the most important thing to avoid the most comprehensive damages, is to ensure that the flow of information and communication between management and the other members of the organization works. Namely, in crisis situations, it is particularly important to be able to make quick decisions based on the real-time information that is available. To minimize the negative effects of the situation, the managers should not forget the different actors and members of the organizations: the made efforts must also be made to meet staffing needs. One such factor is meeting its need for information. People are different and everyone reacts individually to different things. Therefore, in a crisis situation, immediate and individual encounter with people is especially important. This is also being done to prevent members of the organization from overreacting because of the lack of information. In these situations, managers should encourage his or her subordinates to think innovatively to resolve a crisis situation. By doing this, the manager

gives his or her subordinates the feeling that they are included in this period of time. The crises or the effects that the employees may cause or aggravate will be minimized by these actions. The situation will again be easier for the company and its managers, if they have used these methods before the crisis as well. Then, the relationship and trust is already at a better level, and there will be no extra time or - efforts used to the transitional of working methods. This is called proactive management. (Niemi, 2011; Nissinen & Seppälä, 2000.)

"During a crisis, everybody looks to at the managers for the next steps or for reassurance. If a manager projects fear and unease, that unease transmits to everyone else, much like a contagious disease. This is why it is absolutely necessary for managers to look like they are 'masters' of the situation. Employees need someone they can rely on, not someone they need to reassure. There are a few situations where leaders are supposed to make quick decisions or hard decisions. A crisis is one of them." (Engagedly, 2020.) It is crucial to be present; to live in today and not try to under- or overestimate the situation, to work close to ones' subordinates and to be there for them. Also to be positive and to have, or at least, to act confident (Engagedly, 2020). Even though, there are multiple aspects within a crisis situation that resemble the coaching leadership style, this particular style is not seen as the most suitable one for circumstances where there are too many variables because the made decisions during these times, often quickly made, are executed by the managers. Also, during these situations, the managers need to take more control over the daily tasks and the used leadership style easily becomes more commanding and authoritative than it normally would. Namely, there can be situations where there is no time for coaching and discussions. (Niemi, 2011.)

4   Marketing industry and - tasks

Since, coaching leadership style is stated to work well within creative work tasks and - environments, which marketing industry and marketing tasks are, they are being studied more closely in this chapter. The aim of this chapter, is to clarify what *marketing* is and why coaching is stated to suit this industry and tasks so well.

4.1   The most creative job: marketing

According to American marketing association's definition," marketing is the activity, set of institutions, and processes for creating, communicating, delivering, and exchanging offerings that have value for customers, clients, partners, and society at large" (AMA, 2020). The purpose of the marketing industry is to communicate companies' offerings to consumers, clients, and the general public, and by this way, to reduce the gap between companies and their customers (Vault, 2020).

Then, creativity is the labor of transforming new and imaginative ideas into reality. Creativity is often characterized by the ability to perceive the world in new ways, to find hidden patterns, to make connections between seemingly unrelated phenomena, and to create solutions. (Creativityatwork, 2020.) Creative ability depends on creative thinking which can be compared to creative problem-solving (Lobell, 2018.) Creativity involves two processes: thinking and then producing. Some say that creativity has nothing to do with innovation, but this is not true, since there is no innovation without creativity. Also, according to some researches show that everyone has creative abilities and creativity can be both learned and trained at any age or experience level. (Psychologytoday, 2020.) Additionally, it is stated, that creativity can be managed (Creativityatwork, 2020).

The UK Government Department for Culture, Media and Sport's, or the DCMS, has made definition in 2001, of creative industries, and it states the following: creative industries are "those industries which have their origin in individual creativity, skill and talent and

which have a potential for wealth and job creation through the generation and exploitation of intellectual property". (DCMS, 2015, p. 4.) This same Government Department has also recognized nine creative sectors, which are:

1) Advertising and marketing

2) Architecture

3) Crafts

4) Design: product, graphic and fashion design

5) Film, TV, video, radio and photography

6) IT, software and computer services

7) Publishing

8) Museums, galleries and libraries

9) Music, performing and visual arts

(DCMS, 2015, p. 10).

4.2 Why coaching is suitable leadership style for those who work with marketing tasks?

Some researches indicate, that coaching suit generally better in those organizations or teams, which cultures support creativity. This is because, the coaching leadership style makes fuller use of the individuals' potentials that operate among creative cultures. (Ristikangas & Ristikangas, 2018.) Namely, since it is stated that creativity can be taught and the 'amount of creativity' of a person can be increased, there should be a manager who is able to lead people within these creative industries or in these creative teams. There should be a manager, who can identify everyone's strengths and encourage them to make the most of them. That manager should also be able to provide the best workspaces and tools for his or her subordinates and to support them at all times. This is because of the fact that a person can reach his or her maximum creativeness, when having the confidence and knowledge within reach at all times. And due to these

arguments, this is why the coach-leadership style is well suited for creative people, such as in teams in marketing field. (Creativityatwork, 2020.)

Because, marketing industry and – tasks are stated to be suitable for coaching leadership style to be implemented and used, that is the reason why, this thesis focuses on the most creative branch and tasks according to the UK Government Department for Culture, Media and Sport's. The aim is to study how and in which ways the managers that work with marketing tasks or within marketing field utilize coaching in their modes of daily operations.

5 Research

In this chapter, the processes and ideology behind the conducted survey will be presented. The questions that were asked from different managers to answer will be introduced. And, to understand more thoroughly, why exactly these questions or methods were asked and used, this all will be mentioned in the following chapter.

5.1 Data and methods

To summarize the contents of the previous paragraphs, the main ways that coaching can appear in a supervisor's activities are his or her presence – although, more as a listening party to allow the subordinates to truly solve their problems on their own. This is because, by this way, the 'coachees' may learn and grasp the most about the matter that was concerning them. Also, a manager could be classified as a coach if he or she is able to create a trustworthy atmosphere within the team by continually support and encourage his or her subordinates in their daily tasks. Lastly, if the manager's actions always enable his or her subordinates to work and implement themselves as freely and effectively as possible, is this also perceived as coaching. (Ibarra & Scoular, 2019; Munteanu & Raţiu, 2018.)

