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Supervision, Coaching and Mentoring of Independent Management Consultants –

Professional Development In-Between

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ABSTRACT

Title:	Supervision, Coaching and Mentoring of Independent Management Consultants - Professional Development In-Between
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Keywords:	Independent Management Consultants; Coaching; Mentoring; Supervision; Developmental relationship; Developmental network; Professional Development
Thesis Purpose:	The study aims to investigate how independent management consultants experience the differences between supervision, mentoring and coaching and how they employ these approaches in their professional development. It also aims to find out how mentoring, coaching and supervision could be conceptualized in a strategy for independent management consultants' professional development.
Methodology:	The present study is qualitative and the material is approached through phenomenological hermeneutical reading.
Theoretical Perspective:	Relevant conceptualizations of supervision, coaching and mentoring in dyads. Contemporary researches on the intersections between these approaches.
Empirical Foundation:	The paper is based on independent management consultants' accounts of lived experiences in supervision, coaching and mentoring. The empirical material constitutes 7 narrative interviews and informational materials on coaching and supervision received from some of the interviewees on occasions irrelevant to the study.
Conclusion:	Independent management consultants' strategy for professional development is to employ networks of multiple developmental relationships. They tend to shape their developmental processes idiosyncratically in line with their needs and specific understandings without limiting themselves into the concepts of coaching, supervision and mentoring.

Table of Contents

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background

Encompassing strategic consulting, IT consulting, operations management, HR consulting and outsourcing, management consulting has been developing drastically in last decades making a significant impact on our lives and societies through national governance, educational institutions, business models and innovations, and everyday language (O'Mahoney, 2010). As a result, the academic interest in management consultants has been continuously growing (Alvesson and Johansson, 2002). Numerous researches focus on management consultants' identities, lifestyle and struggles, the discourses shaping them, the ambiguities imbedded in their work and the skills they need in order to be successful (Alvesson, 2001, Merilanen at al., 2004, Berglund and Werr, 2000, Johnsen, Muhr and Pedersen, 2009, Whittle, 2006, Muhr and Pedersen, 2010, O'Mahoney, 2010).

Since the growth in demand has outpaced the supply of students to management consulting, an area of a special interest for academics and practitioners is management consultants' professional development (Stumpf, 1999). Alvesson and Johansson (2002) bring to our attention immaturity, fragmentation and diversity as characteristics of the management consulting industry and claim that coupled with the loose link between management consultancy and formal knowledge, these characteristics limit the opportunities for professionalization of management consulting. As a result, management consultants face the challenge to develop professionally and provide professional services by 'mingling professionalism with anti-professionalism' and balancing the roles of technical experts, brokers of meaning, scapegoats, and agents of anxiety and suppliers of security (Alvesson and Johansson, 2002, p. 239).

Acknowledging the demand for improved understanding on management consultants' growth and mastery of their work, Stumpf (1999) presents a five-stage model of professional development in a management consultancy company. He claims that during each of the phases the consultant faces different challenges related to self-esteem, competence, confidence, internal and external relationships, authority, marketability and control. In order to continue their professional

development, at each stage management consultants need support from other professionals to overcome emotional and professional distress (Stumpf, 1999). Thence, consultants employ different coping strategies based on peer support, 'ownership' by more senior staff, coaching and mentoring – all provided internally in the management consultancy company.

As Sumpf (1999) also discovers in his research, supervision, coaching and mentoring are prime examples of support for professional growth. Supervision has been referred to as mandatory approach to professional learning and development (EuroPsy, 2008). Mentoring has proved to facilitate the transfer of tacit knowledge and enact professional standards (Lucky, 2004). And coaching has gained reputation as effective means of developing one's capabilities and improving one's performance (Marx, 2009). All three approaches are depicted as reflective relationships providing learning environment and resulting in sense-making and knowledge construction (Marx, 2009, Pack, 2009). Consequently, they are also employed in the management consultants' professional development.

Supervision, coaching and mentoring, however, are also claimed to be poorly conceptualized and delineated in literature and praxis (Gray, 2010, Lucky, 2004, Gallacher, 1997, Roack and Garavan, 2006, Pack, 2009, Maynard, 2005). As a result, on the one hand, we have three approaches that are claimed to prove critical for management consultants' professional development (Stumpf, 1999). On the other hand, functions, characteristics, goals and outcomes of coaching, mentoring and supervision are overlapping. Authors mainly differentiate supervision, coaching and mentoring based on context and the researcher's point of view. Thus, changing the viewpoint and the context results in blurring the borderlines between these concepts. Attempts to delineate coaching from supervision, supervision from mentoring and mentoring from coaching in practice, also prove that sometimes differences between these approaches are only limited to the ways of naming them. Therefore, a new way of conceptualizing coaching, mentoring and supervision in relation to professional development may prove necessary.

Furthermore, in academic literature attention is only paid, and even partially, to employing coaching, mentoring and supervision for management consultants' professional development in the context of a management consulting company. There is a gap in research concerning coaching, mentoring and supervision for independent management consultants' professional development.

In a management consulting company, environment, and organizational practices and embedded experiences, professional standards and values provide the context for management consultants' professional development. In contrast, independent management consultants occupy an 'in-between space: neither a separate enterprise apart from the organization, nor an integrated part of the organization' (Fenwick, 2007). Their professional development happens in the space in-between and requires more initiation, reflection and flexibility (Fenwick, 2007). What the functions and characteristics of coaching, supervision and mentoring are in this space 'in-between' nobody has described yet.

Therefore, the present paper focuses on mentoring, coaching and supervision of independent management consultants and develops a new conceptualization combining these three approaches in a holistic strategy towards professional development.

1.2. Research Problem

The present study takes into consideration the value of mentoring, coaching and supervision as developmental relationships which provide interactions for framing experiences, values and expert insights. Given the limited research material on the approaches employed in independent management consultants' professional development, it focuses on supervision, coaching and mentoring and investigates how independent management consultants employ them in their development.

Coaching, mentoring and supervision, however, are not clearly delineated and current academic literature does not successfully explain how these approaches are differently employed in one's growth processes. Based on this, the present study is also interested in experienced differences that can delineate coaching, mentoring and supervision for independent consultants in practice. Moreover, it strives to proffer a new conceptualization of a strategy for professional development that clarifies and employs supervision, coaching and mentoring as developmental approaches.

Therefore, my research questions are:

How do independent management consultants differentiate between supervision, mentoring and coaching, based on their experience, and how do they employ these approaches in their professional development?

How could mentoring, coaching and supervision be conceptualized in a strategy for independent management consultants' professional development?

1.3. Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the current study is to investigate the theories and the practices of supervision, coaching and mentoring in relation to independent management consultants' professional development. By this investigation opportunities are created for better understanding and improvement of the practices of coaching, mentoring and supervision. Moreover, the research creates conditions for reflection on the current discourses of supervision, coaching and mentoring and proposes an alternative framework of employing them in independent consultants' professional development. As a result, it opens possibilities for change of the practices and discourse improvements.

Although mentoring, coaching and supervision exist as approaches in dyads and groups, the present research relates to the processes in dyads, the characteristics of the relationships, the functions of a coach, a mentor and a supervisor and the outcomes of these processes. This is done by literature overview and by in-depth interviews. The interviews contribute to building understanding by getting hold of participants' personal experiences and reflections on what respectively the processes of coaching, mentoring and supervision include and what impact these processes had on the independent consultants.

