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EXECUTIVE COACHING AS A CHANGE A DEVELOPMENTAL PROCESS – APPLICATIONS IN THE CONTEXT OF ROMANIAN ORGANIZATION

PhD Thesis Abstract

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Key words: coaching, executive coaching, managerial coaching, leadership, change, developmental needs, coaching evaluation

CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

Coaching is now a common practice for human development and change and, especially an instrument for organizational development. Although widely used, coaching does not have a precise scientific framework, as it is a field in the theoretical construction phase. In the first part, this thesis provides a critical review of studies on coaching in order to summarize the theoretical models which support research, to identify the results in this field, and to present the mechanisms for change and efficiency in coaching. In the context of developing literature on coaching, this thesis brings data on the perception of organizational consultants on coaching, along with data regarding the customers of coaching intervention as well as results of the effectiveness of such an intervention. The studies highlight the complexity of the coaching process from a multiple perspective – of practitioners, beneficiaries and potential customers – as particularities of using coaching in the Romanian organizational context.

The seven chapters of this work approach the subject of coaching from the theoretical aspects of conceptual clarification and differentiation from other similar concepts to results based on the empirical data collected from persons in management position and organizational consultants from Romanian companies. The methodological approaches of the studies are both quantitative and qualitative and target obtaining a perspective on coaching in the Romanian organizations from the points of view of those involved: persons in management positions as potential customers in coaching, managers or leaders that benefited from coaching and organizational consultants as practitioners in the field of organizational intervention.

The dynamic and complex, both economically and socially environment entailed significant changes in leadership, related to which integrated vision and understanding organizational complexity have become a priority (Burnes, 2004; Choi & Ruona, 2011). In the face of increasing competitive environment organizations focused on creating an innovative culture to promote leadership development, client-focused approach and development strategies (Stokes & Jolly, 2009). The ubiquitous nature of these changes put pressure on the whole organization and hence it followed the need for analysis of the changes and the leaders as key initiators in the process of change. Leadership is defined less as power based on the

position in the organizational hierarchy and more as ability to influence and motivate the subordinates through enhanced communication to achieve organizational objectives (Humphreys & Walter, 2003). Considering these trends, the executive coaching is becoming the leadership professional development in order to respond to the rapidly changing business environment (Boyce & Hernez-Broome, 2011; De Meuse, Dai & Lee, 2009; Gray, Ekinci & Goregaokar, 2011; Joo, 2005).

The scope of applications of coaching extends from developing a specific set of skills for effective personal functioning to career development. Organizations invest more and more in coaching, as valuable instrument for enhancing the involvement of the employees, the welfare and professional performance. Thus, it acquired a more and more important role among the options of interventions for development purposes in organizations (Grant, 2006; Underhill, McAnally & Koriath, 2007).

The novelty of the coaching term and practice makes difficult the consensus on definition and conceptual dimensions as well as the theoretical models that orient the practice and research. Even if the number of researchers increased, coaching is a field under theoretical construction, and the need of empirical research continues to be mentioned in articles. Against the background of this development need, approaching coaching from several angles (customer, practitioner of coaching and organization) represents a priority interest.

CHAPTER 2. COACHING. CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND APPLICATIVE DIRECTIONS[1]

2.1 Evolution of research and scientific publications in the field of coaching

The second chapter makes a systematic theoretical synthesis based on 76 articles from academic publications selected from the databases PsychArticles and SAGE Journals which appeared from 1990 to January 2011. The research published after 2009 is integrated in the

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[1] Parts of this chapter were published in the article: Rațiu, L. & Băban, A. (2010) Coaching. Theoretical bases and applicative directions. *Psychology of Human Resources, 8*(1), 50-65

substantiation of the approach lying at the basis of the study regarding the results of the coaching intervention (subchapter 6.2.).

The articles included in the synthesis from the second chapter discussed at least one of the following subjects: definition and classification of the notion of coaching, differentiation of forms of coaching, approaches and theoretical models of the practice of coaching.

Coaching both as scientific and applicative field is in a stage of development. The practice of coaching, especially the forms from the business field, evolved in a faster pace than research. The academic literature specific to coaching does not have a solid theory yet, but the empirical research is still quite limited (Bennett, 2006; Latham, 2007).

2.2. Coaching as developmental relationship

Coaching falls into the category of relationships for learning and development purposes, along with counselling, mentorship, psychotherapy, consultancy or training. In general, a relationship of this kind is established between an expert and a person who aims to reach a personal or professional goal and is motivated to learn and develop (Higgins & Kram, 2001).

Relationships for development purposes have a great diversity given by: a. duration of relationship (long or short); b. type of relationship (instrumental or not); c. style of expert (direct or not); d. object of learning (learning focused on oneself or on the task); e. the effect on the network in which the person who learns is involved (Rock & Garavan, 2006).

The similarities between coaching and other relationships for development purposes are mainly given by the characteristics of the relationship: a support relationship which gives the customer the opportunity to reflect, learn and progress; carried out usually one to one and face to face, based on trust and confidentiality between a professional and a customer. The major difference is given by the position of the expert towards the customer; in coaching a partnership between the practitioner and the customer is established, while in mentorship, counseling or psychotherapy, the specialist is in the position of expert who gives answers and

solutions to problems. Other similarities and differences are given by the techniques used, the training of the specialist who makes the intervention, the theoretical approach which substantiates it, its duration. Table 2.1 presents synthetically the comparison of coaching with other relationships for development purposes.

The aspects illustrated in Table 2.1 require a series of precisions: (i) coaching, especially the executive coaching is the closest to mentorship, and their common dimensions make some authors use the terms interchangeably (Young & Perrewe, 2000); (ii) the demarcation line between coaching and counseling rather applies in case of coaching for business and executive coaching. At the same time, coaching can be an instrument or a form of counseling (Kampa & White, 2002) or can be a method of organizational intervention (Stern, 2004); (iii) both coaching and counseling focuses on the need of development, but coaching has as primary purpose the development of effective skills for achieving the personal and professional goals, and counseling targets especially emotional, social and spiritual development (Filipczak, 1998); (iv) in the field of work and organization, the term of coaching replaces the term of psychotherapy in order to avoid the negative connotations – associated with the pathology – of the latter (David, 2007); (v) although coaching has common points with the activity of training, the difference is given by the fact that the practitioner of coaching does not have in mind a preestablished model or a certain result, but they are formulated during the intervention together with the customer. The training targets the transmission of declarative and/or procedural knowledge, relying on the fact that the participants will apply them in practice, but does not guaranty the actual accomplishment of change (David, 2007). On the other hand, coaching is "tailored" individually by person and by a problem or a present aspect opposed to the group approach from training seminars and programmes. In the last decade, the option for coaching in organizations, especially in USA and Great Britain, significantly increased as alternative to the traditional training for the development of management skills (Feldman & Lankau, 2005; Lawton-Smith & Cox, 2007).

The efforts of making clear delimitations between coaching and other relationships for development purposes led to the outlining of central subjects that can be created in other

criteria of differentiation. The first subject is characteristic of the relationship between the practitioner of coaching and the customer – a relation of collaboration and equality, not one of authoritarian type. The second central subject refers to the approach of problems; the emphasis is laid on solutions and on the process of achieving goals, rather than on the analysis of problems. The joint establishment of goals is another relevant subject for coaching. The fourth subject contains the assumption that those who are involved in a coaching process are persons without problems of mental health of clinical intensity. The final subject refers to the recognition of the fact that the specialists in coaching have expertise in the facilitation of learning, but do not have to have a high level of expertise in the field of specialization of the customer (Brennan & Prior, 2005).

In conclusion, coaching is a systematic process oriented towards a continuous learning and a personal development of the customer and integrates through these elements in the scope of relationships of support of development. These relationships start from the assumption that the adults who learn are autonomous, have a solid basis of life experiences and knowledge they valorize, have a propensity to learn and develop. The illustrated characteristics highlight the closeness of coaching to mentorship, counselling, consultancy, etc., and at the same time the specific differences. The terminological delimitation is important in the selection and application of the procedures and techniques of intervention and evaluation appropriate to each type of problem and customer.

2.3. Taxonomies of forms of coaching and conceptual clarifications

Nowadays, we practise different forms of coaching that have similarities, but also multiple differences depending on one or several criteria to which they relate: the type of customers, the reason for resorting to coaching, the form of the relationship between the practitioner of coaching and the customer.

The multitude of labels used is not directly correlated with the same variety of forms of coaching, and the same practice can be found under different names. Therefore, we keep in mind two major categories: personal coaching and coaching for business, differentiated on the

basis of the type of person of customer and the environment of reference of intervention (in organization or outside of it). Any other labels that are used express nuances of the target problem from coaching, not necessarily a different framework of approach.

2.4. Theoretical models and approaches

The coaching-related research as well as the maturation of coaching as a profession are in the early stage (Bennett, 2006). The activity of coaching is carried out by practitioners who do not have training in psychology, their intervention being most of the times atheoretical or based on local, particular models of coaching. The studies published so far have not validated a model of competences in coaching; rather, they resort to models with heuristic value inspired from "related" interventions.

Just like other types of intervention from organizational psychology, coaching, especially the coaching for business, started from the adjustment of theories, concepts and methods of other subjects of psychology (Latham, 2007). Most of the models focus on executive coaching built on models coming from organizational development, education of adults, training for management, industrial and organizational psychology as well as clinical psychology (Kilburg, 1996). The studies on coaching were published in relatively equal proportions in psychological and management literature, which indicates a substantial contribution both of psychological theories and the organizational theories to the development of the theoretical basis that supports the field (Kampa-Kokesch & Anderson, 2001).

The theories, models and approaches of the practice, regardless of the form of coaching, focus on two directions: approaches from a singular theoretical perspective and approaches from multiple, integrative theoretical perspectives (Banning, 1997; Diedrich, 1996; Kiel, Rimmer, Williams, & Doyle, 1996; Nowack & Wimer, 1997; Peterson, 1996; Saporito, 1996). The practitioners of coaching tend to be eclectic compared to the methods they use, yet they mainly adhere to a theoretical model (Barner & Higgins, 2007).