This thesis focuses on answering on two research questions: firstly, how does the interviewed managers lead their subordinates. And secondly, has the managers' used leadership style changed during the COVID-19 pandemic? If so, how? The first question aims to analyze, in which ways does the coach leadership style appear in the managers' daily modes of operations – or analyze, if this leadership style is appeared at all. The goal of this research question is to find out, if the managers are acting more like coaches or something else. Namely, the hypothesis is that coaching leadership style should be highly represented and used among the studied managers, when this leadership style is claimed to suit within marketing industry and working environments well. Then, the second question aims to question the statement that claimed, that coaching would not be that suitable in crisis situations. Which means, that the goal is to find out if the

elements of coaching decreased within the managers' modes of operations after the most recent crisis, COVID-19 arrived or not.

To answer these questions, there were conducted a qualitative research survey that was created in September and then it was sent to multiple managers in October of the year 2020. At this time, COVID-19 had been already existing for a while but at the same time, the previous circumstances, referring to the times before the pandemic, are not too far in the past to be forgotten. That is why, this baseline: before COVID-19 arrived and after it was set for this survey. Approximately 40 managers from different companies were contacted, and about 20 percent participated in this study. So eventually, there were eight managers who answered the survey within the set timeline. All participants filled the survey independently and remotely, and when being ready, their answers were saved on the used survey platform at Kyselynetti's website. The managers that were contacted for the survey were chosen randomly from a database online provided by Alma Media.

Even though, the sample of eight is not the most comprehensive, it gives a proper impression on how these managers lead their subordinates or team member, or in other words: how many of the studied managers work more accordingly coaching leadership's principles than to any other leadership style. Namely, the survey gives the information, if there are *any* signs of coaching in their used leadership styles or not. And, if there are 'coaching factors' detected in the managers' used styles to lead, these elements of coaching will be introduced, evaluated and weighted with those elements that are not suitable to coach-leadership style. By this way, it is questioned, if the participants are *fundamentally* operating more accordingly to the principles of coaching or not. Lastly, the managers' leadership style is being evaluated on a longer timeline, where the aim is to study if they have changed their ways of leading their team when evaluating their actions before and after COVID-19 existed. If the answer is positive, a crisis such as COVID-19 has had an effect on their used leadership style. As earlier stated, this is seen as a timely topic to study because the current pandemic has both been among people for a sufficient period of time but not long enough for people to forget the times before

it. Hence this, everyone will be able to remember and compare their actions now and before COVID-19.

5.2 Gathered data

As previously stated, the companies that were contacted about this thesis' survey were selected randomly from a database gotten from Alma Media's. The conditions were: medium large to large companies that either have a team that is responsible for the company's marketing tasks or that the company itself works within marketing industry. Companies that were contacted were both international and national, and both listed and non-listed companies such as Neste Plc, Kone Plc, Finnair Plc, Vaasan Sähkö Ltd, Mediabrands Finland Ltd, Asennemedia Ltd and TBWA Ltd. The people within these contacted companies were all managers of some level: in a bigger company, there were marketing managers contacted but if a company was noticed to be quite little, even some CEO's were contacted to be able to reach the right person to answer this survey.

The final gotten number of participants for this survey was eight managers. Most of the participants, namely six out of eight, worked in a company that operates within marketing industry and the minority of the participants, two out of eight, were managers that merely worked in a team that was responsible for the company's marketing actions. The limitation of this survey is its sample's size. Because the number of the gotten participants is *only* eight, this survey's gotten data cannot be directly generalized. This study is a qualitative research that seeks to find answers to few deeper questions. For the future, this survey could be used as a platform for further research: there could be for instance made a qualitative interview by selected method to conduct it to gain even deeper knowledge of the managers' thoughts and actions. More about the limitations and opportunities about this subject used for research will be discussed later on in this thesis.

To remind, the aim is to study how and in which ways the coaching leadership style does occur in the managers' daily activities for their subordinates or team members. In addition to this, the goal is to find out, if COVID-19 has had an effect on the supervisors', who participated in the survey, used leadership styles or not. The goal of the survey was to analyze how and in which way the managers define their job and their modes of daily operations. To be able to answer these research questions as thoroughly as possible, there was a need to also try to read between the lines of the managers' answers and see which word choices they ended up in using. For instance, if the manager explains much of him- or herself or does he or does it come across that she or he values the team more than oneself. Also, the ways and habits of being present for the team members is an important factor to be reviewed as well. By that, it is meant to analyze if the manager also wants or aims to get to know or is interested about the subordinates outside the work environment. For an example, the manager could want to know what the subordinates' interests are and at what state of mind they are in the civilian life too. The better the manager knows the team members, the better he or she can help and support them as coaching requires them to. (Ibarra & Scoular, 2019; Ristikangas & Ristikangas, 2018.)

Firstly, in coaching leadership style, there should be low hierarchical structures within the company or the team, unlike when using leadership styles such as bureaucratic leadership. When having low hierarchical structures, the communication between subordinates and managers should be easy and it should not take too much time to reach the wanted person or people. This was studied in the survey by asking the managers in which ways and how often do they meet their team members. If there were any signs of managers only meeting or facing their subordinates when it is recommended according to some policy or instruction, the communication cannot be spontaneous and continuous, which means that the manager is not working under the 'terms' of coaching. Namely, such actions only create distances between the managers and the rest of the team, and they certainly do not strengthen any trustworthy atmospheres that may have been previously built. Even though, most of the collected answers supported the

principles of coaching, there were still three answers that did give the impression that either the manager is not prioritizing his or her team members enough, or that there are just too high hierarchical structures within the company, and because of the company's' regulations, the managers may not be able to act spontaneous enough for their teams' needs. (DiGirolamo & Tkach, 2019.)