As currently there is limited theoretical and empirical material which describes any approaches to independent management consultants' professional development, this research and its results should be of relevance for academic institutions, independent management consultants,

management consultants working in consultancy companies and professional coaches, mentors and supervisors.

Structure of the Paper

Chapter 2 describes the methodological approach to the research, the research process, the foundation for analysis, as well as the limitations and the trustworthiness of the study.

In Chapter 3 I present overview of some relevant conceptualizations of supervision, coaching and mentoring. In addition, I introduce my analysis of the differences and similarities of coaching, supervision and mentoring depicted in academic and practitioners' literature.

In Chapter 4 I present my thematic structural analysis of the study's empirical findings and its discussion. Moreover, it includes a general interpretation of the findings based on the written text produced at the previous stage of analysis and the frames of references.

Chapter 5 is dedicated to the study's conclusions and addresses recommendations for future studies on coaching, mentoring and supervision in the context of independent consultants' professional development.

2. METHODOLOGY

Being an independent consultant myself I experience the focus of academic research on management consultants in consultancy companies as what I consider to be a gap in academic studies to reflect and investigate deeper into the reality of growing number of self-employed consultants. Influenced by the present discourse on quality standards and professional development among the management consultants in Bulgaria, I decided to approach these issues in a more constructive and focused way through academic research and, thus, to contribute to the building of shared understanding on the independent consultants' approaches to learning and professional development in dyadic relationships.

Any social research is shaped by its theoretical and methodological framework, which include the basic ontological and epistemological assumptions of the researcher (Alvesson & Sköldberg, 2000, Carter&Little, 2007). The present study is informed by the ontological understanding that reality is a subject of interpretation and by the epistemological framework of the social constructivism, defining that knowledge is created in social interaction (Sandberg & Targama, 2007). I believe that there are not objective facts ready to be grasped in our thinking, but meanings are exchanged and understanding is created in communication and by shared experience of the world (Lindseth and Norberg, 2004). Hence I follow an interpretative approach in my research. I employ the qualitative research method of narrative interviewing for data collection. The purpose of the interviews was to give opportunities for telling stories which express the independent consultants' experiences, emotions and insights and reveal the meaning of coaching, mentoring and supervision in their lives. In order to build new understanding, I aim 'to go beyond the surface and look for something less obvious, or less easily revealed in a (quick) coding process' (Alvesson & Sköldberg 2010, p.713). My objective is to dispense with what is taken for granted and to allow to the phenomena to appear in their meaning structure (Lindseth and Norberg, 2004). Therefore, I employed a phenomenological hermeneutic reading.

Phenomenology, stemming from the works of Edmund Husserl, is based on the premises that within our experience we are already familiar with the meaning of all kinds of phenomena.

However, we tend to take those meanings for granted. 'Our very sense of the world is governed by unexamined assumptions, compulsive tendencies to pigeonhole, of which we are often unaware' (Ricouer, 2002, p. xiv). As researchers then our aim should be to reach authentic experience of the essence that is beyond the distortion and alienation brought about by custom and cliché (Lindseth and Norberg, 2004, Ricouer, 2002). We are all familiar with the essential meaning of a phenomenon, but not necessarily conscious of this essential meaning. A phenomenological approach prescribes that essential meaning should be studied in the practices of life and their expression through action, narratives and reflection (Lindseth and Norberg, 2004). When for research purposes the practices of life are fixed in texts, they need interpretation.

Alvesson and Sköldberg (2000) point out that through text interpretation alethic hermeneutics disclose and achieve understanding of something that is covered. The alethic school of hermeneutics claim that understanding is a basic form of life that is marked by interpretation and preconceptions. It radically breaks with the notion that there is 'sharp dividing line between a studying subject and a studied object' (Alvesson and Sköldberg, 2000, p. 56) and renders 'the very process of understanding more important than its own result' (Alvesson and Sköldberg, 2000, p. 59).

Informed by phenomenology and alethic hermeneutics, phenomenological hermeneutics employ the alethic hermeneutical circle of pre-understanding and understanding to transcendent the meaning of the text and to reveal the essence of a phenomenon. In this process the phenomenological attitude is achieved by putting our judgment into brackets in order to free ourselves from 'the reductive mode of thought' (Ricouer, 2002, p. xiv) and be open to meaning implicit in the experience.

2.1. Sample

Since the research question demonstrates my unequivocal interest in the independent management consultants' perceptions, feelings and understanding regarding coaching, mentoring and supervision, the study is built upon interviews with 7 independent consultants living and working in Bulgaria. The choice of participants in the research was determined by the following characteristics of independent management consultants, described by Fenwick (2007, p. 510):

1) 'their work is typically project-based, defined by individual bounded contracts of varying periods for varying activities

2) they contract their knowledge services to a variety of employers, including organizations and single clients

3) they often juggle multiple projects and contracts simultaneously; and

4) they remain self-employed and rarely hire other employees except as limited contracts to assist with particular projects or maintenance services such as their own accounting'.

All of the participants in the study work as organizational consultants, which includes work on small- or large-scale organizational development projects and work at individual level (mainly managers and entrepreneurs), group level and organizational level. Most of the interviewees have background in psychology and have gone through different training programs for trainers, consultants and coaches. Some of the participants in the study were able to share their experiences as supervisee, mentee or coaching client, others from the point of view of supervisor, coach or mentor, and third from both perspectives. An interesting fact was that two of the consultants I interviewed happened to describe their experiences of a dyadic learning relationship that existed between the two of them. Each of them revealed that they had had this kind of shared experience during their interviews and this fact added valuable insights because it provided two different perspectives on the same process.

Twelve people from my network of independent management consultants were invited to take part in the study. They were selected on the basis of their comments that they had participated in processes of coaching, mentoring and/or supervision. Although all of them showed interest, 7 people finally proved willing and eventually participated in the study. The informants are female and male and their ages vary between 29 year and 65 years. The differences in gender and age are premises for difference in the points of view towards the phenomena under study. They may have contributed to richer material on lived experiences which have the potential to disclose essential meaning.

2.2. Data Collection

The present study makes use of primary sources and secondary sources by combining narrative interviews and document material. The firsthand accounts on coaching, mentoring and supervision processes are seen as *primary sources*. In contrast, *secondary sources* comprise the existing empirical material that is not produced directly in relation to the purposes and in the process of the study.

The narrative is defined as a discursive form, a life story and a societal story. It consists of a succession of events and a plot which links the events, makes them meaningful and coherent and provides the context in which we understand these events (Jovchelovitch and Bauer, 2000). Czarniawska (2000) points out that the narrative is 'the main bearer of knowledge in societies' (p. 1). The narrative interview was thus chosen as the most appropriate approach to stimulating the interviewees to tell the stories of their lived experience in coaching, supervision and mentoring, to communicate their points of view and to express their emotions, thoughts and interpretations (Lindlof and Taylor, 2011).