The theoretical approaches undertaken by practitioners for the coaching interventions follow in great lines the major paradigms from the study of personality customized on the process of change and development of the individual (see Table 2.2.). On the basis of these theories, we have described four models that inform and guide the coaching interventions, building the connection between theory and practice. The models are implicit, cannot be found in practice, but the dominant elements of one or another can be recognized: (i) clinical model, (ii) behavioral model, (iii) systemic model and (iv) social-constructivist model (Barner & Higgins, 2007). Each of them has advantages, but none of them holds supremacy. The social-constructivist model is probably the model which offers a complex and integrative framework for the study of coaching. The basic assumption is that significances are built by social interactions and in the symbolical framework in which individuals interact (Blumer, 1986). The central element is the language with role not just to describe reality, but also to delimit and interpret it (Ford, 1999). In such a framework, coaching is carried out as interaction and communication to create new meanings. For instance, the definition of an "efficient leader", of "a top performance", the "maximization of potential" varies depending on the way in which these concepts were built in different organizational cultures. Consecutively, the intervention of practitioners of coaching is located at the level of organizational realities, of the roles that organizational actors have and the way in which they interact.

2.5. Mechanisms of change in coaching

Beyond proving the efficiency of the coaching intervention, the studies looked for the identification of variables that determine and intensify change. An important factor turned out to be the motivation for change and for learning which influences the engagement in an effective coaching (Wasylyshyn, 2003). The feedback is considered not just a component of the process, but also a key factor for change (Diedrich, 1996; Gregory, Levy, & Jeffers, 2008; Joo, 2005; Kampa-Kokesch & Anderson, 2001; Witherspoon & White, 1996). A significant percentage (84%) of customers perceive the practitioner-customer relationship as a major factor for the success of coaching (McGovern et al., 2001). Even if such a relationship influences the success of intervention, the existing studies partially prove the relationship between the

practitioner-customer dyad and the result (Kampa & White, 2002; Kampa-Kokesch & Anderson, 2001; Kilburg, 2001; Lowman, 2005).

Other research suggests that certain characteristics of the practitioner (age, qualification, professional experience) can influence the perceived trustworthiness of the practitioner and the opening of the customer to the experience of coaching. Yet, this association was only demonstrated empirically by few studies (Kampa & White, 2002). Research shows the relevance of psychological training of the practitioners of coaching. The psychologists appear as the most qualified for coaching thanks to their knowledge of theories of human development, the evaluation of performance and their skills of building a trust and confidential relationship with the customer (Brotman et al., 1998; Kilburg, 1996; Sperry, 1996). Other authors have underlined the importance of understanding the context of business, the management principles, the organizational policies (Diedrich & Kilburg, 2001; Saporito, 1996; Tobias, 1996). The effective Coaching dynamically integrates approaches of the psychology of the individual and the needs of organization, both at individual level and at systemic level, taking into consideration the context of intervention (Lowman, 2005). An understanding of corporate culture in which the intervention takes place is essential. It is also necessary to have studies which demonstrate the particularity of programmes of qualification and accrediting of the experts in coaching.

Beyond the limits of research in the field of coaching, this synthesis highlights valuable results which are premises for new directions of study. The results identified indicate a constant interest for the development and individualization of coaching, as independent profession.

CHAPTER 3. ANALYSIS OF THE ROLE OF COACHING IN LEADERS' DEVELOPMENT

This chapter approaches executive coaching its principles and functions compared to the new approaches of development of management. The first part treats the importance of developing management starting from a history of its conceptualization in literature; the

second part defines coaching as method of intervention for management; the third part details the two functions of coaching, remedy and development (or performance), and in the end, conclusions and future directions of research are outlined.

Without doubt, the theory of transformational management (Bass, 1990) and the theories of management distributed in the team (Hackman & Walton 1986; Larson & LaFasto, 1989) have known an increasing popularity with the development of organizations as teams and working groups. In this conceptual framework, leaders have to assure a balanced componency of the team, to give opportunities for expressing the strengths of its members and for fulfilling their expectancies (Collins, 2002; Ulrich et al., 1999).

In relation to this evolution of conceptualization of management, we searched for and studied the most effective ways of organizational intervention. The studies from practice highlight the importance of development of management supported both by persons in management positions and by organizations. Moreover, although data is not conclusive, it supports that such programmes have a positive impact on the whole organization.

In a much different organizational context, it requires exceeding the development methods applied until the 1990s and the search for more effective ways. Against this background, coaching stands out as an effective instrument for enhancing the involvement of the employees, welfare and performance. The persons in management positions need support in order to introduce changes in real time in their work. Coaching gives them the opportunity to "explore", to bring to light aspects that most of the times in the dynamism, fast pace of the present pass unnoticed (Hall, Otazo, & Hollenbeck, 1999; Kampa-Kokesch & Anderson, 2001; Turner & Goodrich, 2010).

3.2.1. The functions of coaching for the persons in management positions

The novelty of the field and the lack of vast research privileged the circulation of several taxonomies of the functions of coaching, in spite of quite extended overlaps here and there (Sperry, 2008). The functions of coaching highlight the interdisciplinary perspective, but also the

difficulty of tracing precise boundaries between coaching, psychotherapy, counseling and consultancy.

The functions were defined compared to the major reasons for which coaching is used: development of management skills, the improvement of managerial style, the resolution of relationing problems, the formation of management skills and management at the persons too oriented on task (Rațiu & Băban, 2010).

At first, coaching developed as an intervention of remedy, of optimization of the results obtained by the persons in management positions (McCauley & Hezlett, 2002). Later, the role of the practitioner has changed passing to a large extent from the "expert" who gives support in the resolution of problems to partner of reflection with a view to obtaining better performances (Eggers & Clark, 2000).

3.2.2. The basis principles of executive coaching

The principles that guide the coaching intervention target: 1) the triangular relationship practitioner – customer – organization; 2) the development of a plan of action for the customer; 3) the focus on the skills and strengths of the customer (Axelrod, 2005). The principles mentioned engage in an optimal way the components of the coaching process illustrated in Diagram 3.1. and organized schematically by the model entries-processes-exits (Boyce & Hernez-Broome, 2011). In the absence of a unique conceptual framework, these principles are debatable, but the fact that the perspective of the customer, with professional and personal needs, is decisive in the intervention benefits from consensus (Cox & Jackson, 2009).

The first principle of coaching is the triangular relationship between the practitioner of coaching which makes the intervention, the person in management position who is directly involved in the process and the client organization which usually supports financially the intervention (Sherman & Freas, 2004). Coaching is directly oriented towards the individual, and the benefits at organization level are indirectly obtained by developing this individual (Bacon &

Spear, 2003; Garman, Whiston & Zlatoper, 2000; Goldsmith, Lyons, & Freas, 2000; Kutzhanova, Lyons & Lichtenstein, 2009). In this relationship, it is obvious that the individual purposes within a coaching agreement must subordinate to the strategic organizational objectives.

Coaching can approach in parallel aspects of career and personal life of the manager, such as, for instance, the work-life balance. Coaching not only has a reactive role, but is also focused on interpersonal skills, such as trust in relationships, active listening, presentation skills. Resilience, top performance and a fast adjustment to change are new requirements solicited by the increase of organizational complexity (Hudson, 1999).

In a coaching commitment, an essential characteristic of the practitioner is his integrity compared to the agenda with the most personal preoccupations of the customer. Some authors consider that the practitioners with basic training in psychology are the most qualified to make a coaching intervention (Brotman, Liberi, & Wasylyshyn, 1998; Kilburg, 1996; Sperry, 1996). Other authors underline the importance of training in the business field and the understanding of organizational dynamics (Kampa-Kokesch & Anderson, 2001; Saporito, 1996; Tobias, 1996). Although there is no empirical data to support a unique position regarding the basic training, the practitioner of coaching acts by integrating the development needs both of the organization and those of the customer. By the integration of needs expressed by the customer and the organization, the practitioner of coaching builds a development plan. It is preceded by a full evaluation of the customer – personality traits, management style, his values and attitudes (Feldman & Lankau, 2005). Based on the results of evaluation, we identify the major aspects of the customer's career and elaborate a development chart in agreement with the skills, needs and desires of the customer, but also with the organizational context. The emphasis is laid on the organizational role of the customer (Axelrod, 2005).

The third principle that guides the intervention of the practitioner in coaching is the focus on the positive aspects of the manager. Regardless of the initial purpose of coaching, the practitioner accomplishes a stage of evaluation of the personality, management style, values and attitudes of the customer (Feldman & Lankau, 2005). Then follows a stage of identification

and reflection on his strengths and their maximum valorization (Feldman, 2001). Coaching took theories with wide popularity in psychology which demonstrate that the activation of the central strengths and talents leads to the promotion of development (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990; Grant, Curtayne & Burton, 2009).

Beyond the focus on the positive aspects of the person in management position, an important aspect in development is related to the management of power. The leader is invested with power and is responsible for a judicious management of power. The exercise of power adds a new dimension to the leader and not only his professional life, but also personal life. The activity becomes more complex and the confrontation with the new responsibilities can often be accompanied by stress, the lack of a feedback as he progresses in organizational hierarchy, situations in which coaching can affirm as a successful intervention (Masciarelli, 1999).

Studies highlight that the persons in management positions, who benefited from coaching were able to manage the complexity of organizational situations, to optimize their relationships, to deal with change (Barbuto & Burbach, 2006; Heames & Harvey, 2006; Shipper, Kincaid, Rotondo, & Hoffman, 2003; Smither, London et al., 2003).

CHAPTER 4. COACHING AS A PRACTICE OF ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN THE PERCEPTION OF ORGANIZATIONAL CONSULTANTS

Empirical study of this chapter includes coaching in organizational practice among other intervention practices, in order to organizational change. Organizational development in the broad sense, and organizational diagnosis as an area subsumed, are conceptualized through a series of theoretical approaches (eg. Argyris & Schon, 1996; Burke-Litwin, 1992; Jex, 2002; McNamara, 1998; Porras & Robertson, 1992), which can be differentiated in "traditional" and recent theoretical approaches.