Secondly, according to coaching leadership style, the manager should be present at all times to his or her team, or at least available to them whenever needed. In contrast to autocratic leadership, the manager who uses coach-leadership style does not need to understand how to solve the possible problems nor does he or she have to understand anything about the handled subject itself, but the coach-manager should be able to help the subordinate to solve and deal with the issue on their own. In other words, the manager needs to ensure that the subordinates have all the required tools and platforms to use in their work, but also that the subordinates know how to use them and more generally, what to do next. This was again tested and analyzed from the gotten answers. The terms and concepts sought at this stage were: 'space-giving', 'present', 'active-listener', and for example 'coaching'. Almost all of the participants met the criteria of coaching leadership style at this stage. There were few managers, who mostly intervene in their subordinates' daily life, when they are encountering problems. This is ok for a coach to do of course, but a coach should also be there to praise the subordinates when they have done something well and check on them even though there would not be anything specific going on. Among all the participants, there was discovered only two managers, who mentioned separately *the coach-leadership style* and informed to either operate by this leadership's principles or to consider themselves as a 'coach'. One of these managers highlighted her team's spirits importance, which is an essential factor in coaching. The 'we-spirit' is an end-result of multiple things, and in this manager's company, they conduct continually job satisfaction with the help of surveys: they analyze the gotten results and act to them when needed. Also, the good 'we-spirit' that they have been able to build is supported by creating common rules within the company together with all employees – not just between the managers. By this way, all feel taken

into account and all have the same knowledge and motivation to support the company's shared mission. This same manager who highlighted the previous matters was also the only one who answered to be a 'listener' when there were 'debater' and 'counselor' as alternatives too to express which of the words represented them the most. This was asked in the survey, since, in coaching it is important for the manager to really listen and to understand his or her subordinates in a deeper way, in contrast to the managers that lead according to autocratic leadership style. (Burrows, 2018; Ibarra & Scoular, 2019.)

Then, there were analyzed how many of the managers' purposely aim to create and offer the best work environment and tools to their team members. For a manager to be able to serve his or her subordinate as good and suitably as possible, the manager has to know the subordinates' strengths, capabilities, and for an example, their motivational factors. Because all the teams' members may be totally different from each other when analyzing these questions, the manager needs to take all individually into account – not forgetting to support the team spirit as well. Again, the need for the manager to get acquainted with the team members, not only within the work environment, surfaces. This was tested in the survey by asking the managers to estimate how well they know their subordinates and how well do they estimate to know what their subordinates do daily at work. The higher the answered number between zero and hundred, the better they claim to know them. In this phase, if the manager answered a number between 80 – 100, it was considered good and below this range, the answer was considered *bad enough* for the studied leadership style's requirements. There was only one participant who gave a truly bad answer to this (answering 55) and another who gave a slightly worrying answer (by answering 74) but the rest of the managers claimed to know their subordinates either good or very well. What was surprising, only or even one manager stated to know her team members extremely well (by answering 100). Even though, only one question's answers are noticed and listed here, there were few other questions in the survey that test this question's answers too. In one of the questions, the answer had to be written out, and there again the used words and phrases could be analyzed 'between the lines' as well. By asking the same question but in a different way, it was for

instance proven, why the one manager who acknowledged not to know her team members well. In this other question, she wrote that even though she aims to build an atmosphere where all could talk freely and feel safe, she is not sure if she sometimes is understood wrong due to her way of communicating, which is quite sarcastic. This indicates, that she as a manager is not truly aware of her audience and how she should or could talk to her team without making anyone feel uncomfortable. (Janse, 2018.)

Lastly, the managers' modes of operations were even more analyzed. In contrast to, transactional leadership, which may achieve short-term goals, it does not focus on the future as coaching does. Namely, in coach-leadership style the aim is to be sustainable also long-term, and to focus more on the strategic planning rather than extinguish the 'fires' of everyday. Most of the answers, specifically six out of eight, stated, that they focus more on the strategic work than anything else, but only half of them gave a considerably better answer than the others did. In this question, all numbers below 50 were considered as alarming, and not suitable answers for coaching leadership style. Also, when asked if COVID-19 has changed the managers' used leadership styles and operations, only one, the same person who answered to work as coaching leadership style requires, answered yes. This answer was assumed to be used due to the outcome of the *crisis chapter* in this thesis (Niemi, 2011), but what was surprising with the gotten answers, was the truly low ratio of answering 'yes'. When starting to conduct the research study, it was assumed that the majority of the participants would respond that the ways they lead their subordinates have transformed somehow due to COVID-19, according to the gotten results, this was not the case. Namely, all the seven others that answered 'no' felt that their ways of leading their teams have not changed significantly since the pandemic appeared. Perhaps this finding supports the fact that these other managers did not function completely as coaching leadership style would require them to – or that they did not work according to any particular leadership style consciously and because of this they were not able to analyze their actions in a more comprehensive way.

As previously stated, all the gotten answers in the survey were analyzed and each mode of operation were defined under two options: 'coaching' or' non-coaching'. By this way, the aim was to find out how clearly each manager operated according to this specific leadership style. This separation of the appeared actions was conducted since being aware that not many people work systematically by one leadership style's regulations. Namely, it is common for a manager to change his or her working methods accordingly to the occasion or to the people he or she is working with. When the participants were finished with the survey, their answers were analyzed sentence by sentence: all the sentences that supported the coach-leadership style's principles were marked with the color of green and all the sentences that supported some other leadership style than coaching, was marked with the color of red. In the created study for this thesis, there were 16 questions that were considered as significant when defining if a participated manager was either a coach or not a coach. Of course, it may be seen as a harsh or strict way to classify someone's leading style but this was also seen as the only way to truly define and divide the participants into categories. Because, not one or even two aspects could prove if a manager is acting according to any specific leadership style's principles, the participated managers' answers were analyzed as a whole. To eventually be able to categorize a manager between 'a coach' or 'something else', this was done by summarizing the analyzed answers and if a manager got over eight, half of the questions, or more 'approved', or in this case marked as green, he or she was considered to be working more like a coach than anything else to his or her subordinates. Then again, if there were eight or more red answers for a manager, he or she was considered as not a coach.