The initial phase of the study was devoted to gathering primary sources. Since the participants were familiar with the meaning of coaching, mentoring and supervision in the practices of life and the most basic way to gain understanding of one's experiences is narration, I gave them the opportunity to express their experience and understanding through narrative and reflection. In accordance with Lindseth and Norberg (2004), as a researcher I aimed to refrain from any judging and concluding and to accomplish bracketing in the process of participants' narrating from lived experience. However, I did not try to put into brackets my pre-understanding about the phenomena but any judgment of what is right or wrong, so that I could be open to understand meaning implicit in the lived experiences (Crist and Tanner, 2003). The interviews started with a very open invitation to the consultant to tell the story of how she had experienced the processes of coaching, mentoring and supervision in her life. 'When conducting a narrative interview the interviewer encourages the interviewee to narrate, as freely as possible, about her lived experience of the topic chosen.' (Lindseth and Norberg, 2004, p. 149). Hence, during the interview I encouraged the interviewees to narrate and to reflect on their narratives. Any

additional questions aimed only to prompt the participants to explain more thoroughly what they meant.

The interviews were conducted in person. They took place either in secluded cafes or interviewees' offices in April 2011. Each interview lasted between 45 minutes and 90 minutes. In order to promote the sense of shared experience and to allow authentic and deeper understanding, all interviews were conducted in Bulgarian.

Confidentiality issues were discussed prior to each interview and all interviews were type-recorded with the permission of the interviewees.

All interviews were partially transcribed in English as parts which are irrelevant to the study subject were omitted from transcription.

The secondary sources comprised of documents written by the interviewees for informational purposes on the topics of coaching and supervision. They outline coaching, mentoring and supervision processes as parts of different initiatives or projects. I had received these documents by e-mail on different occasions in the last two years before the study started. They were employed as a source of reference during the data analysis and interpretation.

In addition to the primary and secondary sources, in the role of the researcher my educational and professional background, my experience and relationships with the interviewees and other consultants are very relevant to the study as sources of pre-understanding, interpretation and bias. My educational background includes in-depth studies and analysis of the issues of adults' learning and professional development. Combined with additional professional training in coaching, mentoring and supervision and professional experience in applying these developmental approaches in various organizational and individual settings, my background provides a frame of reference and is a source both of taken-for-granted ideas and critical approach to dominant views that replace the plurality of viewpoints (Mingers, 2000).

My professional realization as an independent consultant provides access to a broad network of independent management consultants. Moreover, it allows for genuine contact and real resonance with the interviewees, based on shared previous experiences and shared meanings concerning a

vast range of topics of common interest. As a result, prior to the study, trust had already been established and served as a basis for self-disclosure. In addition, shared pre-understanding allowed for deeper understanding of interviewees' stories.

According to Alvesson (2003) the researcher is 'part of the social world that is situated' (p. 24) and hence may be preoccupied with oneself and employ forms of writing that put the researchers's personal experience in the center. Thus, my personal experience and pre-understanding may limit the scope of possible interpretations. This issue is addressed more thoroughly in the Trustworthiness and Limitations section. However, it is also important to note that no researcher is free from pre-existing understanding and the awareness of my own limitations may only add to the quality of the study.

2.3. Data Analysis and Interpretation

The method of analysis of the transcribed interviews is the hermeneutic circle of interpretation. It is based on O'Gorman and Gillespie's (2010) adaptation and development of the four epistemological practices (Alvesson and Sköldberg, 2000) and the two methodological principles (van Manen, 1990) of hermeneutic interpretation. Thence, combined with bracketing and sharp focus on the phenomenon during data collection, the analysis goes through a process of *reflection on essential themes* concomitant with *writing and rewriting*. According to Alvesson and Sköldberg (2000), facts emerge from the text as results of interpretation while the researcher moves back and forth between pre-understanding and understanding, asking questions to the text and listening to them. Thus, reflection and writing are symbiotic tasks that happen through dialogue with the text (O'Gorman and Gillespie, 2010).

Data analysis and interpretation started during the process of transcription of the interviews. Following the process of phenomenological analysis of interviews described by Wareing (2011), I listened to the interviews for the sense of the 'whole', I delineated units of general meaning, but I also delineated units of meaning relevant to the research question and discarded units of meaning that are clearly irrelevant, hence transcribing only the relevant parts of the interviews.

At the next step *thematic structural analysis* was performed. It sought to identify and formulate main themes which convey essential meanings of lived experiences. 'A theme is a thread of meaning that penetrates text parts, either all or just a few' (Lindseth and Norberg, 2004, p. 149). Themes answer questions asked to the text and condense sub-themes found within and across stories. As prescribed by Lindseth and Norberg (2004) results are expressed in everyday words and verbs in strive to be as close to the lived experience as possible.

The empirical material was first analyzed to reveal the main themes in interviewees' experiences in coaching, mentoring and supervision. I read the interview texts and identified meaning units. A meaning unit can be a part of a sentence, a sentence, a whole paragraph or any piece of the text that conveys one specific meaning. I went through each of the interview texts multiple times in the same day and in consecutive days. I listened to the text and asked questions. I moved between my pre-understanding and understanding of the text. My fore-projections were constantly revised as new meanings emerged from the text. I read the whole text and parts of it to see what points stand out and what new ideas emerge from the whole. I identified themes and sub-themes, allowed myself time to dwell upon their meanings and their designations. Then I wrote and rewrote the text numerous times moving between the empirical findings, my preconceptions and the theoretical frameworks.

The next stage of *broad interpretation* of the text was accomplished iteratively and included movement among the 'sense of the whole text', the themes and the frames of reference, which consist of the researcher's pre-understanding, the secondary sources and the relevant literature.

2.4. Trustworthiness and Limitations

Although objectivity is discussed as an issue in social research, in phenomenological hermeneutics understanding and meaning are brought to the fore, while the polarity between subject and object is radically opposed (Alvesson and Sköldberg, 2000). Thus, empathy becomes increasingly significant as the foundation for filling and enriching 'with inner meaning the thin shells of outward behavior which are the results of previous interpretation' (Alvesson and Sköldberg, 2000, p. 75)

When performing a phenomenological hermeneutic interpretation I aim at disclosing the meaning of lived experience. Hence, *authenticity* – that is how sincere the individual is (Alvesson and Sköldberg, 2000) - is critical for the research quality. Although the researcher does not look for only one possible and all-encompassing truth, only truthful accounts of interviewees' lived experiences contribute to an ontologically truthful understanding about the phenomena under study (Lindseth and Norberg, 2004). On the one hand, interviewees' narratives are shaped by interviewees' pre-understandings, what they remember and what they are ready to share; whereas on the other hand, accounts are influenced by interviewees' awareness of their lived experiences. Since data is influenced by the researcher's ability to create safe and permissive climate that encourages the interviewee to feel free to reflect and relate (Kvale, 1996), it should be noticed that based on previous experience and interactions, the researcher and the interviewees easily created rapport and climate of empathy and acceptance. Based on that, I presume that all of the interviewees who took part in the study shared honestly and genuinely their experiences.

Another essential issue is that interviewers only understand the narratives in relation to their pre-understanding and 'the researcher's repertoire of interpretations limits the possibilities of making certain interpretations' of the text (Alvesson and Sköldberg, 2000, p. 249). In order to overcome this issue, Alvesson and Sköldberg (2000) advise that at level close to the data reflection should be employed to reinforce reciprocity between the researcher and what is being studied. Moreover, they link researchers' ability to broaden their repertoire of interpretations to the ability to see various aspects by employing alternative theories and perspectives. Following these considerations, the study makes use of broad frame of reference employing various theoretical conceptualizations of the investigated phenomena. Reflection on my pre-understanding and preconceived meanings was also employed at each stage of the study.