Traditional approaches focus on planned effort, holistic and controlled by intervention (Beckhard, 1969), corresponding to a static vision of the organization (McNamara, 1998), unlike more recent theories that integrate dimension of active participation in intervention, from diagnosis until the solution (Nielsen, 1984). According to recent trends, organizational phenomena are seen not only in a linear cause-effect perspective, but from an integrated perspective, in which all aspects of the system are important and should be considered in complex causal relationships (Chirică, Andrei & Ciuce, 2009). Furthermore, it notes the importance of studying the current organizational practices and organizations "as it happens", namely capturing the characteristics and context influences, as the multitude of interactions (Hutton & Liefooghe, 2011; Schatzki, 2006). In this new perspective, success of organizational change correlates positively with participation of the organization members, as was highlighted by studies which focused on strategic change management (Choi, 2007; Lines, 2004; Saksvik et al., 2007).

Although active participation of clients in organizational development (Argyris, 1960, 1990; French & Bell, 1995) and in the process of consulting (Schein, 1988, 1999) was considered central, matters warranting further interest aims to identify the optimal ways in the practice for assisting the organizations in achieving change (Kykyri, Puutio, & Wahlström, 2010).

Adaptation of organizational intervention practices along with continuous changes faced by organizations (eg. organization's external environment pressures) stimulates therefore constantly rethinking organizational intervention practices (Gallos, 2006; Mirvis, 1990). According with the evolution of trends of both research and environmental, the role of managers and employees in implementing effective interventions has changed, they becoming active agents. Also, the role of organizational consultant is defined rather by facilitating participation and still less by providing solutions to existing organizational problems (Schwarz, 2006). In addition, the emphasis is on the quality of interactions with organizational members, their authentic experiences at work and the responsibility of the consultant toward the organizational members. Moreover, the consultant on this position works together with the client to improve the overall quality of life and the organizational functioning, without

maintaining erroneous perception (in view of recent, but not "traditional" perspective) that would have the power to "fix" something alone (McNamara, 1998).

Another dimension of organizational development is permanent learning from his own actions or by observing others from organizational environment in order to be able to correct himself (Terry, 1993). Unlike the traditional approach to organizational development, new approach emphasizes the role of implicit organizational theories in understanding and solving organizational problems (Chirică et al., 2009). In organizations, which generally inhibit the discovery of the need for change, especially when change involves changing the rules, policies and their basic objectives (Chirică, 1996; McNamara, 1998), investigation of implicit theories can be achieved through individualized, tailored interventions and adapted to the situation (Chirică et al., 2009).

Based on the conceptualization of organizational development field and organizational consultant role, the present study has proposed to investigate perceptions of organizational consultants about coaching as an organizational development practice. More specifically, the study aims to reveal the assumptions and processes used by consultants in their work with persons with leading positions in order to connect their results with organizational performance. The findings may help to develop training programs for practitioners in the field of coaching and provide directions to promote coaching as a development intervention at individuals with leading positions.

4.1. Context of the present study

This study builds on a series of both theoretical and practical history that will be mentioned briefly below. First, diversity of theoretical perspectives on organizational development and highlighting the need for a new approach in consulting process for achieving change led to coaching. Second, in the organizational development, profile of the coaching practitioners vary according to basic training, which can be in organizational and change domain, psychology, adult education, even in business, human resources and other areas. Beyond domain-specific knowledge and beyond the experience that bring in coaching, practitioners require a set of standards and rules of practice, which contributes to the

development of coaching practice. Third, coaching clients have become more sophisticated, better informed, which required more careful practitioners training interventions. More specifically, due to the complexity of human behavior and management behavior, practitioners must be able to respond and build tailored intervention given the contextual, specific data.

On the other hand, the approach of this study started from the observation that the Romanian organizational market is in development and follows the trends of the West (Riddle & Pothier, 2011). Nevertheless, local particularities of the organizations can define a specific framework by cultural mark data and the understanding of existing context.

4.2. Objectives of the study

In the light of theoretical positioning have been previously pointed, the present study aims to investigate perceptions and attitudes of organizational consultants on their work with people leading position and shaping the place and role that coaching plays in organizational consulting practice. The methodology behind the study is qualitative, allowing direct access to data provided by participants. Moreover, qualitative data analysis enables to capture participant's implicit theories concerning organizational interventions and creates an explanatory frame of the emergence of coaching in organizational intervention practice.

4.3. Method

Participants

The group of participants was composed of 15 human resource practitioners with minimum five-year experience in consulting and development of people in management positions. Gender distribution was approximately equal: males, N=7, and females, N=8. Age of participants ranged between 26 and 52 years (M=37.60 and SD=6.95). All participants work in Romanian consulting companies of the human resources development field and they have an average of 8 years of professional experience. For 60% of the participants, their basic training is in psychology field, but the whole group has postgraduate studies in the socio-human field.

Sampling of participants was done by the method "snowball", in the category of interest to research topic, that is, in chain, from one participant to another.

Procedure

Participants attended an individual, semi-structured, in depth interview. Prior to running the interview, participants were informed about the purpose of the study, estimated duration of the interview and the right to withdraw or interrupt the interview if they wish. They also gave their agreement for participation by signing an informed consent form. They were assured of confidentiality of data, audio or written, obtained by interview and the possibility to have access to any of these forms of data storage. In addition, it was mentioned that the answers to questions are used for research without any content associated with the author or other data which allow his identification and they are not subject to moral judgment, of value or precision. In terms of location, was agreed that the interview take place at participant's company, in a time interval preferred by them.

In terms of content, *semi-structured interview* aimed to approach the relevant issues for identification and analysis of intervention methods used to people with management positions and identifying the place and role of coaching between them.

4.4. Results

Data processing was done by thematic analysis method which consists in six stages, some of them being common to other methods of qualitative analysis: familiarizing with data, initial codes generation, identifying themes, their review, naming and defining themes, elaboration of the report (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The analysis method chosen for this study incorporates both an inductive approach based on data from interviews (Boyatzis, 1998), and a deductive approach based on themes drawn from relevant theoretical frameworks (Crabtree & Miller, 1999; Fereday & Muir-Cochrane, 2006). This approach allowed the description and understanding of authentic experiences of the participants captured in interviews, but guided by theoretical concepts.

Audio recordings of interviews (a total of 980 minutes) were transcribed and corpus data were obtained as a written report. Verbal content was coded deductively and inductively with cu ATLAS.ti, which is qualitative data management software. In a first phase was performed open coding which consists in careful examination, comparison in order to discover similarities and differences, conceptualizing and categorizing data (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). The initial analysis was followed by second-order analysis that aimed to reduce data to allow further analysis and interpretation and identification of emerging themes.

The themes identified in interviews content of the present study synthesize organizational intervention practices, applied especially to people with management position, with all its aspects, from the characteristics of client from the characteristics of the client, the consultant, to the process and results. Themes and subthemes related to this with examples of codes are summarized in Table 4.1. Extracts from the content that exemplify themes or codes can be located in interviews following the appropriate number of each participant and the number of text unit, as it was quantified using the ATLAS.ti program in processing of transcribed interviews.

THEME	SUUBTHEME	Examples from the interviews
Client	Role	”…Most… [clients] … or if we discuss percentages somewhere around 80% of the positions that we manage are positions of middle management and top management……”(I 1_25)
	Features	”… I had more success when I worked with directors from other cultures [străine], because I was less assessed, because they focused more on content, competence,

		experience, more than the speech which I could envelop…"(I 14_51).
	Development needs	*"… It was the first man, Romanian manager to say, which I actually saw wanting in real to improve things" (I 10_73).*
	Readiness	*"… the action of introspection is difficult for people. Therefore I noticed this thing in many programs. It is not something people currently do it, they rarely think about themselves… how to say … constantly … deliberately, in a planned manner and with time and resource allocation… yes, so … that when we require to do not find it … no, it's not handy…" (I 11_52).*
Consultant	Role	*"… Ok, and then my work as a consultant start from zero in a way… with a discussion in advance, something about the culture of the organization, something about the background of problems … " (I 12_48).*
	Confidence	*"… if they did not trust and consider you, he will probably not take appropriate what you say and may not implement it or he will not make convincing…" (I 1_63).*
	Professional expertise	*"…The initial [of the intervention process] was the most difficult. If the initial is well,*

		so if the composition of plan is done very well, I think that 50% of success is assured. So there must be invested very, very much energy and work to persuade in order to keep his commitment. If they keep the commitment at that stage, later will be very easy to do, even to put into practice what he proposed in the plan…"(I 11_69).
Goals	Problem solving	*"… [the client] tried to replace the sales director, but I did not say what to do, or how to do. Practically, he had all the answers to him …" (I 11_103).*
	Support for response to new situations	*"… purpose of transition to a higher position, he was young, ….. we emphasized harnessing the potential … he knew the steps to go, but we work harder in order to verify and confirm his steps (I 11_103).*
Relationship (process)	Facilitation	*"… but I did not told him what to do, or how to do. Practically, he had all the answers to him …" (I 11_103).*
	Learning	*"… everything was on his own responsibility, I insisted on very hard, so the method works if you assume responsibility for this process of learning "(I 11_98).*

	Cooperation	”… it's like you take arm in arm … with the client and go where you want to go together … " (I 6_91).
Result	At the individual level of client	”… they compared the initial stage to final stage [of intervention], and satisfaction was very high, because I have seen people changing under my eyes” (I 11_98).
	At the organizational level	”[from coaching]… he succeeded to replace sales director with a better one… they really managed very well at that time and increased turnover and sales …” (I 5_51).
	At the consultant level	”… for a consultant or trainer or whatever in this field to see that facilitation that you did…and the frame that you have created allowed them to have fundamental changes in their internal structure of personality and abilities was extremely rewarding, for me, you know?…” (I 11_98).

4.5. Discussion and conclusions

Data from this study represented a combination of perspectives, values and personal meanings, in other words, participants' implicit theories concerning intervention at the people with management position. Their integration allowed shaping a local model of coaching which provides an explanatory framework for reflection on the changes facing the organization and

the challenges of new methods of intervention. This explanatory framework consists of themes found in the interviews analyzed and emphasizes previous experience in delimiting expectations, practitioner role in relationship, the importance of the link with the organization and the impact of intervention at the organization level. Among the organizational intervention practices, coaching has emerged as a tool for continuous learning, reflection towards learning and for building new ways and solutions to organizational problems.