Eventually, there were 5 managers who acted more like a coach than something else. Those, who scored well enough to be classified as *a coach*, their number of accepted answers are bolded in the table below:

Table 2.   Coach or not

| Participant's nr. | 1 | Accepted answers | **9/16** |

Participant's nr.	2	Accepted answers	5/16
Participant's nr.	3	Accepted answers	7/16
Participant's nr.	4	Accepted answers	**9/16**
Participant's nr.	5	Accepted answers	6/16
Participant's nr.	6	Accepted answers	**9/16**
Participant's nr.	7	Accepted answers	**10/16**
Participant's nr.	8	Accepted answers	**12/16**

In the conducted survey, there were various aspects that were either expected or surprising – positively or negatively. The first thing, that caught the attention, was the finding, that there were only two managers who mentioned coaching leadership style without asking or guiding them to highlight this leadership style. In addition to this, there was just one who claimed to be a coach of some sort, but did not mention this specific leadership style. It is also worth noting that coaching was the only leadership style that even got any separate mentions or attention in the participants' answers. The three participants that highlighted coaching in some ways can be seen both a positive surprise because they cover 37,5 percent of the whole sample, which is quite a good ratio – but then it can be also seen as a negative discovery since, five participants of eight did *not* mention this modern and effective leadership style at all. Additionally, it was remarkable to find that these three managers, who highlighted separately the coaching leadership style, or coaching in general in the survey, they were also the ones who got the best scores when analyzing all the participants' answers above in the Table 2. This could be proof to an idea of if a manager notices a specific leadership style in anyways, he or she more likely implements its principles into his or her modes of operations too. And on the contrary, if a manager is not aware of any specific leadership style or has not found the most suitable for him or her, the manager is also more likely to act as he or she thinks is the best for the specific situation. In these cases, the outcome could be sometimes a bit confusing and probably the used modes of operations can be contradictory to each other. This is though mere speculation.

Besides all the surprising findings from the survey, there were multiple examples gotten on how coaching can truly appear in practice. Namely, until the conducted survey, there were only claims of how a manager could execute his or her operations as a coach, but with the help of the done research, these scholarly statements got practical examples to support these claims. For instance, as according to various scholarly studies, one of the most important aspects of coaching is that the managers should give their team members the space and time they need to truly comprehend how to solve their faced problems or issues both on their own and by giving them the support they need and by asking them required questions to improve their ability to think and solve problems. (Munteanu & Raţiu, 2018.) This argument was supported by many of the managers that participated to the conducted survey. One manager stated to be 'a space-giving coach', that wants to support his subordinates' development, and another manager also emphasized the importance of meeting the subordinates needs and aiming to always cheer them forward because she thinks that if an employee feels well, this reflects on his or her work and by this way the client can be more satisfied too. In addition to these, as multiple researchers highlighted, the presence of a manager is also highly recommended within coaching leadership style, the participated managers gave numerous examples of how this deed is shown in their workplaces: the managers elaborated, in which ways and how often they keep in touch with their subordinates. One example of this, is that some of the managers stated to *be there for* their subordinates at all times and make some sort of contact to them each day. The matter is not about what they discuss, but that the subordinates are taken into consideration each day, especially now, during COVID-19 when most of the teams and companies work remotely from their homes. Few managers said that they call to their team members sometimes even daily to know what is going on with them. The key is to not to wait to communicate with them when it is *required* of a manager to do so according to some regulations or rules, but when they want to or when they see it to be necessary. To wit, the communication should be spontaneous and as open as possible. (Ibarra & Scoular, 2019.)

But then again, there were also collected multiple modes of operations that did not support or suit within the idea of coaching leadership style. For an example, to the lastly handled topic above, there was a manager who wrote that he discusses or notices *a new team member* every week for the first weeks, then every month and then the thoroughly communication from his side happens between two or three months. This means, that the longer period of time a subordinate has been in his team, the less there is natural communication from the manager's side. That manager's statement was immediately highlighted as red in the survey, because it gives the impression that the manager operates only accordingly to the company's rules and that he does not care enough to make any changes to the set rules either. Another example that does not suit to the principles of coaching, was the discovery that some supervisors have quite many responsibilities on their shoulders, especially for tasks, that require likely skills of an expert. Within coaching's principles, the manager who aims to work as a coach too, should not be or at least identify of him- or herself as an expert in the manager – subordinate-relationship. Therefore, this was considered as a warning, since a manager's role in coaching leadership style should be primarily on the team and its members. In coaching, the manager's task is to be an enabler, a supporter and a trustworthy team member. This means, that a coach should not to be responsible to manage too many other demanding work assignments alongside managing the team: rather let someone else, such as a specialist, handle those tasks. (Burrows, 2018; Janse, 2018.)

In addition to those previous examples of actions that did not go by the 'rules' of coach-leadership style, there was a case where the survey revealed, that one manager has truly issues with one important part of a coach's work: she is not sure if she is being misunderstood by her team and that is why, she also scored the lowest points in the question, where it was asked of the managers to define from 0 to 100 how well they know their teams' members. In these cases, there should be done something about this gap of knowledge for the manager to be able to be a better coach to her subordinates. Namely, as previously stated, the manager should know his or her audience or in this

case, the team members well enough to be able to coach them as required within coaching leadership style. If a manager does not know a subordinate's weaknesses or strengths, about his or her background, or if the manager is not aware of the subordinate's vision or dreams for their future, it is quite hard for the manager to be a coach to them. In this manager's situation, probably some other leadership style, such as authoritative leadership style, where the relationship between managers and subordinates is not the same as in coach-leadership style could suit the manager better. (DiGirolamo & Tkach, 2019.) Lastly, one of the most unexpected returns of the conducted survey, was that there was only one manager who answered 'yes', when questioned if they have had to change their modes of operations since COVID-19 has appeared. This was truly surprising, namely, the expectation was to have more than one *yes*-answer and to gain more examples of how their leadership styles have transformed during the on-going global pandemic (Niemi, 2011).