3. LITERATURE OVERVIEW

A significant body of academic literature has paid attention in recent decades to the fact that supervision, coaching and mentoring are poorly conceptualized (Milne at al., 2008, Kilburg, 2006, Maynard, 2006, Haggard et al., 2011, Kleinberg, 2001, Pack, 2009). The purpose of the current chapter is to illuminate relevant theories and to shed light upon main definitions and conceptualizations of coaching, mentoring and supervision. It focuses on the general objectives of the processes, the relationships between the participants in these processes, their functions and dimensions, the theoretical frameworks they are based upon and the competences of a supervisor, a coach and a mentor.

The current paper is dedicated to the study of the ways independent consultants employ mentoring, coaching and/or supervision to support their professional development. Accordingly, this chapter is focused mainly on supervision, mentoring and coaching in professional context and special attention is paid to literature that reflects these processes as developmental relationships in dyads between a mentor and a mentee, a supervisor and a supervisee, a coach and a client (Rock&Garavan, 2006).

3.1. Supervision

Being conceptualized in the contexts of organizational management, clinical therapy, social work and others, supervision is diversely defined and various aspects are brought to the fore. Staff supervision is described as the 'process of directing or guiding people to accomplish the goals of the organization in which they work' (Gallacher, 1997, p. 193). It is claimed to include monitoring, assessing performance and competence levels and alignment to organizational policy (Pack 2009). Gallacher (1997) summarizes that managerial models prescribe that supervisors define and communicate job requirements and expectations, plan, organize and control the job tasks, provide job-related instructions, and manage the performance by arranging the environment, evaluation, corrective and formative feedback and providing consequences for poor performance.

Alfred Kadushin (1992) defines managerial supervision by the three functions of administration, education and support. The administration concerns the promotion of performance standards, the alignment to organizational policies and the organization of the work. The educational function is related to the process of learning, acquisition and development of knowledge, skills and competences. The supportive supervision deals with morale, job satisfaction and the emotions of the supervisees, while promoting and maintaining harmonious relationships (Smith, 2005).

Smith (2005) points out that supervisors are mainly concerned with improving the work of the others. He argues that managerial supervision and non-managerial supervision share the three-fold administration/education/support model and are primarily directed towards the interests of a third party, namely the employer and/or the client. Therefore, the supervision includes at least three main actors – the supervisor, the supervisee and the client. And while the development of the supervisee is a goal of the process, it is claimed that attention to the client's welfare is central (Smith, 2009, Patterson, 1997, Brown, 1985). Brown (1985) also points out conceptualizations adding the environment as another 'actor' in supervision.

In the context of psychological practice, including organizational psychology, the European Federation of Psychologists' Associations describes supervised practice as a mandatory prerequisite for receiving professional license to work independently with clients. Supervision in this case serves to assure the quality and competences of the practitioner. It is to be performed by qualified professionals 'who have the time, commitment and competence to carry out this task' (EuroPsy, 2008, p. 37).

In order to assure the quality of the process, supervisors are expected to be able to provide active listening, feedback, dealing with difficult issues and feelings, work on boundary issues and issues of power relations, sharing ethical dilemmas, evaluation of competence, performance assessment, modeling, gate-keeping, mediating, mentoring, coaching (Annex, Pack, 2009, Gallacher, 1997, , Holloway, 1995, Westefeld, 2008, Milne at al., 2011, Copeland, 2005). Tebes at al. (2011) paraphrases the aforementioned activities into supervisory competencies and conclude that using a competency framework results in supervisors' perception of increased ability to manage the relationship and influence supervisees' performance, as well as in increased satisfaction and decreased stress levels.

In the field of non-managerial supervision, which includes supervision of psychologists, nurses, social workers, trainers, coaches and other more or less independently working practitioners, Stoltenberg (2005) uses the term intervention to describe five different aspects of supervision practice. He defines them as facilitative interventions, prescriptive interventions, confrontive interventions, catalytic interventions and conceptual interventions. Corresponding to the supportive supervision, the facilitative interventions are behaviors communicating support and encouragement in the process of the supervisee's development. Prescriptive interventions are claimed to provide specific input and directions, the conceptual interventions link theory and its practical applications, while the catalytic ones 'expand the awareness of the supervisee' (Stoltenberg, 2005, p. 861). Thus, the these three interventions correspond to the educational supervision, while the fifth ones – the confrontive interventions – challenge the supervisees to 'move beyond what is safe and try new interventions, expand their views of the process, or accept more challenging' (Stoltenberg, 2005, p. 863), which means they are directed towards setting higher standards and achieving better performance.

Stoltenberg's (2005) supervision conceptualization through interventions also provides ideas concerning the subject-matter of the supervision process. His five types of interventions suggest that the aspects of the content are: the process of supervisee's work, standards for quality and ethical professional behavior, relationships and boundaries between the supervisee and the clients, supervisee's emotions. More thoroughly, Brown (1985) describe the content a supervisor and a supervisee work on as three types of modalities – knowledge base, behavioral competencies and judgmental competencies. These competencies cover respectively theoretical frameworks and particular methodologies, interpersonal skills and cognitive skills. In a similar vein, Pack (2009) summarizes the supervisor's approaches as emotional style, focusing on psychosocial aspects of supervisee's work, and cognitive style, focusing on theory application and problem-solving abilities.

The so-called different supervision styles describe the interactions and relationships between supervisor and supervisee. Glickman (1985) defines three approaches – directive, collaborative and non-directive – and links them to the supervisee's development stage. Brown (1985) illuminates two other supervision strategies – client-centered approach and supervisee-centered approach – enabling concentration on one of the two main foci of the supervision process, which

are the client's welfare and the supervisee development. Smith (2009) adds up reflection of supervisory-matrix-centered supervision, which apart from the material from the client and the material from the supervisee also examines the relationship between supervisor and supervisee. As a result, the supervisor is not seen only as an uninvolved expert, but as an active interpreter, sense-maker and agent in a process that parallels the client-supervisee relationship (Smith, 2009, Haynes, Corey, & Moulton, 2003, Frawley-O'Dea & Sarnat, 2001).

Holloway at al. (1989) refer to the supervisor-supervisee relationship as shaped by two primary factors – power and affiliation. They describe the three primary roles of the supervision as teacher, counselor and consultant and claim that each of them 'suggests a particular distribution of power between the supervisor and supervisee and puts specific role demands on the supervisee to provide a counterpart to the supervisor' (Holloway at al., 1989, p. 95). These roles and the resulting relationship are placed among other factors as the client, the traits and skills of the supervisor and the supervisee, the institution, the function of supervision, the tasks of supervision, thus forming the systems approach (Westefeld, 2009).

Stoltenberg & Delworth (1987) describe the relationships between the supervisor and supervisee, the supervisor's style, the subject-matter and the goals of the supervision as dependant on the supervisee's stage of development. This developmental approach to supervision assumes that the supervisee progresses through a certain number of stages that have distinct characteristics and suggest different challenges the supervisee faces and skills the supervisee develops. Therefore, the behavior and the style of the supervisor vary in order to respond to the supervisee's needs and experience. Stoltenberg (1993) also notes that when the supervisee is active in various domains of practice s/he can be at different developmental stages in any of the domains at the same time. Thus he argues that the developmental model of supervision is more complicated and it is not linear as it is readily assumed.