It should be noted that in Romanian organizations, coaching for people with managerial position entered as practice, especially under the influence of multinational companies. Despite these influences and trends to expand the coaching, data from this study indicate that coaching intervention does not have a definite place between the developmental practices at management level in Romanian organizations. But in a dynamic market it is noted that the use of specific methods of coaching with all its features - relationship, client, results - is present.

The study revealed a profile of coaching client, that is, most frequently, middle level manager in multinational or international companies. Clients vary in degree of readiness for coaching, expectations and skills that they hope to acquire from coaching. Often, clients require coaching following organization initiative and with its support, which indicates its value not only at the individual level but also at the company level.

Although currently coaching practice is not strictly regulated, has shaped a profile of the practitioner that can respond optimally at corroborated needs of the client – person with managerial position - and organization. Communication skills, assessment and feedback, planning and organization, motivation and stimulating the change, are just some of skills cited in studies and also mentioned by participants in the present study (Ely, Boyce, Nelson, Zaccaro, Hernez-Broome, & Whyman, 2010; Feldman & Lankau, 2005; Kampa & White, 2002).

Beyond practitioner skills and abilities, relationship with the client is considered an important factor in the success of intervention. Its features - partnership, collaboration, commitment, trust and confidentiality – provide unique coaching process compared to other management development programs (Ting & Riddle, 2006).

Practitioner features, as they emerged from the study, correspond to the models described in the literature of coaching (Wasylyshyn, 2003). According to these models, coaches practitioners aim to increase the efficiency to people with managerial positions, in a formal relationship, one-to-one. Moreover, the practitioner has the skills to successfully meet the diverse needs of individuals and their organizations (Ely et al., 2010).

Learning, as is mentioned by the participants in the study, corresponds to Argyris vision (2006) on organizational learning, that is frequently situated beyond a process of correcting the errors or problem solving. It requires a critical reflection on behavior, identification of ways by which it contributes to organizational problems and changing the way of action. Along with critical reflection, reflection *on action* and reflection *in action* increase client expertise (Schon, 1991) and are issues raised in the interviews from this study. As it was illustrated by verbal statements, learning features correspond to the coaching intervention mechanisms (Feldman & Lankau, 2005; Sherman & Freas, 2004; Stern, 2004).

In the absence of data about the coaching industry in Romanian organizational environment, this study outlines a profile of this practice, which is marked by contextual features, but follows the trends of development covered in Anglophone areas (Sherpa Coaching, 2010; Spence, Cavanagh, & Grant, 2006). In the Romanian organizations, coaching is expanding, but little expanded, and to a large extent, subsumes the applied fields of psychology in organizations, without being a professional field itself.

In the organizational context, coaching addresses to individuals which can also be clients in training, consultancy, mentoring. Differentiated and appropriate use of development practices increases effective outcomes and provides a better persistence in time (Rock & Garavan, 2006). Congruent with research perspectives in coaching, interviews revealed key issues due to which coaching can be most effective response.

The emergence of coaching is explained, in the perception of consultants, as more than a trend taken under the influence of multinational organizations. Moreover, it is becoming increasingly evident that its development, *as practice,* is stimulated in two ways - organizational

problems and consulting practice. This perception is associated with the belief that delivery of training programs (training type) at the level of people with managerial positions no longer correspond to sustainable results (Feldman & Lankau, 2005; Lawton-Smith & Cox, 2007). So, by this, study results provide a framework for understanding how organizational intervention practices, especially those aimed at people with managerial position as initiators of change and responsible for its spread in the organization, are diversifying in order to respond mode adapted to the current context. Therefore, the role that coaching acquires compared to other development practices is a adapted role the new theorization in organizational development field that optimally respond to the need for change. Coaching highlights in organizational consultants practice as an indispensable tool, strategic for management due to the potential to establish, adapt, rebuild skills required for dynamic organizational environment, as required by theoretical models (De Vries, 2005).

Summarizing, the results of this study indicate the emergence of the practice of coaching in the development of people with managerial positions of Romanian organizations and create opportunities for development and organization training practitioners in a more appropriate way to organizational realities.

The study has some limitations arising from the type of qualitative methodology used. Usually, small group of participants and their recruitment may have an impact on results (Chapman, 2002). Another limitation could be the fact that participants are from different companies which means different approaches to practice and different clients. Due to qualitative approach, results can be generalized only to the participants in this study. However, some findings may have significant implications for similar cases (Maxwell, 2005).

Future studies should include a larger sample, and results should be corroborated with quantitative data. Also, the perspective of practitioners could be completed by the client to ensure a more comprehensive approach to organizational intervention. A possible future direction could address the link between different developmental relationships faced by people with managerial position and how they impact on personal career, organizational results and working group.

CHAPTER 5. COACHING AS A CHANGE PROCESS: AN ANALYSIS OF THE READINESS FOR COACHING

Procedural approach to intervention recommends the assessment of coaching readiness of the coachee in the early stage of the process (Boyce & Hernez-Broome, 2011). The pattern of characteristics integrated into the readiness for coaching concept vary; however the authors agree to include readiness for change as an essential item (Boyce, Zaccaro, & Wisecarver, 2010; Goldsmith, 2009). Owing to the fact that research on coachees has no long tradition, the studying of the readiness concept should incorporate the research findings on a person's stage of change by applying the transtheoretical model of change (Prochaska & DiClemente, 1994). This model, originally developed in health psychology for changing the addiction behaviours, extended its application to other types of behaviours, and to online interventions and coaching interventions (Prochaska & Norcross, 2010; Prochaska, Prochaska & Levesque, 2001).

Beyond stages of change analysis, the coaching intervention maximizes its efficiency by adjusting itself to the developmental needs of the coachee (Ely, Boyce, Nelson, Zaccaro, Hernez-Broome, & Whyman, 2010). Targeted coaching needs is a unique combination of individual and organizational needs. Improving leadership skills, behaviours, attitudes, strategies enhance performance, efficiency in work and career success. The interpersonal, communication, self-management, leadership, and conflict management skills, together with the managing subordinates' performance are the most common objectives for developing through coaching at management level (Ely et al., 2010; Hall, Otazo, & Hollenbeck, 1999; Judge & Cowell, 1997; Hicks & Peterson, 1999; Society for Industrial and Organizational Psychology, 2008; Witherspoon & White, 1996).

From the perspective of readiness for change, this research seeks to identify the conditions and the factors of readiness for coaching in terms of the coachees' stages of change and developmental needs.The aim is to study the readiness for coaching of the managers at all levels who benefited from coaching or to those who are just potential coachees of such intervention by applying the transtheoretical model of change. Additionally, it is studied the

pattern of the stages of change and developmental needs, considered relevant to the assessing phase of the coaching intervention.

5.1. Readiness for change, readiness for coaching

The executive coaching emerged as a direct answer to unpredictable changes in organizations for which it is imperative the search for new approaches and ways of optimizing the management activity through coaching and professional development of leaders (De Meuse et al., 2009; Joo, 2005).

Despite its popularity in practice, coaching is less structured as a field of research; it requires researchers to focus upon theoretical construction. Definitions differ from one author to another, but they have in common the purpose, type of relationship and coachee's characteristics. Generally, the coachees are top, middle, and lower level managers proving their potential for progress, possessing significant responsibilities for the business success (Baron & Morin, 2010).

The coaching intervention follows the principles of experiential learning, reflection in learning and problem solving (Feldman & Lankau, 2005; Sherman & Freas, 2004; Stern, 2004). The premises of organizational learning theory and those of socio-cultural learning provide a framework for shared problem solving in which the coach and the coachee develop an action plan. By considering this reflection context, the imperative for change is of frequent occurrence (Wise & Jacobo, 2010).

The challenge of change consists in the assumption that individuals should be involved in the change process, especially in an organizational context where change is unavoidable (Armenakis & Harris, 2002). Through integrated approach to intervention, the preliminary examination consists in assessing the coaching needs of coachees. This includes experience, skills, and coaching needs analysis.

Coaching, in general, can be a more productive and impactful process if coachees engage in it in a well-planned and intentional manner (Nelson & Hogan, 2009). A coaching relationship is a bidirectional one. Both coach and coachee need to be engaged, and committed to creating the desired change. At the executive level, a coachee's commitment to the coaching process becomes even more important if obvious and lasting results are to be made. It can also

help increase the success of coaching relationships which ultimately leads to higher satisfaction of both coaches and their clients.

Some studies argue that not all individuals are coachable (Goldsmith, 2009). The clients less receptive to coaching limit their development, and fail to recognize their own problems by following a single way of action. <Coachability> does not necessarily exhibit the opposite attributes. Interviews with coaches and coachees revealed certain common themes around people's ability to actively engage the coaching process. Coachable individuals are committed to change, have a strong motivation to improve their competencies, they are perfectible, take responsibility for outcomes (Goldsmith, 2009).

5.2. Transtheoretical model of change at individual level

DiClemente şi Prochaska (1998)'s transtheoretical model of change characterizes the continuum of steps that people take toward change and includes the activities or processes to move people from one stage to another, thus making his model of particular interest to coaches (Table 1). This model is now widely used in health psychology to study addiction behaviours, and in the work environment or business coaching programs. (Prochaska et al., 2001).

Transtheoretical model of change has been used to study the management's perception on costs and benefits by applying the coaching skills in working with subordinates (Grant, 2010).

5.4. Developmental coaching needs

The coaching intervention maximizes its chances of success by adjusting itself to the developmental needs of the coachees. Stern (2004) points out that coaching can be particularly effective for leadership development in the following situations: specific performance expectations are communicated to immediate subordinates, feedback is provided, organizational strategy is built, strategies to manage conflict effectively are adopted, constructive response strategies to ambiguity are given. Beyond these general formulations, particularly impactful on an organizational level, coaching should take into account the personal developmental needs of individual coachee's. In fact, the leadership coaching is quite different

from other forms of personal coaching by simultaneously addressing the individual and the organizational leadership developmental needs.

A study on leadership coaching expansion revealed slightly differences on the coach`s role, scope and prevalence in different regions of the world (Table 5.2.). Even if in the English-speaking countries, practice and research on coaching is advanced compared to other areas, the American Management Association (2008) estimated a global expansion, and besides, the developmental trends track those already covered in the U.S.