5.3   The successes and limitations of this research

The coaching leadership style is still a quite new way to lead people, and because of its short term existence there are still some uncertainties in its definition, of which researchers are still having some disputes about. Regardless this, coach-leadership style has truly made its breakthrough during the past decade and gotten a lot of attention lately. (Munteanu & Raţiu, 2018.)

Even though, there is no one way to ensure if a manager is a coach or is he or she operates according to some other leadership style, there are few aspects that may confirm if a manager is acting like coaching leadership style requires. As previously summarized, there are some main features that usually appear in the managers' modes of operations if he or she is working as a coach. For a manager to be considered to work as a coach, they should for instance be always present for their subordinates – although, mostly as a listening party, they should be supportive and not only intervene when being forced to – meaning, that intervention in subordinates' life should not be seen only as a

necessity of 'bad times', rather, a manager can also be present when everything is working normally and or even when succeeding. Also, the manager should create an environment where everyone feels comfortable and noticed. The team spirit is important and should be invested in at all times. (Ibarra & Scoular, 2019; Janse, 2018.)

The conducted survey proves, that there is no one way for coaching – or any other – leadership style to be appeared. Usually, people are being led by a combination of different leadership styles. Also, it is important to remember, that different occasions and audiences require different modes of operations. In addition to these, all people are different and that is also why the perceptions differ from a person to another. That may be one reason, why for instance one manager can perceive coaching as one and another manager could see it as a different entirety. Because of these, the research on leadership styles is never unambiguous and can be difficult to conduct. The survey affirmed also, that it is common for the principles of coaching to be appearing within the modes of operations of a company's or team's managers that is working with marketing somehow. At least, all that participated in the survey conducted for this thesis did use multiple 'coaching actions' by being either conscious or unconscious to the coaching leadership style. So, this confirms that coaching is seen or considered as an effective and modern way to lead people even though, the leadership style itself would not be the most familiar concept to a manager. This proven 'popularity' of this leadership style was acknowledged in the scholarly sources too. (Ristikangas & Ristikangas, 2018.)

Because no one of the participants know what this survey truly is about: what is wanted to be analyzed in this research and from which point of view all the gathered data is being evaluated from, the participants were able to – or were obligated to answer each question without any prejudices. Because the participants have been kept unaware of this survey's core research topic, they have not been able to distort the gathered information's results in any ways. This ensures that the collected data is real and completely honest – from the perspectives of the participated managers. On the other hand, the limitation of this survey is, as previously stated, the sample's size. There were

only eight out of forty contacted managers that answered to the research questions. This prevents the results of this survey to be generalized or comparable directly to any other research considering this topic.

5.4 Proposal for future research

This topic could have been studied in multiple ways. In this thesis, the made decision narrowed the interviewees only to managers. In the future, a research of this topic could be conducted further with the help of 360-degree interviews. This means, that not only would the managers have been interviewed but also their possible managers and subordinates. This would enable the researcher to have the ability to analyses the studied managers' leadership styles more thoroughly. Namely, by this way, it would be possible to analyses if the managers truly lead their subordinates in the way they say or think they do. Also, in this kind of research, it could be testified, how these specific leadership styles that are used by the selected managers suit their teams and the company's' strategies. This style of interview would tell more transparently, if there could be another leadership style that would suit the team or company better. Of course, it would then be interesting to find out, for how many teams, for an example as a percentage, the coaching leadership style would be *the most suitable* one.

Also, if an additional research would focus on how coaching leadership style would suit different teams and companies, this could be done for an example by asking the managers about the results of the executed job satisfaction surveys. Or – it would be interesting to see if the analyzed managers would even mention this indicator, or do managers tend to analyze the company's success only by analyzing the economic, especially, financial units of measurement.

6 Conclusions

The aim of this thesis was to increase the awareness and knowledge about coaching leadership style. The goal was to study where this leadership style is being applied, when can it not probably be used, and mostly, in which ways can it be appeared within the modes of operations of managers. Though, this thesis narrowed the analysis to those managers whom are working with marketing tasks or within marketing field.

In the first chapters of this thesis, there were multiple basis concepts defined, some briefly and others a bit more thoroughly. This was done to ensure having a comprehensive picture about the touched subject before introducing or performing the survey to the voluntary participants. In those first chapter, there was learned that nowadays it is frequently required for a manager to be a leader too. So, even though, management and leadership are their separate matters, they are needed together to achieve the maximal performance of a company. (Asrar-ul-Haq & Kuchinke, 2016; Chau, 2008.) Also, in these days, there is noticed a need for managers to be present and supportive to their subordinates, and hence this, managers should have specific capabilities such as emotional intelligence. These are also reasons why leadership styles like coaching have become more and more requested among working environments. Because, coach-leadership style has become a more timely and trending topic, it has also gotten more attention among the researchers – though, it has not been studied enough yet. (Munteanu & Raţiu, 2018.)

Then, in the main chapters of this thesis, the goal was to open the studied matter more thoroughly. In this chapters, there were more information shared about the marketing work: its definition was introduced, but also, the current situation and knowledge was clarified. Additionally, one section handled about crisis situations, where the goal was to ensure that its definition was also clarified and its power of impact was known. Lastly, and most importantly, the coaching leadership style itself was presented elaborately: its backgrounds and modes of operations were defined, some tools were discussed and both pros and cons were listed.