Stoltenberg (2005) describes the process of supervision as including transition from supervisees focus on their own behavior, thoughts and emotions to shift towards the client and improved understanding about the client's world, continuing to increased self-awareness, ability to reflect on the process, autonomy and self-confidence. At each of these three stages the supervisor intervenes accordingly starting by specific input and directions, encouragement and

conceptualizing and continuing towards challenging, confrontation and exploring more personal issues in order to achieve self-awareness. Similarly to Stoltenberg, 2005, Caroll (2006) recognizes the influence of different stages of professional development on supervision and describes training supervision and consultative supervision. He defines training supervision as more educative and a means for initial professional development and consultative supervision as an interaction between two professionals where the one helps the other to reflect on their practice (Caroll, 2006, Copeland, 2005).

Ladany at al. (2005) describe a slightly similar approach to supervision in their interpersonal model. Instead of delineating developmental stages, however, they identify a number of critical events which characterize every supervision process (Westefeld, 2009). Among the events they name are skill deficits, role conflicts, countertransferance, sexual attraction, gender-related misunderstandings, problematic attitudes and behaviors (Ladany at al., 2005).

In summary, there are numerous models that provide theoretical framework for well-informed successful supervision. Some of them focus on the system and the roles of the actors, others describe the process and its specific events, while third elaborate on the competencies of the supervisor and supervisee (Tebes at al., 2011, Falender&Shafranske, 2007). All of the supervision models mentioned above, however, treat the relationship between the supervisee and the supervisor as critical for the supervision process (Tebes at at., 2011). It is recommended to be growth fostering and characterized by trust, transparency and empathy (Pack, 2009) and should result in a parallel growth for the supervisees and their clients (Pack, 2009, Gallacher, 1997). Therefore, supervision is defined as a two-way interactive process in which the supervisor assists the supervisee to achieve an agreed goal (Gray, 2010). Thus, both internal and external supervisors act as a buffer in order to relieve the anxiety, but they also challenge and evaluate (Gray, 2010, Pack 2009, Stoltenberg, 2005, Westefeld, 2009, Caroll, 2006). External supervision, however, is claimed to provide a sense of objectivity and greater autonomy, while the process and effects of internal supervision are found to be highly dependent upon the organizational culture and the supervisors' strive to enact it during the supervision process (Gray, 2010).

3.2. Mentoring

Definitions of mentoring are varying based on the application of mentoring in a broad spectrum of contexts - from business organizations, via governmental, military, educational and health institutions to voluntary organizations and political parties (Haggard et al., 2011, Eby&Allen, 2010, Roberts, 2000, Garvey, Stokes and Megginson, 2008). Gallacher (1997), for example, outlines mentoring as 'a caring and supportive interpersonal relationship between an experienced, more knowledgeable practitioner and a less experienced, less knowledgeable individual' (p. 196). The Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development, UK (2008), defines mentoring as the long-term passing of support, guidance and advice. Eby and Allen (2010) conceptuaize mentoring as 'a learning partnership' (p. 13). Generally, however, it is regarded a means to foster individual growth mainly dependent on the relationship between the mentor and the mentee (Eby&Allen, 2010, Haggard et. al, 2011).

In their strive to define the mentoring relationship, the process, the activities and the outcomes, authors trace the phenomenon back to its first known description in Homer's Odyssey and the depiction of Mentor, who transfers his wisdom to Odysseus's son during his father's absence. Nowadays, most researchers use Kathy E. Kram's (1985) descriptions of career and psychosocial functions of mentors, which encompass coaching, providing challenging assignments and exposure of the mentee, role-modeling the professional and personal standards, offering emotional support and unconditional acceptance, sharing experience and advising, explaining, protecting (Gallacher, 1997).

Clutterback and Lane (2005) translate Kram's functions and the tasks of the mentor into five key competencies: 1) Understanding of and insight into one's own and other people's behavior and motivations; 2) Linking reflection upon experience to a broader context and further practice; 3) Conceptual modeling; 4) Commitment to learning; 5) Relationship management. Based on their research, they claim that efficacious mentors possess contextual knowledge and use theoretical frameworks that they enact during the mentoring process by adequate communication approach that should be aligned to the mentee's needs. Rapport, feedback and questioning techniques are seen as critical elements of the mentoring relationship. Thus, the mentors facilitate the development of both occupational and personal capabilities of the mentees (Clutterback&Lane, 2005, Brown, Daly&Leong, 2009).

As a result of a broader phenomenological analysis of mentoring, Roberts (2000) claims that apart from that 1) it is a career and personal development process, 2) it is an active relationship and 4) a reflective practice, among the attributes of mentoring are also: 5) it is a teaching-learning process, 6) it is about helping and 7) it is a role constructed by or for the mentor (p. 151).

In light of mentoring being a process, Gallacher (1997) outlines four general stages in mentoring which are focused on the changes of the content of mentoring interactions and the relationship. She calls the first one 'initiation stage' (Gallacher, 1997, p. 198) and describes the main tasks as building rapport and recognizing the mentee's needs. The second stage is cultivation and includes more efforts towards achieving mentee's goals combined with increased psychosocial support. After that the separation stage comes. Then the mentee becomes more independent and autonomous until the nature of the relationship transforms into what resembles a friendship. The last stage at which the mentor and the mentee behave as equals Gallacher (1997) call the 'redefinition stage' (p. 198). Clutterbuck (2005) also refers to this stage as the phase at which the mentee is able to function effectively without close guidance or support and compares it to the moment when the child becomes independent from the parent.

Moreover, inspired by development approach to mentoring, Clutterbuck (2005) develops a situational model for mentoring and defines four main roles of the mentor at the different stages of the mentoring relationship. In this model the mentee is conceptualized as a learner who has different needs, which can be placed on scale between the need of nurturing and the need for intellectual stretch. The other dimension of the model describes the way the mentor influences the mentee with directive behavior at one end of the scale and non-directive behavior at the opposite end of the scale. As a result, the four roles of the mentor are: 1) A Guardian – directive and nurturing mentor; 2) A Coach – directive and intellectually challenging mentor; 3) A Networker – a mentor who challenges intellectually, but behaves non-directively; 4) A Counselor – nurturing and non-directive mentor. Each of these roles can as well be referred to as a mentoring style. The guardian plays the role of the 'godfather' or someone who acts as a protector, guide and role model. The role of the guardian is generally associated with power. The coach helps the mentee to set reasonable goals, gives objective positive and negative feedback; challenges mentees to extend their boundaries and collaborates with them on the execution of specific tasks. The networker has an extensive list of people and connections which are able to assist mentees to

achieve their goals and catalyses the development of mentee's own network. The counselor enables the mentees to gain an understanding of their own emotions, perceptions, judgments and actions; assists by motivating and by drawing on previous discussions; provides the mentee with a platform to express new ideas and concepts (Clutterback, 1998).It is also important that each of the roles/styles may be more appropriate for a different stage of the mentee's development (Clutterbuck, 2005).

Brown, Dely and Leong (2009) also bring into light the fact that mentors 'promote, demonstrate, and teach' (p. 311) ethical decision-making and appropriate conduct.