Table 5.2. Leadership coaching features (adapted from Riddle & Pothier, 2011)

	English - Speaking Regions	*Western Cultures*	*Eastern Europe, Asia, Middle East*
Role of Coach	To stimulate reflection, growth, change	Collaborator for optimising the whole „whole life" and improved performance	Teacher or expert; fewer differences between mentor and coach
Dominant Purpose of Coaching	Acceleration of development; increased performance	Problem solving, but increasing developmental uses	Correction of gaps; remedial actions and teaching of better or the " right " ways
Penetration of coaching	High, no stigma; seen as perquisite for high performers	Medium, some stigma; valuable collaborator for executives	Low; still mostly global firms with roots in West

Even if a coaching program requires minimum training requirements and commitments (conscious need, desire to improve current performance, openness to new experiences), attitudes and the levels of motivation vary from one client to another, among organizations, even during the development intervention. Therefore, this study addresses the developmental needs at different management levels and their variation depending on the coaching experience.

As discussed in the preceding review, in prior research, the concept of change, readiness for change and the aspect of needs assessment are inherently related to coaching. The lack of empirical studies on these topics and the lack of specific psychometric instrument in the field of coaching leaded us to address the objectives by using the transteoretical model of change in the context of coaching and the perceived developmental needs used in the field of training for leadership. Therefore, we formulated the following hypothesis:

H1a: the factorial structure of the stages of change assessment for leaders follows the conceptual structure of the stages of change model (operationalized as precontemplation, contemplation and action).

H1b: according to the stages of change model, we expect that precontemplation negatively correlates with the other two stages and contemplation positively correlates with action.

H2: the leaders who benefited from coaching are different to those who have not received coaching by their stages of change being less contemplative than the last.

H3:as coaching is followed by an increased awareness of developmental needs, we expect that the participants who were coachees report higher scores in perceived developmental needs than the participants who didn't benefit from coaching.

H4: the management levels are associated with different levels of developmental needs, top managers reporting lower scores of developmental needs than the participants in other management levels.

5.5. Method

Participants

The participants were 87 persons in management position in private organizations from Romania of which 58.6 % men and 41.4 % women. The age mean of the whole group was 33.19 years (AS=7.65). As management positions, the participants represented the top level (N=14), the middle level (N=29) and the first-line level (N=44). Regarding their coaching experience, 42 participants were previously coachees in a coaching intervention and 45 participants didn't report any participation in a coaching intervention for management skills.

Procedure

The scales of the stages of change and of the developmental needs were administered to the participants. At the same time, the participants were given a prior presentation of the aim of the study and were requested to give their consent of participation in research. The

participation was voluntary and was not rewarded in any way. The participants were also informed on the confidentiality of data collected and on their option of withdrawing from the study if they consider it is necessary. In order to obtain demographic data relating to the participation in development activities, we also included questions regarding gender, age, management level, tenure, and prior participation in coaching intervention in the last year.

Instruments

The stages of change scale was built on the basis of the scale that was initially developed by the authors of transtheoretical model and contains separate items formulated for three stages: precontemplation (i.e. As far as I am concerned, I do not have any leadership development needs), contemplation (i.e. I have some leadership challenges and I really think I should work on them) and action (i.e. I am actively working on my leadership shortcomings). The instrument with 12 items was previously validated by Lam, Chan and McMahon (1991) and McConnaughy, DiClemente, Prochaska, and Velicer (1989). The content of the items was modified so as to make reference to the change of management behaviour. The items were evaluated on a Likert scale with five points (1 – strong disagreement; 5 – strong agreement).

The scale for the evaluation of perceived developmental needs was developed by Harris and Cole (2007) and is made of 28 items. The participants evaluated on a Likert scale with 5 points (1 – strong disagreement; 5 – strong agreement) the extent to which they want to make improvements on specific management skills: team development (i.e. I need to personally improve building team spirit in my work group), stress management, communication, conflict management, (i.e. I need to personally improve managing conflict with my subordinates) visionary leadership, preparation of their subordinates for change. A global score of developmental needs was also calculated.

Control variables

This study included a series of control variables which were not directly related to the testing of hypotheses, but we took into consideration the possibility of bringing plausible explanations supplementary or alternative to the analyses performed: t*enure in a management position, the age of participants, gender of participants, participation in managerial development programs and leadership programs (s*uch a variable can change the results

especially in case the participation was recent. The data for this variable was collected by open question and, unfortunately, was frequently omitted in the answers of the participants).

5.6. Results

In the absence of consistent data regarding the use of instruments in the field of coaching, we examined the construct validity of scales applied by two methods. First of all, a factorial analysis was carried out to determine whether the items of scales used corresponded to the multidimensional solution of the instrument developed on the basis of the transtheoretical model of change (H1a). Secondly, we investigated the pattern of correlations between the subscales of the instrument (H1b).

Given the existing data that suggest a pattern of correlation between stages measured by SOCS, we performed the exploratory factorial analysis using principal components method with Direct oblimin rotation ($\Delta = 0$). Kaiser–Meyer–Olkin measure of sampling adequacy (KMO = .746) is considered a good value that allows the performing of factorial analysis (Field, 2009). The correlation between items was checked with Bartlett's test for sphericity the value of which is strongly significant (χ^2 (66) = 535.940, p < .001), which suggests the existence of common factors. The three primary criteria used to determine the number of factors to extract were eigenvalues, the scree plot, and a parallel analysis (Horn, 1965).The total variance explained by the three factors extracted according to the criteria mentioned before is 67,52 %. Table 2 contains the saturation of items in the extracted factors and the indicators of the internal consistency of the 3 subscales after the rotation of factors. The results of this analysis confirmed the grouping of items in the three dimensions representing the stages of change for which the test was built (H1a).

Table 2. Summary of exploratory factor analysis results for the stages of change scale

Items	Rotated Factor loadings					
	Precontemplation		Contemplation		Action	
	P	S	P	S	P	S
Item 1	.98	.97				
Item 6	.89	.91				
Item 10	.90	.93				
Item 12	.93	.97				
Item 2			.64	.68		

Items	P	S	P	S	P	S
Item 4			.90	.92		
Item 9			.85	.82		
Item 3					.80	.79
Item 5					.89	.83
Item 7					.87	.87
Item 8					.53	.68
Item 11					.72	.79
Eigen values	1.910		1.547		4.647	
Variance explained	15.917%		12,894 %		38.721 %	
α Cronbach	.78		.76		.86	

P = pattern coefficients; S = structural coefficients.

The lack of data regarding the structure of the developmental needs scale leaded us to perform supplementary analysis of the factorial structure of the scale. The exploratory factorial analysis of the principal components with Direct oblimin rotation (Δ = 0) was performed on all the 28 initial items. Kaiser–Meyer–Olkin measure (KMO= .864) of sampling adequacy is considered a good value that allows the performance of factorial analysis (Field, 2009). Moreover, we applied Bartlett's test for sphericity to check the relationship between the items. The calculated value was strongly significant (χ^2 (378) = 1819.132, p< .001). Table 3 presents the saturation of items in the extracted factors as well as the indicators of the internal consistency of the 5 subscales. The total variance explained by the five factors extracted is 67,11 %.

Table 3. Summary of exploratory factor analysis results for developmental needs scale

Items	Rotated Factor loadings									
	Team development		Visionary leadership		Conflict management		Stress management		Preparation for change	
	P	S	P	S	P	S	P	S	P	S
item1					.49	.56				
item2					.68	.70				
item3					.60	.74				
item4					.54	.67				
item5					.56	.76				
item6					.47	.65				
item7							.59	.71		
item8							.79	.81		
item9							.51	.63		
item10							.66	.73		
item15	.42	.67								
item16	.55	.73								
item17	.74	.83								
item18	.71	.81								
item19	.72	.82								
item20	.49	.55								

	P	S	P	S					P	S
item21	.70	.81								
item22	.62	.80								
item23			.77	.85						
item24			.78	.86						
item25			.43	.68						
item26									.68	.75
item27									.86	.89
item 28									.81	.85
Eigen values	11.840		2,385		1,802		1,470		1,296	
Variance explained	42.285 %		8,517 %		6,435 %		5,251%		4,628%	
α Cronbach	.91		.87		.83		.78		.84	

P = pattern coefficients; S = structural coefficients.

Following the factorial analysis, we removed the 4 items (11, 12, 13 and 14) which did not load significantly on either of the factor (factor loadings < .40). The individual items retained in the model and factor loadings are presented in Table 3. As a result, a five-factor solution was deemed more appropriate and parsimonious. We also calculated a global score of developmental needs on the 24 items taken into consideration for further statistical analyses (α = .94).

According to the stages of change theory, the results indicate a simple structure of factors and the relationships between them. The participants ranged in each of the three stages of change (precontemplation M=2.51 and AS=0.95; contemplation M=3.85 and AS=0.79; action M=3.64 and AS=0.79). Precontemplation as the theoretical model stipulates correlates negatively with the stages contemplation and action (r = -.32, p< .001, respectively r = -.35, p< .001) as hypothesized (H1b). The action and contemplation stages positively and significantly correlate (r = .404, p< .001), as hypothesized (H1b). The pattern highlighted by this data is consistent with the pattern reported in general in the studies of measurement of the stages of change and support the construct validity of the test (Harris & Cole, 2007; McConnaughy et al., 1983, 1989).

The differences between the two subgroups – coachees and manager who didn't benefit from coaching – were statistically significant on the dimension of precontemplation (t(85) = 3.131, p < .01) and the dimension of contemplation (t(85)=2.014, p < .05), which means that the coachees are in the stage of precontemplation (M=2.83 and AS=0.93) compared to those who haven't benefited from coaching in the last year (M=2.22 and AS=0.88). Moreover, the participants in this group are more contemplative (M=4.02 and AS=0.71) than the coachees

(M=3.68 and AS=0.85). These results support H2 which states that the coachees are actively involved in a change process and don't look for other changes. But, the results are only partial supported by this idea because of the impossibility of controlling the issues related to the experience of coaching and other experiences of development as well as the variety of conditions of achieving them. In fact, the effect size for the difference between the two categories was reduced (d = .33, respectively d = .21) and confirms only partially the second hypothesis regarding the differences between the categories of participants on the dimension of the stage of change.