As earlier mentioned, there was a study created for this research. The survey is a qualitative research, that was created in September of 2020 and then it was sent to multiple managers next month after it was ready. Because COVID-19 had been already existing from the beginning of year 2020, but the previous circumstances, referring to the times before the pandemic, are not yet forgotten, it was seen as a suitable goal for the study to aim to find out how COVID-19 has possibly changed the managers' modes of operations. The conducted survey enlighted various new and surprising outcomes, but it also verified multiple aspects that the researchers have claimed in their studies. One aspect that was confirmed also by conducting the study and gathering data was that coaching truly is an entirety, which composes of multiple elements. And even though there can be listed few requirements that need to be somehow fulfilled to be able to say that a manager is a coach too, there is no must for a manager to have all the components that could be listed belonging to coaching leadership style. This is of course the same outcome in all the possible leadership styles as well. (Ibarra & Scoular, 2019; Janse, 2018.) To have been able to do this analyzation of managers and to study if they are more a coach or something else was not unambiguous. But there were 'minimum requirements' made to be able to do this. The managers' answers were evaluated as a whole, and if the majority of the components, over 50 percent of the answers were more on the 'coach' side, he or she was defined as a coach. If there well less than 50 percent coach-kind answers, the manager was defined as a *non-coach* – or something else than a coach. This something else though is not defined any specifically in this research because it was not seen as significant. This scale of judgement was decided to do, due to acknowledging, that managers mostly use various styles to lead people depending on the audience or the situation. Namely, there are managers that do not follow one specific leadership style, but they combine different elements of various leadership styles (Ward, 2020). The aim in this thesis is to analyze, which leadership style is used the most: to find out if it is the coaching leadership style or not, and if it is, how does this certain leadership style appear in the manager's daily modes of operations.

As already known from the scholarly references, the study showed in how many ways can coaching truly appear in managers' actions, and the survey helped to both clear and verify various scholarly claims. For instance, the manifestation of coaching can be noticed in both little and bigger acts. A manager may show his or her ability to be a coach by giving the subordinates a feeling of being approachable regardless of a situation. This can a manager do by always being there for the team: taking the time to listen and question the subordinates' feelings and thoughts, and not to judge, interrupt or speak on the behalf of them – to assume or make a decision on behalf of another. Also, coaching can be noticed in the way of how a manager talks to his or her subordinates: does the manager speak of '*us*' or is he or she prioritizing the sentence '*me*'. Additionally, it can be analyzed whether the manager guides the communication in any ways or not, or does the manager the listener or the one who talks the most. These little but yet so big aspects of a manager's manners of approaching a team member are crucial when analyzing from a coaching perspective. (Ibarra & Scoular, 2019; Munteanu & Raţiu, 2018.)

Then, there are notable gestures and operations, that may tell if a manager is a coach or not. For an example, how often does a manager talk or even notice his or her subordinates? If there are any regulations or rules behind those actions that control a manager from approaching his or her subordinates, the modes of operations are too stiff to be able to work effectively as coaching leadership style. Additionally, there must to be a desire wanting to build a relationship with the team's members from the manager's side to function genuinely as a coach – but also, to be perceived as one too according to the subordinates. (Ibarra & Scoular, 2019; Munteanu & Raţiu, 2018.)

The matters, that were considered as surprising or educational, were the discovery of the link between noticing a leadership style, in this case coaching, and acting accordingly its' principles. This was discovered when analyzing the participants' answers and examining their total 'scores' of the conducted survey: those whom highlighted a leadership style separately, acted more accordingly it. In this case, the only leadership

style that got more attention was coach-leadership style, and those managers, who named this leadership style somehow, got better points of the survey's results than the rest did. Therefore, there was made a conclusion that people act certainly, when having the knowledge about an operating model and when it is being considered as a suitable way to work for that person. This conclusion is though a generalization of the collected sample of eight managers. Also, one finding of the conducted survey that was surprising, was the gathered information from only one of the participants to claim to have changed her modes of operations when analyzing before and after COVID-19 emergence. This was considered as surprising news, because according to multiple researchers, coaching should not suit that well within crisis situations, such as the on-going pandemic is (Niemi, 2011). Because only one manager stated to have needed to change her way of leading her subordinates by some way, that manager was the only one that answered as it was predicted before receiving the filled surveys. Though, this participant, who answered accordingly to the forecast, she was also the one who collected the best 'scores' of the study and hence this was the most coach of all the managers.

This thesis concluded a survey, which aimed to gain knowledge about coaching leadership style and its appearance, but also about the possible situations, where it could not be probably be used as effectively. With the help of the conducted study, there was gathered multiple answers for this thesis research questions. Even though, this thesis got its answers, there are ways to continue and deepen the understanding of this theme. For instance, this topic could have been studied with the help of not only managers but also by interviewing the managers' subordinates to gain more information about the managers' styles to lead. Namely, by this way, it would have been possible to analyze and verify if the managers truly lead their subordinates in the way they say or think they do. Also, when interviewing the subordinates too, there could have been the ability to get to know which leadership style would be the most suitable one for the team according to the team itself. Namely, it would be interesting to find out, for how many teams the coaching leadership style would be *the most suitable* one. Additionally, this topic could be also analyzed from a bit different perspective: how do managers usually

measure their used leadership styles' performance or success. Namely, it would be interesting to find out, it managers tend to analyze success of any sort with the help of economic, especially, financial units of measurements or something else, such as the job satisfaction rate of the employees. This though takes the analyzation to a different track than what was decided to study in this research.

In the beginning of this project, this subject was chosen because of few reasons. Firstly, this leadership style is considered as a modern way to lead people, and it has already in a quite short period of time gotten a lot of praises and attention to it (Ibarra & Scoular, 2019.) Then, even though this leadership style has shown its performance in multiple cases, why should the coaching come from within the company – from the managers themselves, and why this thesis should focus on the company's managers? This is because the managers that work within the company are already closer to the activities and people on the 'work floor' than an external consultant, and therefore a manager that is already working for this specific company has a better idea of the organizational matters and a better grasp about the people working in it as well. Then, if a company or a team within that company would need a leadership style such as coaching to increase its employees' capabilities, it is better if the coaching comes from within that company and not taken from the outside for a certain time. This is because, it is more likely that the coaching skills stay within the company if someone knows how it works, and mostly, truly wants to use it rather it to 'placed' into the company externally. Namely, if this leadership style and mind-set comes from the outside of the company, it is also more likely to leave when this 'coaching person' farewells the company. (Ibarra & Scoular, 2019; Munteanu & Raţiu, 2018.) This is why, this thesis analyses the company's managers and their daily modes of operations. Lastly, because, the coach-leadership style is a *new* style to lead people, there are still some gaps in its studies. Hence this, the second goal of this thesis was to reduce these voids of information and simultaneously to awake the interest of this matter, and to increase the chances of this subject to be studied further in the future as well by giving for instance examples of possible research questions.