Apart from the definitions of mentoring, based on functions and the competencies of the mentors, the stages of the process and the respective mentorship styles, researchers claim that a number of other attributes influence the nature of the specific mentoring relationship (Haggard et al, 2011, Gray, 2010). Haggard et al. (2011) call them 'boundary conditions' and claim that they include the differences between supervisory versus nonsupervisory mentoring, peer mentoring, inside versus outside mentoring, level of intimacy, the duration of the relationship and regularity of interactions. The supervisory mentoring and non-supervisory mentoring are related to the issues of power positions of the mentor and the mentee (Haggard et al, 2011, Fletcher and Ragins, 2007). Peer mentoring suggest more reciprocity in the relationship. The internal mentor and the external mentor are claimed to both belong to the mentee's work environment, but the former is part of the same organization while the mentee works for, while the latter is not (Haggard at al., 2011). Moreover, Gray (2010) even differentiates between mentors-experts and mentor-non-experts in the professional skills that the mentee wants to develop. These two types of mentors provide respectively the specific technical skills the mentee needs or a more general business savvy, which enables the mentee to reflect on the contextual influences and the politics.

The level of intimacy corresponds to the level of emotional sharing and the growing friendship between the mentee and the mentor (Gray, 2010). Engagement is also reported to be a critical antecedent of effective mentoring (Young&Perrewe, 2000).Often authors describe different levels of intimacy and personal engagement by employing the categories of formal and informal where the informal mentoring is related to an increased level of intimacy in the relationships (Baugh and Fagenson-Eland, 2007). Due to the different expectations, requirements, mentoring

structure and the actual actors in the mentoring relationship, formal mentoring is reported to be less likely to result in such a significant level of personal benefits as the informal mentoring.

The outcomes of mentoring relationship are also a subject of interest for researchers. Although different scholars list different benefits from mentoring according to the definitions they use, among the ones that are commonly discussed are skill development and professional competence, increased self-confidence and awareness, more positive attitudes, improved performance, achievements, changes in the remuneration and increased satisfaction for the mentees (Ramaswami&Dreher, 2010, Brown, Daly&Leong, 2009). Kram and Regins (2007) point out that benefits as personal learning, socialization, increased levels of relational competence and transition to higher level of adult development are coupled with long-term health benefits and improved work-family balance. Chao (2007) claims that psychosocial functions shape the mentee's identity.

In general, mentors are believed to set high standards and transfer their tacit knowledge to mentees (Lucky, 2004). Mentor's and mentee's personalities and developmental stages, their interpersonal skills, goals, expectations and engagement, the environment shape the nature of the relationship and different outcomes (Young&Perrewe, 2004). Mentoring can contribute both to more context-specific, short-term learning and to more long-term, context-free learning, usually defined as identity growth and personal adaptability (Lankau and Scandura, 2007). Mentoring relationships based on mutual trust, reciprocity and interdependence are reported to be perceived as more successful (Eby, 2007, Lankau and Scandura, 2007). And since mentee's unique needs and expectations of the dyadic partnership in mentoring are more probably to be met by different kinds of complementary forms of mentorship, researchers and practitioners claim that the mentoring networks, which consist of mentors fulfilling different mentoring functions, competencies and roles, are the only possible development towards more meaningful and effective approach to mentoring (McCauley and Douglas, 2004, Kram and Ragins, 2007, Haggard et al. 2011, Lucky, 2004, Clutterback, 2005, Gray, 2010).

3.3. Coaching

Coutu and Kaufman (2009) describe coaching as a field full of contradictions and coaches as disagreeing on the purposes and process of their work. Griffiths and Campbell (2009) suggest it

has interdisciplinary roots and broad application, but weak foundation due to lack of proper research-based conceptualization. As a result of her literature overview on coaching, Maynard (2007) claims that coaching is ill-defined, very hard to differentiate from other forms of consultation and training, and even used as a less threatening term to substitute consulting and counseling (p. 15 – 17). Furthermore, the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development, London, published a research in 2008 in which claimed that practitioners take advantage of the popularity of the new term and apply it to their general services.

There are, however, researchers and practitioners who try to provide definitions of this so much contested term. Drawing upon the semantic history of the word, coaching is linked to a particular kind of carriage and literally means to convey a person from where one is to where one wants to be (Witherspoon&White, 1996). The International Coach Federation provides a very general definition of coaching as 'partnering with clients in a thought-provoking and creative process that inspires them to maximize their personal and professional potential' (ICF Code of Ethics). Grant (2003) suggests that coaching is 'a collaborative solution-focused, result-oriented and systematic process in which the coach facilitates the enhancement of life experience and goal attainment in the personal and/or professional life' (p.1). Lucky (2004) says that coaching is a process of interaction during which the coach and the client solve performance problems and develop the client's capabilities. He also names the elements of the successful coaching as technical assistance, individual challenging, and personal support (Lucky, 2004).

Drawing upon scientific literature and their research, CIPD (2008) claim that coaching 1) consists of developmental discussions; 2) focuses on improving performance and enhancing individual's skills; 3) may address wide range of issues; 4) works towards client's self-awareness; 5) may include personal issues. Gallacher (1997) focuses on more specific tasks of the coaching process among which include supporting and encouraging, reflection on experiences and emotions, experimenting with approaches and techniques. Maynard (2006) elaborates on the coaching activities and mentions also fostering insight, feedback, planning for the future, analyzing the process decision-making and identifying behavioral patterns. Kilberg (2006) argues that among the main coaching tasks are also increasing tolerance of ambiguity, improving clients' capacity to manage their own career advance, improving clients' ability to manage tensions between different roles and needs of theirs.

Witherspoon and White (1996) outline the role of the coach as one who helps the client to learn, grow and change. They claim that inherent in this role is coaching for acquiring and developing specific skills, coaching for performance and achieving desired results, coaching for development with perspective for future roles, and coaching for achieving one's political agenda (Witherspoon&White, 1996). These roles may require the coach to assist in the process of clarifying theoretical grounds, setting behavioral and quality standards, working on attitudinal and motivational issues, and dealing with the extended environment (Witherspoon&White, 1996).

In a similar vein, Gallacher (1997) differentiates between technical coaching, cognitive coaching and challenge coaching and claims they can be different and complementary. Technical coaching is described as transfer of specific skills. Cognitive coaching is directed towards judgment competencies and the process of decision-making, while challenge coaching is about generating new approaches and solutions.

The competency-based approach to coaching is best enacted in the document describing International Coach Federation (ICF) Core Competencies (2011). They frame the role of the coach employing extensive list of competencies. In short, these competencies include: ability to build a contract and set boundaries; establishing trust and intimacy by empathy, support and integrity; ability to be fully conscious and aware including work with strong emotions; communicating effectively including mirroring, paraphrasing, reinforcing; powerful questioning; creating awareness; designing actions; planning and goal-setting; ability to hold attention and to leave responsibility with the client to take action.

In line with the competency-based approach, CIPD (2008) also report 16 general coaching competences: self-awareness and self-knowledge; clear and effective communication skills (verbal and non-verbal); relationship-building skills (including ability to establish rapport); flexibility of approach; listening and questioning skills; ability to design an effective coaching process; ability to assist goal development and setting; ability to motivate; ability to encourage new perspectives; ability to assist in making sense of a situation; ability to identify significant

patterns of thinking and behaving; ability to challenge and give feedback; ability to establish trust and respect; ability to facilitate depth of understanding; ability to promote action; ability to build.

Outlined by the coaching competences, the coaching relationship is claimed to be characterized by reliability, reciprocity, helping, learning, self-revelation, trust and respect (Maynard, 2006, Kilburg, 2006). Lucky (2004) places the emotional relationship in the heart of the coaching process and argues it is the link between all coaching elements, while Kilburg (2006) focuses on the environment it provides for open and honest expressions of the client's thoughts and emotions. Askeland (2009) describes the coaching relationship as a formative one. And Maynard (2006) claims that its main attribute is 'commitment towards self-initiated change and continued growth' (p. 50).