We explore also the differences in the stages of change reported to the management level. Depending on the management level, significant differences manifested between the participants from top management and those from the middle or lower management level. Top managers positioned significantly differently in the stage of contemplation (F(2, 84) = 4.487, p < .01). The size of effect was average (η^2= .09).

In order to test the third hypothesis regarding the differences in the perceived developmental needs between the participants who benefited from coaching and those who didn't, we found that the difference was significant in case of the need of team development (t(85) = 1.736, p < .05; d =.18). Beyond these significant differences, data supports the scores of global needs, needs of stress management and needs of conflict management higher in the coachees compared to those who are potential clients. The fields of visionary leadership and preparation of the subordinates for change are perceived as fields for development by those who did not benefit from coaching. This might suggest that the coaching intervention from their latest experience at the moment of data collection mainly targeted these needs.

The fourth hypothesis referring to the developmental needs in participants at different management levels was tested by and highlighted significant differences only on the field of preparation for change (F(2, 84) = 6.011, p < .01; η^2= .12). More specific, the top managers reported lower scores at this variable compared to the other two management levels. Hence, we found partial evidence for H4.

We also tested the interaction effect of the management level and coaching experience on the studied variables, but no significant interaction effect was revealed by the data.

The data obtained and the analyses performed led to the proposal of prediction models regarding the categories of persons with management position and the status of coaching beneficiary. Given the fact that the dependent variable is a dichotomous one, the testing of these models was done by logistic regression (tables 5). For the application of logistic regression, diagnostic testing for collinearity (its value was below the accepted threshold indicating a low degree of relation between them (Field, 2009), nonadditivity, and outliers was performed. Categorical variables in the dataset were dummy coded using the indicator method, which compares levels of the variable to either the first or last level of the variable. The last category of each variable was used as the reference category, to which the other levels of the variable were compared. For each analysis, predictor variables were entered into the model using a forced-entry method, which adds all predictors to the model at one time.

Regression analysis. The results of the binary logistic regression predicting the coachee status from the control variables are presented in Tabel 55..

Table 5.5. Logistic regression for coachees

Predictors	B	S.E.	Exp(B)	Wald
STEP 1 (a)				
Tenure	-.255	.198	.775	1.648
Management position				
Top level	.977	.671	2.656	2.122
Middle level	1.356	.545	3.879	6.182*
Age	-.017	.035	.983	.235
Gender	.581	.479	1.789	1.475
STEP 2 (b)				
precontemplation	1.212	.337	3.361	12.975*
team development	1.143	.459	3.137	6.195*
need for change	-1.024	.465	.359	4.846*
Constant	-4,133	1,430	,016	8,357

a. Control variables: tenure, management level, age and gender.

b. Predictor variables after controlling for management position

5.7. Discussions

Coaching is more an individual practice, but is carried out in a context defined by the role and status of the person in organization as well as the wider organizational framework and

targets the integration of intervention in a management development system (Tesluk & Kudisch, 2011). The essential question for the initiators of change is how the individuals prepare to cope with change so that they implement it in the organizational environment in which they work. In order to use coaching for the purpose of developing leaders, it becomes important to understand the process of change and particularly the readiness level, the degree to which a person can change and his/her desire to change something in a specific area.

From the multitude of theoretical models on change, the present study was founded on the transtheoretical model that postulates the importance of preparation in order to successfully making a change. Thus, the application of this model was extended in the context of developing management by coaching and the specificity of development needs was corroborated to offer a more complex pattern of antecedents of intervention.

The research had an exploratory character to check to what extent the stages of change and the needs of development differ and whether it is relevant to approach them before a coaching intervention. First we checked the psychometric qualities of the measures given the novelty of using them in the context of executive coaching. The instruments confirmed the factorial structure of the theoretical models lying at the basis of their elaboration and turned out to be appropriate for the purpose of the study.

Consequently, one of the contributions of the study consists of the application of instruments that can take part in the evaluation of clients for coaching, especially as the target population tends to be much more diverse compared to the "traditional" category. The importance of paying attention to the client first of all as an individual, taking into account his uniqueness, his goals and needs and then his position in the organization and its requirements are new challenges for coaching (Valerio & Deal, 2011). The client's skills and his motivation become the major predictors of change by coaching, and the way in which the client valorizes them has an influence on the results.

The data of this study showed significant differences both between coachees and non-coachees and also between participants at different management levels. The top managers are mainly in the stage of contemplation, which indicates an active opening to change and the desire to approach it in the next period. Such a result orients the approaching of coaching

especially at higher management level and is consistent with previous studies (Kiel, Rimmer, Williams, & Doyle, 1996).

The present study highlights the psychological aspects of coaching which can facilitate the understanding of the aspects of change as a basic objective of coaching. It brings data that can be useful in the evaluation of the opportunity of coaching as an intervention compared to other developmental relationships (training, mentorship, counselling, etc.) (Rock & Garavan, 2006). The organization has to choose between an intervention or another depending on the cost – benefits ratio. That is why, a special attention is paid to the preparation of programs so that they can be applied at the right time and in the conditions of existence of certain inclinations.

The analysis of differences between coachees and non-coachees regarding the stages of change highlighted the lower scores for contemplation in the group of coachees compared to the group of non-coachees. This result might suggest that the group of coachees has already initiated a change and therefore are less willing to allot resources to explore new developmental opportunities. Unfortunately, the lack of further data on specific details of development by coaching or other developmental relations limits the extension of the previous conclusion.

The common characteristics of coaching with other relations for the purpose of development – for instance, counseling, psychotherapy, training – justify the focus on the stages prior to intervention and the evaluation of the degree of preparation of the client for intervention. Researchers in the field warn that the effect of coaching can be situational and specific to certain situations or individuals. This conclusion agrees to the results of a meta-analytical study in the field of counseling, which highlights the fact that the client readiness is the most significant factor in change, being responsible for 40 % of the variation of results (Lambert & Barley, 2002). Therefore, the careful evaluation of preparation prior to intervention assures not just its effectiveness but also its efficiency.

The analysis of the types of development needs perceived by the participants showed that the need of development of the team pointed out higher scores in the group of coachees, explained by the approach of this issue in the coaching intervention and the importance of the

team in obtaining organizational results. We discussed also non-significant differences on the global needs of stress management and conflict management in the coachees compared to non-coachees. The fields of visionary leadership and preparation for change are perceived as fields for development by those who did not benefit from coaching.

Beyond the contributions stated above, the study presents a few limits which will be succinctly presented. The number of participants in the study is consistent with the number used in coaching studies in which the emphasis is rather on the individualization and personalization of the intervention than the description of wide categories. The prevalence of using coaching in Romanian organizations is another argument for sizing the sample in this study (Sherpa Coaching LLC, 2010).

One of the criticisms supported by certain studies from the literature says that just like in case of other theories that propose stage-by-stage models, the transtheoretical model of change reduces the complexity of behavioural changes by the artificial imposition of certain categories on certain continuous processes (Bandura, 1997; Davidson, 1998; Sutton, 1996). Further research could test alternative models of change by experimental studies and approach the evaluation of preparation beyond the stage-by-stage aspect of transtheoretical model.

The categories of development needs were taken from specific studies on training for management skills. Future studies should also explore other categories of needs that cover more of the complex management activity.

The multilevel approach, especially on the dimensions of development needs would bring a more complete image. The evaluations could come from subordinates and superiors and might compensate for the limits of distortion and fidelity by self-reporting. A longitudinal study could point out more valid inferences on the use of transtheoretical model of change in coaching along with the approach of different types of needs perceived. Other methods of data collection can bring more information on the process itself and on the results.

The access to participants and the limited extension of practice in Romanian organizations make more difficult the investigation in the field of coaching. The norms of confidentiality, the duration and complexity of intervention can be other barriers for research.

In summary, this research provided a framework for studying the characteristic of coachees addressing the stages of change and perceived developmental needs. In spite of the limits, the study brings empirical data that can be a basis of further exploration of readiness for coaching and the study of this concept beyond the framework of costs and benefits proposed by the transtheoretical model of change. By studying different specific categories of development needs, this research offers suggestions for initial evaluation, a significant stage in the coaching intervention.

CHAPTER 6. DEVELOPMENT OF THE MANAGERIAL BEHAVIOUR BY COACHING. EFFICIENCY OF A COACHING PROGRAM

The analysis of literature in the field of coaching psychology suggests a discontinuity between research on coaching and the research on the development of management (Elliott, 2011). Although only a third of the coaching interventions for persons in management positions are assessed (Ely, Boyce, Nelson, Zaccaro, Hernez-Broome & Whyman, 2010; McDermott, Levenson & Newton, 2007), the empirical results reported confirm the efficiency and value of coaching both at personal level and at organizational level (Dagley, 2006; Hernez-Broome & Boyce, 2011; Passmore & Gibbes, 2007).

The main effects of coaching for the persons in management position can be seen in the sphere of management competences, the skills of managing complex situations in the organization, as well as at the level of relating with the subordinates, which is optimized (Bowles, Cunningham, De La Rosa & Picano, 2007; Diedrich, 1996; Hall, Otazo & Hollenbeck, 1999; Perkins, 2009). By definition, the target of coaching is behavioural learning and change in case of the client (manager or leader); therefore, it is not at all surprising that most of the studies report a positive relationship between coaching and behavioural changes (Levenson, 2009).

Beyond coaching for persons in management position, a tendency in process of extension, both at practical and theoretical level, it is the managerial coaching (Agarwal, Angst & Magni, 2009). The managerial coaching is defined as the method by which a supervisor

(manager or leader) facilitates the learning and development of subordinates by the activation of the professional behaviours and skills they have (Beattie, 2006; Ellinger & Bostrom, 1999). The empirical studies show that this form of coaching is an intervention of development with significant impact not only at individual level, but also at organizational level (Agarwal et al., 2009; Ellinger, Ellinger & Keller, 2003; Ellinger & Bostrom, 1999; Evered & Selman, 1989; Elmadağ, Ellinger & Franke, 2008; Hannah, 2004; Yukl, 2002). In spite of the fact that this form of development acquires a more and more role in organizations (Heslin & Latham 2004; Latham, Almost, Mann & Moore, 2005), the data that should support the value of development coaching in the career of subordinates is inconclusive (Heslin, Vandewalle & Latham, 2006).