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Appendix

Th gender and title of participant	Briefly tell us what kind of unit / team you lead? (For example, how many of you are there, how do you work and do you have team members elsewhere than in Finland?)	What is your role in the company you work for?	What kind of leader do you feel you are? (If you are consciously following a specific leadership style, please report it here)	How are you involved in the daily lives of your team members?	How and when do you provide feedback?	How do you take care of the well-being of your subordinates?	What kind of atmosphere do you try to create in your team? How do you do this?	What changes has COVID-19 brought to your team?	Has your own habit of leading changed during the corona? (If so, how?)	I feel able to help my subordinates even when I am not familiar with the issue at hand.	I know the members of my team well.	I know what my team members do every day in their work.	I am more…	I live more in the…	In a conversational situation, I am more a…	My daily life is best reflected before…	Would your answer to the previous question have been different if your situation before Corona had been different? If so, briefly explain why?
Woman – Brand Manager	I'm in charge of a tiny team with one person in addition to me, and another one will be recruited next year. Our company has a decentralized marketing organization model. Our brand management team is located in the group and the different business units have their own marketing managers. We work closely with these marketing managers as well as other Group units such as Communications and HR. Our team operates in Finland, but has marketing managers globally from Singapore to the US.	Our most important task is to increase the value of the brand and ensure a strong and unified brand image at various meeting points globally. We are responsible for various brand management tools, make instructions for brand management, and train people inside the house and various partners outside the house. We support our business marketers in their projects.	Fair, open, goal oriented, trustworthy. I want to provide my team members with the best opportunities to get good results in their work and develop in their roles.	Regular communication through various means of communication. Weekly meetings and if necessary every day.	I constantly try to give feedback. There is no need to wait for some specific conversations, etc., but as soon as something is well taken care of or something needs to be improved. Critical feedback on the burger model :)	I regularly ask how they are doing and will intervene if I notice anything special. I encourage them to take care of themselves, because no one else can really do it but oneself. I also encourage myself to develop in this and also spend time working on it.	There must be confidence in the team to can bring up even difficult issues. I talk and listen to my teammates and also my colleagues. I have supported and helped colleagues who have had their own challenges on our team. The most important thing is to have your eyes and ears open in order to see and hear what is going on around you and also to react to things ... Must also have a nice feel to it and was lucky enough to do the job I've got to work with smart and comfortable team members and colleagues. Sometimes it's also nice outside of working hours to chat more freely and get to know people outside of work.	We have been working remotely since March. The work has gone amazingly well despite the distance. We have adopted the Agile operating model, which includes daily short meetings. In this context, we will also briefly exchange other affiliations. We have also agreed to keep the cameras on during the meetings so that we can even see the team members and colleagues through the picture. We have also introduced a virtual coffee break twice a week, where we talk about news and often also work-related issues. Many also go for walks during such meetings if they are not presenting anything themselves and mostly just commenting. This has been seen as a well-functioning and good solution, made possible by working remotely.	There has been little change in my management style. Maybe you need to keep your eyes and ears open even more to see if anything needs to be addressed. In the past, I was able to exchange news with a coffee machine or lunch break and naturally make contact with team members and colleagues.	100	100	100	Mentor	Present	Conversationalist	53	Corona has not had effect
Man - Team leader	Advertising agency, 5 people. No members elsewhere.	Unit leader, creative director.	Sparring.	Whenever need to. I give a lot of responsibility, and if things need to be developed or addressed, I will address and help develop. I motivate.	Initially weekly, then monthly and then every 2-3 months, and whenever there is an acute need. -> seems quite hierarchical	I am present and reachable at all times, I try to keep the team spirit high by organizing activities etc for the team.	Open, free, cheerful, goal oriented. By different means.	Decentralization and remotely working.	No, but it is more challenging to sense, see and notice the feelings and states or needs of each member if everyone is at home and not present together. Creative design is also more	54	74	67	Mentor	Present	Conversationalist	72	No
Woman – Customer Insight Director	Our company's insight team along with my colleagues. A total of 15 people in the team. The unit conducts a wide range of consumer understanding projects for our customers, mainly market research.	I lead the team and do customer work	Freedom and responsibility giving. The goal is to guide team members to act in accordance with the company's strategy.	To some extent, but the projects are each managed independently. We spar together and I help when needed.	Orally and in development discussions. If necessary, also at other times.	I try to know of their workloads etc work situations.	Open, confident, tolerant for mistakes	Teleworking has had a big impact on teamwork. I call my teammates from time to time, and we also deal with projects.	Definitely become more distant.	83	90	67	Expert	Present	Conversationalist	71	No
Man - Customer Insight Director	I lead the Insight team along with another leader. There are 15 of us, I have 6 subordinates myself and all in Finland.	I lead the Insight market research team	A space-giving coach, a creator of opportunities for others. I try to be modern and give as much power as possible to the team members.	With some on a daily basis if there are joint projects, with others only once a couple of weeks a closer connection. Talk about research problems, make offers together and think about question formulations, or analyze and sparring results	Whenever I feel it is worth giving positive or even negative feedback. If there's no reason for either, then consciously try to talk longer and encourage at least once a month.	By asking about their well-being on a regular basis. Striving to build immediate relationships.	Immediate, easy, everyone can be their own self. By setting an example and encouraging this kind of behavior and also asking if my practice is good.	There is a lot of distance from Teams connections. Less so-called. light togetherness.	When working from the office, it was easier to inquire in the open office by turning your head in different directions, now you have to call / ask for a meeting.	48	93	98	Mentor	Present	Conversationalist	94	No