Maynard (2006) proposes a summarized model of the process of coaching as a result of her extensive coaching literature overview. She claims it starts with establishing the relationship/partnership, continues with definition and agreement of goals and goes through insight development and/or action learning.

Theoretically informed by a developmental approach, Kegan and Lahey (2009) refer to a five-stage model of cognitive development and link its three stages of adults' development to the coaching process. They argue that the coach can facilitate further development either at the level of the socialized mind, the level of self-authoring mind or the level of self-transforming mind, or can support the transitions between different levels. Therefore, the coaches should adapt their behavior according to the client's goals at a certain developmental stage or their goals for transition between stages. This is a client-centered approach, which takes into consideration that the clients at the plateau of the socialized mind are shaped through the process of socialization and alignment to 'schools of thought' or referents in their environment; the clients at the plateau of self-authoring mind create their own ideologies and set boundaries on behalf of their own beliefs; the clients at the plateau of self-transforming mind work through the contradictions of multiple ideologies and enact them into a dialectical completeness instead of choosing between them (Kegan&Lahey, 2009). Kegan and Lahey (2001) suggest a constructivist approach in which the coach chooses what and how to address in words in order to be able to facilitate the client's sense-making and consequent observable change in the behavior. They distinguish between

'technical challenges' and 'adaptive challenges' and describe the former as challenges at the current stage of mental development and the latter as challenges of advancing to more sophisticated stage (Kegan&Lahey, 2009, p. 29).

Following a similar line of argumentation, Brockbank (2008) constructs a model of four coaching approaches each of which is characterized by a different source of purpose and specific learning outcomes. The functionalist coaching is based on objectivistic assumptions and aims at preserving equilibrium through socialization as a source of improved performance. The engagement coaching is inspired by humanism and subjectivism and seeks to preserve the status-quo by altering the client's disposition. The revolutionary coaching strives to reflect the mistaken ideas of the individual by objectivist persuasion and argumentation in order to achieve transformation in the environment, while the evolutionary coaching challenges the environment by generating ownership of construction of the client's reality. Since these four approaches or styles of coaching have different outcomes, they also employ different kinds of activities during the coaching process. They are respectively the following: instruction and training in the functionalist approach; confirmation of underlying values and persuasion in the engagement approach; recognizing personal emotions, eliciting individual solutions and promoting client's own desires in the evolutionary approach; and transforming individuals beliefs in the revolutionary approach (Brockbank, 2008).

Apart from the mentioned by Brockbank (2008) key outcomes of coaching – socialization, change in dispositions and beliefs, improved performance, Kilburg (2006) claims that among the outcomes are also improved resilience and decreased stress. Maynard (2006) summarized the outcomes mentioned in the literature she researched in the following list: increased self-awareness, growth, skills improvement, improved self-efficacy, increased levels of motivation and performance, goal focus, increased ability to balance personal and professional life, increased ability to successfully cope with change or turmoil, health improvement, character shifts, financial gains.

In general, coaching is a learning relationship that helps people 'to take control of their own learning' (Gray, 2010, p. 61). Researchers and practitioners differentiate between various kinds of coaching - internal and external coaching, peer coaching, individual and team coaching, on-

the-job coaching, career coaching, executive coaching, coaching for entrepreneurs – each of which happens in different environment and with presumably different goals (Gray, 2010, Maynard, 2006). In all of the kinds of coaching, however, feedback is seen central for the learning and change. And although the context and the particular topics may differ, the coaching theoretical grounds may significantly vary as well as the particular coaching techniques employed, going through a coaching relationship is continuously reported to result in affective, cognitive and behavioral changes (Kilburg, 2006, Kegan&Lahey, 2009, Maynard, 2007, Lucky, 2004).

3.4. Summary and Theoretical Analysis

In the previous sections I have presented the concepts of supervision, mentoring and coaching as developmental processes. To this purpose I have referred to different definitions and reflected various approaches to listing the activities employed in supervision, coaching and mentoring through functions, competencies and roles. I have also shed light upon conceptualizations of supervision, coaching and mentoring based on developmental theories and the respective stages of the process or a supervisee's, a mentee's or a coaching client's development. The present section is dedicated to theoretical analysis of these three concepts, their intersections, the difficulty of delineating them and the challenges academics and practitioners face due to the poor conceptualization.

In an attempt to demonstrate the specifics and the essence of supervision, coaching and mentoring, I have summarized what is claimed in literature to be the core activities employed in these processes and the defining characteristics of these three different relationships. The result of this summary is presented in Table 1.

Supervision	Mentoring	Coaching
Assessing performance	Support	Technical assistance
Providing job-related instructions	Guidance	Challenging

Supervision	Mentoring	Coaching
Promoting performance standards	Advice	Personal support
Dealing with morale, job satisfaction and emotions	Coaching	Creating awareness and self-awareness
Dealing with difficult issues and boundary issues	Challenging	Promoting reflection
Promoting ethical standards	Promoting professional and personal standards	Promoting experimentation
Conceptualizing	Promoting ethical decision-making	Feedback
Linking theory and practice	Conceptual modeling	Analysis
Giving feedback	Linking observation to broader context	Clarifying theoretical frameworks
Role-modeling	Giving feedback	Setting behavioral and quality standards
Mediating	Sharing experience	Dealing with emotions, morale, environment
Mentoring	Role modeling	Transferring skills
Coaching	Coaching	Encouraging
Support	Promoting reflection	Goal-setting
Encouragement	Transferring tacit knowledge	Developing judging competences and decision-making
Providing specific input, directions, advice	Challenging	Generating new ideas
Challenging	Exposure	Feedback
Confronting	Protection	Listening
Promoting awareness and self-awareness	Questioning	Questioning
Exploring personal issues	Listening	Mirroring
	Nurturing	Sense-making
	Supporting goal-setting	
	Catalyzing network development	
	Collaborating on specific tasks	
	Teaching	
	Dealing with motivational an emotional issues	

Supervision	Mentoring	Coaching
Relationship	Relationship	Relationship
A learning relationship	A learning relationship	A learning relationship
Growth fostering	Growth fostering	Growth
Trust	Rapport	Trust
Empathy	Trust	Intimacy
Transparency	Reciprocity	Reciprocity
	Friendship	Rapport
		Respect
		Empathy`

Table 1

Table 1 shows that the variability of descriptions of coaching, mentoring and supervision is reducible to two main types of activities. Mentoring, coaching and supervision are forms of support that employ activities with *instrumental* and *expressive* value (Molloy, 2005). In all three types of relationships there are activities which are related to professional and quality standards, job-related knowledge and skills, performance issues, moral choices and sense-making informed by appropriate theoretical frameworks. These activities have instrumental value, because they serve the purpose of achieving the individuals' professional goals (Molloy, 2005). Apart from the instrumental activities, the summary also shows that there are activities that encompass dealing with personal issues, emotions, morale, creating self-awareness and personal support. In accordance with Molloy (2005), I refer to them as expressive activities. Feedback, questioning, listening, challenging, sharing experience and role-modeling are means for performing both instrumental and expressive activities depending on the content they are focused upon. For the purposes of the present paper, I call these activities-means generic activities.