In this theoretical framework, this study has as objective the investigation of the effects that the coaching program has on the medium-level managers. More exactly, this study targets the changes that appear at the level of managerial behaviours following the coaching intervention. Moreover, the results of the coaching program are analyzed on the dimensions of the behaviour of managerial coaching. Because of the similarities between the behaviours of managerial coaching and the behaviours of transformational management, as we will show below, the pattern of transformational management was adopted as theoretical framework for the evaluation of management behaviours.

Hypotheses

This study is based on a pretest-posttest design and aims at the following hypotheses:

H1: medium-level managers participants in the coaching program will improve their scores in inspirational motivation as way of stimulation of the individual and team spirit in subordinates.

H2: the medium-level managers participants in the coaching program will improve their scores in individual assessment as the behaviour by which managers pay attention to the achievement and development needs of the subordinates.

H3: at the end of the coaching program, the medium-level managers will report higher scores on the scale of situational reward as effective transactional behaviour.

H4: the efficiency of self-assessed management increases at the end of the coaching program

6.7. Method

Participants

The group of participants was initially made of 23 medium-level managers from a multinational company which makes electronic equipment. Their age varies between 23 and 46 years old (M = 33.11; AS = 6.47). Depending on gender, the participants were 69.6 % men and 30.4 % women. In the statistic analyses of data, we only included the data from 11 participants (age: M = 31.63; AS = 6.47) of which 81.81 % men and 18.19% women.

Procedure. The coaching program

The coaching program was specially designed for medium-level managers with responsibilities of supervision of the production teams from a multinational organization. The major purposes of the program consisted of: developing managerial coaching skills, skills of assertive communication with the employees, of motivation of the employees on one hand and the development of stress management strategies, on the other hand.

Prior to the actual initiation of the program, the participants were evaluated with MLQ scales for the managerial behaviour. At the completion of the program, the participants were evaluated again with the same psychometric instruments.

In the second half of the interval of deployment of the coaching program, the company in which the intervention was made announced major changes whose effect could not be neglected. The program was pursued, but against the background of a growing tension, an uncertainty related to the near future regarding the jobs of managers, but also the jobs of their subordinates.

Instruments

The main instruments of evaluation of managerial behaviours were MLQ scales (Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire). MLQ is a widely used instrument whose efficiency in the identification of characteristics of leaders was tested in many studies (Avolio & Bass, 1999; Bass & Avolio, 2000; Bass & Stogdill, 1990; Rowald, 2005; Sarros, Gray, & Densten, 2002). The version applied in this study was MLQ (5X short form) adjusted to Romanian population by Iliescu, Beldean & Sîntion (2006).

6.8. Results

The rate of renouncement[2] to the study and throughout the coaching program in which the participants were included was 52.17%. The differences between the final group of participants and the group of those who renounced on the data from the pre-intervention stage, statistically analyzed with t test for independent samples were not significant in case of variables included in the study (inspirational motivation scale $t(21) = 1.69$, $p > .05$; individual appreciation scale $t(21) = 0.94$, $p > .05$; situational reward scale $t(21) = 0.94$, $p > .05$; efficiency scale $t(21) = 0.68$, $p > .05$). The statistical analyses of the pre-intervention data do not highlight a specific variable which explains the renouncement of the participants to the coaching program or to the post-intervention evaluation stage. Therefore, the data which was included in subsequent analyses in this study was the data of participants who completed the coaching program and fully completed the scales used for the post-intervention evaluation (N = 11).

After checking the internal consistency of the scales, we reported the data of evaluation of the managerial behaviour before the coaching program, under the form of means, standard deviations as well as the correlations between variables (Table 6.2.). The correlational indices show significant values between variables IA and IB (r = .547, p < .01) confirming the belonging

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[2] The rate of renouncement to the coaching program and implicitly to the study was caused by major changes which occurred after the initiation of the program. At about half the interval provided for carrying out the program, the employees of the company were announced that it would close the factory from that location and as a consequence, they would lose their jobs. In spite of the changes that occurred, the coaching program was continued and completed as planned, but with a significantly low number of participants. It was obvious the influence of these unexpected changes on the participants and it was approached during the individual coaching sessions.

to the superordinate scale of transformational management. It also signals strong positive correlations between certain transformational scales and the scales that evaluate the effects of management (for instance, r = .711, p < .01 for IA and EFF). CR scale as transactional scale strongly correlates both with transformational scales (with IB, r = .70, p < .01), and with the efficiency of managerial behaviours (for instance, with EFF, r = .602, p < .05), while the correlations between MBEA scale with such constructs are small. MBEP and LF scales correlate negatively both with the scales of transformational management and with the scales of effects of management, as MLQ authors indicate.

Table 6.3. presents the data of evaluation of the managerial behavioural after the completion of the coaching intervention. After the inspection of these results, we can see statistically significant correlations between certain transformational scales (for instance, between IB and IM with r = .786 at p < .01), proving the belonging to the same basic concept. In the post-intervention stage as well, some correlations are kept between the transformational scales and the transactional scales as well as the scales of efficiency of management.

The statistical analyses conducted on the data obtained had the purpose of checking the influence of the intervention on the dimensions of the managerial behaviour. We resorted to test t for pair samples and chose the significance threshold 0.10, usually used in case of small samples. The analysis of the differences before and after the intervention indicated a statistically significant increase on dimension IC (individual appreciation), at p < .05, t(10) = 2.324, d = 0.50 and confirms the second hypothesis. Another dimension in which we recorded a significant difference before and after intervention is CR (situational reward), at p < .10, t(10) = 1.845, d = 0.55, the third hypothesis being confirmed. As for the self-assessed performance, a significant increase was identified on scale EFF (efficiency), p < .50, t= 2.141, d = 0.33 and the fourth hypothesis is confirmed.

Even if there were differences before and after intervention in the meaning provided in hypotheses and graphically illustrated (Diagram 6.1), these differences were only significant for a part of dimensions. Therefore, the hypothesis regarding inspirational motivation as way of

stimulation of the individual spirit and the team spirit in subordinates *was not confirmed*, but we can graphically notice the tendency of increase of scores between the stages before and after intervention (t(10) = 1.372, p > .10).

On the dimensions of transactional management, the results from this study indicate variations of scores from pre-intervention to post-intervention (Diagram 6.2.). As a result of the coaching program, we can see the decrease of scores to the management by exception active by which leaders focus on the monitoring of mistakes and their prevention, but the statistic analysis of difference does not highlight a statistically significant decrease.

Even if only the self-assessed efficiency was significantly different following the coaching program, we obtained increases of results in EE scales (additional effort) and SAT (management-related satisfaction as the workflow from Diagram 6.3. shows.

Therefore, following the statistical analyses performed, only three of the four hypotheses formulated for this study are confirmed.

The results at the scales of self-assessment of the performance of management are on the increase at the moment of measurement after intervention, but as we mentioned, the difference from the moment initiated by measurement is statistically significant only on the scale of efficiency of management.

6.9. Discussions

This study investigated the effectiveness of a coaching program applied to medium-level managers from a multinational company. More precisely, by a longitudinal design, the study followed up the changing of the managerial behaviour on the dimensions of managerial coaching, evaluated with the scales of transformational management and of transactional management. On the overall, as we anticipated, the analysis of results highlighted an increase of scores at the dimensions of the managerial behaviour which are part of the managerial coaching skills, at the end of the coaching program. Moreover, the efficiency perceived as

indicator of performance was significantly higher after the completion of the coaching program. These results are considered consistent with the results reported in the previous studies which certify the effectiveness and efficiency of coaching in the persons in management position in general (Grant & Cavanagh, 2004; Gray, 2006; Feldman & Lankau, 2005; Joo, 2005; Palmer, Tubbs & Whybrow, 2003).

A first contribution of this study is using the pattern of transformational and transactional management as framework of study of managerial behaviours optimized by the coaching intervention. By the orientation to development, the expression of behaviours which exceed the simple focus on the rewarding of the effort, the transformational scales and some transactional scales of MLQ as instrument of measurement of managerial behaviours can support the study of managerial coaching skills, in the absence of specific psychometric instruments.

The second relevant result in this study is the change of behaviours of individual appreciation and the behaviours that fall into the situational reward scale following the coaching intervention. More precisely, the managers from this study have enhanced the behaviours of expression of attention towards the needs of achievement and development of each subordinate, acting as a *coach* (trainer), allotting time, effort and individual resources to help the subordinates valorize their potential and develop.

In the direction of the importance of management for the performance of subordinates and of the organization, in the management literature we emphasized the role of coaching. Coaching is regarded as a means in the development towards an organization which learns (Dunphy, Turner and Crawford 1997). The metaphor leader as *coach* (Senge 1990) involves consistently this orientation and draws the attention to the redefinition of the relationship between the leader and the subordinate and to the need of studying this dyad. The presence of the coaching skills at the level of managers allows for their propagation in the organization. The leaders act as *coach* by delegating decision-making and taking responsibilities to their subordinates (Kouzes & Posner, 2002). The managers with *coach* skills increase confidence in

their teams and there is the potential path of dissemination in organization and development of a culture of coaching (Crane, 2007).

On the other hand, the studies in the field of managerial coaching described the behaviours relating to the role of management from this position, but mentioned less practices of formation and development of behaviours of this kind (Beattie, 2006; Ellinger & Bostrom, 1999).

Along with the development of dimensions of managerial coaching, another result supported by the empirical data from this study is the increase of self-assessed efficiency of medium-level managers from the multinational company in which the coaching program was carried out. The efficiency of management is assessed especially in relation to the role of management, not necessarily in relation to reaching the purposes.

This study qualitatively differentiates from the previous studies regarding the results of the coaching intervention, the most frequently assessed only at the level of reaction of participants and only in retrospection or omit the evaluation of the program (McManus, 2005). Therefore, this empirical data supports the effectiveness of coaching for the improvement of managerial coaching skills and of the efficiency of management.