Woman - Digital Manager	A team of 7 experts, all of whom do digital design. All team members are in Finland and Finns. The level of experience of the team members has been in the field for 2-10 years.	I'm team leader as an administrative supervisor of my team, spartiapuna and also will involve the design & give a more strategic view on request. My specialty is search advertising and usually results-based design.	Close to people, I strive to be easy to approach and I try not to elevate myself any higher than necessary. However, I have noticed that the superior position of the attitude towards me has changed, and also because I have given an example of the space communicate with each other without the manager's guiding eye. So even though I don't feel in any way controlling anyone.	Weekly meetings and helping clients. I have a relatively wide range of experience in many marketing matters and I can help in many tasks, either in practice or through training. I ask how my subordinates act independently in their own clientele, I hardly see or hear how they have succeed there. Thus, the chances of giving quick feedback are slim. In general, there is very little to tell of my subordinates, even when asked of others in the company.	This is my weak point, I clearly don't give enough feedback. I often try to say when a task is done well or if there is something to fix, but because my subordinates act independently in their own clientele, I hardly see or hear how they succeed there. Thus, the chances of giving quick feedback are slim. In general, there is very little to tell of my subordinates, even when asked of others in the company.	I try to keep the connection open and not be afraid when approached. I hope they will tell me even the slightest worries so I can help. I feel it is my job to be about removing barriers to work.	Light and free. I don't want anyone to have to be afraid of what they say or me. I joke a lot already by nature and I have given the team understand that I am not in any event be understood literally turns individually to mention. I might joke about even sensitive topics and I think my team has already understood that. However, I'm always a little scared that someone might still get upset or take my speech too seriously.	We're almost all working remotely, so team meetings and more are handled through Teams. It has already been given the team understand that I am not in any event be understood. Covid may have appeared as a slightly lower workload than usual.	Not really.	77	55	84	Expert	Present	Conversationalist	64	No
Woman - Marketing manager	We have a team of three, where I work as a supervisor for one person, the marketing coordinator. We also have a communications manager on the team.	I am responsible for marketing the company. My responsibilities are very diverse and broadly related to these entities: brand building, marketing strategies and plans, advertising campaigns, website development, increasing customer understanding, developing the customer experience and bringing a marketing perspective to various product and other development projects.	I feel like I am a supportive teammate who guides what I do. I don't consciously act on any leadership style, and I don't think of myself as a leader.	We are in contact almost every day and I am very accessible. The conversational connection is natural and functional.	I give feedback constantly, mostly appreciative feedback. Due to the teleworking situation, the feedback is often two-way, but we also have the tools to give appreciative feedback in public. In my thanks, I say why I thank, praise, and encourage in more detail. ; I always give developmental feedback in a one-on-one burger style.	I help, if necessary. A good atmosphere, for discussion where people can tell me if they are having for instance too much work-load etc. I ask time to time how it goes with my team.	Open, easy going, immediate, forward looking. I set an example myself and do my part to create the desired atmosphere.	The job description I am leading has changed a lot, as a large part of the tasks he is responsible for were left out. It has meant taking on new responsibilities and learning.	I systematically make sure we talk many times a week. Now that you can't see and greet, it's even more important to discuss things outside of work in between during the day at Teams.	82	89	90	Mentor	Present	Advisory	34	No
Man - CEO	As CEO, I manage the entire group but report directly to me by our management team (5 people). The team has members from outside Finland as well. Management system: every other month we have management team meetings, 1on1 meetings once a week, online to-do list, etc.	CEO – which means what?!	I feel that I am very close to people and a coaching leader.	we spar everyday	constantly, but we also have official 360s on a quarterly basis	By creating a good operating environment and by lending the work-load	I strive to create an atmosphere of trust and courage. By being approachable and emphasizing the importance of different perspectives and encouraging disagreement	Distance highlighted.	Not really.	100	84	91	Mentor	Present	Conversationalist	66	No
Woman - CEO	In Finland, the traction responsibility is the entire staff (approx. 19 people), a direct supervisor for 2 team leaders with traction responsibilities for the production and sales teams. In addition, leading the company's creative team (2-3 people). Company X owns the company where I work and I also work for the owner company Group as an influencer marketing service category manager. There is no managerial responsibility here, but service category management responsibility for about 70 people.	Overall responsibility for the company's results, personnel and operations.	Coaching leader. I sincerely believe that personnel is our most important resource and I work to enable our company to be the best possible employer for employees and to have opportunities to develop and improve the company's operations in an even better direction. I believe that the good feeling and enthusiasm of the company is reflected in the customers and through it can be seen under the line. I believe that social intelligence and empathy are the most important qualities of future (and already) leaders. I believe that a leader should be very genuine about what is, and not try to act according to some "particular chosen model". Of course, this means, in my opinion, that both managers and companies must genuinely think about what kind of management culture is right for them and choose their managers accordingly. A good leader in one company may not have it in another.	Very much, I see that this is really important so that they feel heard and valued. I also try to organize 1on1 time with everyone on a regular basis and just actively ask for news and also genuinely listen to how they are doing outside of work, for example.	There is certainly room for improvement in the provision of constructive feedback, unfortunately often it stays in the development discussion, but I feel that these feedback, both small and large, should be actively reviewed on a regular basis as the feedback arises. Positive feedback to the part is given better as soon as praise comes up.	I actively seek to talk to them and genuinely listen and ask what belongs to them. We run regular job satisfaction surveys and "pulses" that make it possible to tackle "problems" right away. We actively discuss issues together and consider updating policies in a direction that supports well-being. For example, we now have a series of lectures on well-being at work on the wishes of employees, carried out by an external service provider.	Open, honest, respectful and accepting of others. I feel that a good we-spirit is the cornerstone of our company. We have created common ground rules for the ways in which we operate (values). Listening to team members and their wishes creates an environment where they feel comfortable and at their best. We support active exercise & also organize a lot of co-operation both during and outside working hours.	We had to give up trainees and freelancers. The we-spirit has suffered from constant distance to many in the work community.	Not really. More and more attention has had to be paid to taking time for team members when there is no "normal" interaction when people are mostly working remotely. More time should be spent on taking people into account.	77	98	56	Mentor	NOTE! THE ONLY WHO RESPONDED AS FOLLOWS : In the future	NOTE! THE ONLY WHO RESPONDED AS FOLLOWS: Listener	64	SUPPORTS THE ASSUMPTIONS: Yes, time requires reacting to new things and problems are new, so solving them also requires more learning than before.