However, we point out a few limits for which we will formulate solutions in the future studies. First of all, the lack of a control batch makes the internal validity be very much affected, and the favourable differences of the measured behaviours be potentially explained by the intervention of the effect of maturation or of other exogenous variables which were not controlled. Another possible limit could be given by the effect of testing, but considering that the interval between the preliminary evaluation and the post-evaluation was quite large, we exclude this negative influence on the results. The effect of renouncement to the study as limit in the pre-post test design was also checked. The careful analysis of the results in the evaluation before intervention did not highlight a factor or a variable from the study which might have influenced the decision of renouncement to the study. The rate of renouncement to the study was mainly explained by external conditions, which are the unpredictable changes of

dissolution of the location of the company to which the managers included in the study belonged.

In spite of the internal validity vulnerable because of the type of design used, this study has two strengths: the explanatory power and the reduction of variance of error associated to individual differences. In conclusion, in order to explain the results from the causal point of view, they should have been reported to the results of a control group, frequently difficult to involve in natural conditions. In coaching, even the studies without control batch are not very frequent. 29% of the studies used a design before and after the intervention and only 14% resorted to a control group with a view to making the comparison (Ely et al., 2010).

CHAPTER 7. FINAL CONCLUSIONS

This paper, by the studies carried out, brings contributions regarding the investigation of coaching in the Romanian organizational environment as process of change and development at the level of persons in management position. In the context of coaching literature, the thesis contains empirical studies based on data regarding the perception of organizational consultants on coaching, along with data regarding the clients of the coaching intervention as well as the results of the effectiveness of such an intervention. The studies carried out highlight the complexity of the coaching process from a multiple perspective – of the practitioners, of the beneficiaries, but also of potential clients – as particularities of using coaching in the Romanian organizational context. Moreover, it is the first paper in Romania which approaches the subject of coaching in the local organizational context.

In this scheme of definition of coaching, this paper followed an approach of both theoretical and empirical investigation. After the introduction and the general presentation of the framework of this paper, the second chapter and the third chapter focused on the systematic synthesis and the critical analysis of the main scientific studies and research in the field of coaching in general and more specifically, the coaching for persons in management position. Based on the conclusions drawn and the research needs identified, chapter four, chapter six and chapter seven contributed by empirical data to the understanding of the

coaching process from the perspective of practitioners, clients and persons in management position as potential clients of such an intervention.

Therefore, the first stage in the approach of research of this paper consisted of the critical analysis of research in the field of coaching, which allowed for the conceptual delimitation and the differentiation of coaching from other relationships for development purposes (mentorship, training, counselling, etc.). In the theoretical approach from the second chapter were selected the studies and research in the field of coaching and one can see that although coaching stirred interest in literature, the theoretical approaches are less rigorous and abound in a diversity of invalidated patterns, some of which are taken from other fields.

The role of systematic synthesis of literature in the field of coaching was essential, considering the multidisciplinary character of coaching as well as the lack of a solid theory specific to this type of intervention. The conceptual clarifications from the second chapter led to the observation of coaching for the persons in management position as the most visible form both in research and in practice. However, as we highlighted in the third chapter, the current stage of research in the field of coaching is marked by the need of theoretical and empirical integration as well as the need of accomplishment of several research focused on the components of process, the functions and the purposes of coaching. This need is given by the limited number of rigorous scientific research which is explained by factors such as: the novelty of the field for psychology, aspects of confidentiality of participants, the lack of a specific methodology of evaluation of the efficiency of coaching, making the comparison of results difficult.

The third chapter also targeted the approach of executive coaching, of its principles and functions in relation to the new approaches of development of management. Therefore, we kept in mind that the theories and patterns of leadership offer a significant challenge to the design and carrying out of programs of development of leadership and management. Unfortunately, a lot of research rather focused on the conceptualization of leadership and management, on the person of the leader and less on development (Bernal, 2009).

Yet, it is visible that the evolution of theories on development followed the evolution of theories of conceptualization of leadership, which is the passage from leadership as exertion of power to interpersonal skills and in the end to skills of management of interactions in a group. Given this repositioning of the field of development of leadership, coaching is an optimal solution with sustainable results based on self-directed learning and on reflection on learning (Grant, 1999).

The systematic investigation of the factors of coaching, from the level of conceptual delimitation, the disclosure of forms and the identification of theoretical orientations on which the practice of coaching is based, allowed for the outline of designs of investigation of empirical studies.

The complexity and the importance of the result targeted in coaching draws the attention to the role of the practitioner of coaching (organizational consultant in wide sense) in the process. It is a role which requires the understanding of the organizational system, of motivation of work, of the impact that the leadership style has on the organization as well as the understanding of the aspects of management and leadership from the wider perspective of organizational realities in the competitive environment.

The empirical study 1 was carried out on the basis of a qualitative design, and the data under the form of the verbal content obtained by interview with 15 organizational consultants was processed with the method of thematic analysis. In the absence of data about the coaching industry in the Romanian organizational environment, the first study outlines a profile of this practice, which is marked by the contextual characteristics, but follows the development trends gone through in the Anglophone areas. In the Romanian organizations, coaching is in the expansion, but it is less extended, and to a major extent, subordinates to the applicative fields of psychology in organizations, without being a professional field.

The empirical study 2 approached in an innovative way the characteristics of clients from coaching and focused on the identification of a pattern of stage of change – development needs which could orient the stage of initial evaluation from coaching and consecutively, the

adaptation of the intervention approach. The study was designed starting from two premises. The first premise claims that in general, coaching turns out to be much more productive and of impact when the clients get involved in an intended and well planned manner (Nelson & Hogan, 2009). The second premise referred to the fact that not all the individuals are *coachable* in order to benefit from coaching (Goldsmith, 2009). By integrating these premises, the study 2 offered a framework of investigation of coaching which contains the components and characteristics of change and aspects of development needs identified before an intervention. Further on, the transtheoretical pattern of change was taken over at individual level, a popular pattern in the psychology of health applied for the change of addictive behaviours, but with applicability in other fields of the human behaviour. The takeover of the transtheoretical pattern and the approach of development needs in the sphere of leadership skills and behaviours required first of all the adaptation and checking of psychometric qualities of measurement instruments. The instruments confirmed the factorial structure of the theoretical patterns that laid at the basis of their elaboration and turned out to be appropriate for the purpose of the study, pointing out by them a methodological contribution in the research of coaching.

The study 2 also reported differences by types of development needs perceived by the participants and they can be explained by the specific content of the main activities and by the purposes associated to each level of leadership (Bowles et al., 2007). Therefore, the development needs acquire on different levels of leadership a different configuration which, for maximized results, can orient the approach of the coaching intervention (Feldman & Lankau, 2005).

While in study 1 and 2 were targeted the organizational consultants and clients and potential clients for coaching, the study 3 approaches the coaching process and its results. The study is preceded by a vast critical analysis of the empirical research of evaluation of coaching, of the patterns of evaluation of results as well as the factors that moderate the effect of coaching and the methodological aspects.

Coaching is less suitable for study in laboratory or cutting out the components to be thoroughly studied. Yet, this paper brings data about the effectiveness of a coaching program in the real environment by the study 3. By a longitudinal design, the study followed the change of the leadership behaviour on the dimensions of managerial coaching, evaluated with the scales of transformational leadership and of transactional leadership. In overall, as anticipated, the analysis of results highlighted an increase of scores to the dimensions of the leadership behaviour which are part of the managerial coaching skills, at the end of the coaching program. Moreover, the efficiency perceived as indicator of performance was significantly higher after the completion of the coaching program.

To sum up, the results of this research offer important theoretical orientations clarifying the aspects related to the components of coaching. This research also brings important methodological innovations in the field. An important aspect of this research is that once identified the mechanisms that privilege access to coaching and the factors that influence the process, the results of the intervention can be improved a lot.

The novelty of the field and of research in the field of coaching involves the lack of specific instruments, specially built for such an intervention. On the other hand, there is pressure for using appropriate instruments. Thus, by the study 2 we applied an instrument built on the transtheoretical pattern of change and adapted to the context of development of leadership by coaching. The results of factorial analysis confirmed the factorial structure of the pattern from the basis and satisfying psychometric qualities of the adapted instrument, thus bringing an important contribution to future research in the field. We also adjusted the scale of development needs perceived in persons in management positions on different levels. The instrument proved to have satisfying psychometric qualities and allowed using data in subsequent analyses. The study 3 used an instrument with wide popularity in the studies on the persons in management positions, but without previous applications in the specific context of coaching.

This research also has a series of limits. First of all, the studies based on quantitative methodology were carried out on quite small samples and this could explain obtaining insignificant results. Another limit is given by the characteristics of the participants included in the study and their availability. As mentioned before, coaching mainly addresses the persons in management position who have potential and availability for development. Their proportion in the population is limited, which made difficult the access to them. Another limit is given by the diversity of organizations which will reflect on the characteristics of the organizational environment, but also of the factors acting at individual level. Therefore, the power of generalization of results is limited. The future studies should include complementary evaluations which eliminate possible variables which can distort the results. Yet, the results provided by empirical studies are encouraging, bringing important clarifications to the field studied and being premises for future studies.

The future studies could extend this research line of the clients from coaching by investigating in a longitudinal design the effects of identification of the stage of change and the types of development needs in the results on the long or medium term. Moreover, future research could check the way in which this pattern evolves. The third study was based on a design before and after test and its limits affected the internal validity. The replication of the study, but the use of a control group will be able to give high validity to the causal explanations of attribution of the effect of a coaching program. Moreover, it is necessary that the future research brings more clarity to the mechanisms lying at the basis of the intervention of this kind.

The results obtained in this paper have a series of practical applications. The study no. 1 highlights the perception of practitioners in the field on coaching and outlines aspects which can orient the preparation of future practitioners in the field. The study no. 2 with substudies on related measurement instruments brings a pattern of the characteristics of evaluation of the preliminary intervention of clients for coaching and outlines a profile of the potential client. By building and implementing a coaching program designed to optimize the leadership behaviour, the study no. 3 brings data on the coaching intervention in the organizational environment. As

for the practical implications, first of all, the results obtained inform the practitioners, but also the clients on the opportunities of development by coaching. The stage of evaluation of the characteristics of the client can be useful for the calibration of the intervention depending on the characteristics of the client on the dimension of the stage of change and the need of development.

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