The overview of the literature proposed in the present paper demonstrates that concepts of supervision, coaching and mentoring revolve around instrumental and expressive activities and their outcomes and provide more proofs of the similarities between the three developmental approaches than grounds for distinction. The summary in Table 1 shows that most of the instrumental, expressive and generic activities employed in mentoring, supervision and coaching are the same. Few activities of a generic nature that do not overlap in the conceptualizations of supervision, coaching and mentoring include mediating, confronting, mirroring and sharing

experience. In addition, exposure, protection and catalyzing the development of networks, which have instrumental value, seem to be descriptive only for the mentoring process.

Researchers and practitioners make efforts to delineate coaching from mentoring, mentoring from supervision and supervision from coaching as developmental relationships. By trying to achieve truthful distinctions they aim to provide basis for future research and valid scientific argumentation in what context and to what purposes one of these dyadic partnerships is more adequate to be employed than another one (Gray, 2010, Lucky, 2004, Gallacher, 1997). Since this research aim to shed light upon mentoring, coaching and supervision for independent management consultants', I consider it important how these approaches are distinguished in literature, so that independent management consultants can choose the more adequate one for their situations and purposes. In view of the result of my summary showing there is not distinction between coaching, mentoring and supervision concepts in the literature, it is important to discuss existing attempts for clear-cut distinctions between mentoring and supervision, coaching and supervision and coaching and mentoring.

3.4.1. Mentoring and Supervision

Gray (2010) identifies the overlaps between mentoring and supervision in both instrumental and expressive activities. He claims that both developmental relationships provide coaching and teaching, role modeling, offer acceptance, confirmation and work with emotions. Mentoring, however, is reported to provide protection, challenging assignments, sponsorship, exposure and friendship, which Gray (2010) claims that does not refer to supervision. Similarly, supervision in contrast to mentoring promotes reflection and sharing of theoretical models, tools and techniques, attends to unconscious processes, challenges practices, espouses values and promotes ethics (Gray, 2010).

Different conceptualizations of mentoring and supervision, however, blur the differentiations Gray (2010) makes. Brown, Dely and Leong (2009) claim the mentors also espouse values and promote ethics. Clutterback and Lane (2005) include conceptual modeling as one of the key mentoring competences. Furthermore, Clutterback (1998) describes one of the roles of the mentor to be focused on challenging practices and sharing specific skills and another one to be the role of the counselor. Caroll (2006) describes the consultative supervision more as a professional

friendship than as a relationship based on power imbalance. In 2006 Rock and Garavan even report that in mentoring literature in Europe sponsoring and protection tend to be regarded as 'unacceptable within the mentor's role' (p. 340). Smith (2005) points out the role of the supervisor in encouraging and promoting constructive relationships between the supervisees and other people in the professional environment.

Thus, analysis of the different theoretical perspectives towards supervision and mentoring prove distinctions between them feeble. Moreover, Smith's (2005) view on the role of the supervisor in facilitating relationships in the professional community also refutes my conclusion that catalyzing the development of networks is an activity only characteristic for the mentoring process. In addition, Rock and Garavan (2006) demonstrate that exposure and protection cannot be considered distinctive characteristics of the mentoring process compared to supervision.

Furthermore, the overlaps and complementarities of mentoring and supervision are so obvious and beneficial for both processes that Gray (2010) proposes an integrated model which encourages the mentors and supervisors to aim at holistic relationships with their mentees and supervisees which possess all the characteristics of mentoring and supervision. He calls it 'transformational supervision' (Gray, 2010, p. 67).

3.4.2. Coaching and Supervision

Busse (2009) conceptualize the difference between coaching and supervision as the difference between 'reflexive and instrumental logic of action' (p. 164). He, however, continues to describe supervisory experiences which prove that supervision 'has to be possible under conditions of limited reflection and capacity for action.' (p. 170). Combined with the fact that both coaching and supervision are implemented via instrumental and expressive activities, it is even more evident that supervision and coaching are only discursively differentiated in order to create a context of conflict driven by competition (Busse, 2009).

3.4.3. Coaching and Mentoring

In the research and practitioners' literature there are numerous descriptions of the differences between coaching and mentoring. For example, Lucky (2004) and The Chartered Institute of

Personnel and Development, UK (2008) claim that mentoring is a more long-term process which takes the broader view on the person, while coaching is more short-term process focusing on specific issues at work. Opposing these claims, Lankau and Scandura (2007) give examples that mentoring may be either long-term or short-term and focusing either on context-specific issues or broader topics. Moreover, Brockbank (2008) and Maynard (2007) report that the coaching relationship may have different duration depending on the goals it is supposed to achieve and the developmental stage of the client.

Lucky (2004) also claims that in the mentoring process the responsibility for learning and development lies within the mentee, while it is a responsibility of the coach in the coaching relationship. Gray (2010), however, explicitly states as one of the main characteristics of coaching that clients 'take control of their own learning' (p. 61).

The Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (2008) also point out that the mentor is supposed to be more experienced and qualified than the mentee, while the coach does not need to have direct experience with what is discussed during the process. In contrast, Gray (2010) differentiates between the mentor-expert and the mentor-non-expert and give example how all mentoring functions can be successfully performed by both types of mentors. Furthermore, Lucky (2004) describes the technical assistance, which requires expert knowledge and experience, as one of the main elements of coaching, while Brockbank (2008) demonstrates that the coach employing an evolutionary approach does not engage in giving expert advice or training specific skills. Denying any differences based on expert/non-expert basis, Murray and Owen (1991) believe that coaching is the essence of the mentoring process.

In short, mentoring and coaching may take the form of long- or short-term processes, may focus either on context-specific or broader issues and may or may not require some expertise in the professional subject-matter from the coach and the mentor. Neither of these factors differentiates between the two processes.

In the discussion of differences between coaching and mentoring, however, for the first time the characteristics of the relationship between a coach/mentor and a coaching client/mentee are brought to the fore. Since this may prove to be a line of distinction between all three processes, I

consider it necessary more focused attention to be paid to the nature of the coaching relationship, the mentoring relationship and the supervisory relationship.

The summary in Table 1 demonstrates that supervision, and coaching and mentoring are conceptualized as learning and growth-fostering relationships (Pack, 2009, Maynard, 2006, Gallacher, 1997). Trust is claimed to be central for the developmental value of all three relationships. Other characteristics as empathy, transparency, reciprocity and interdependency are also emphasized. Supervision and mentoring are claimed to be professional friendships, and coaching is sometimes claimed to be characterized by intimacy. Drawing upon the view that friendship is more personal/intimate relationship, I conclude that all three relationships involve open and personal interaction on personal and/or professional topics.

The present summary and analysis based on the literature overview demonstrate that there exists some confusion about what coaching, mentoring and supervision consists of and what the distinctions between coaching, mentoring and supervision are. Drawing upon different theoretical traditions, areas of application and promotion efforts, differentiations between supervision, coaching and mentoring seem to be usually factitious and stemming from political and/or marketing discourse. Each of the processes of mentoring, coaching and supervision can be employed with different purposes and may include specific activities in line with the actual issues and developmental needs. Thence, coaching, mentoring and supervision emerge as alternative or complementary interventions that can have the same, similar or different purposes.

The theoretical concepts of supervision, coaching and mentoring overlap unequivocally. Since none of the differentiations between mentoring and supervision, supervision and coaching and coaching and mentoring proves substantial and viable, it seems the current literature overview proffers a view on coaching, mentoring and supervision as developmental relationships which are only conceived as different concepts because of the various goals or perspectives of the researchers and practitioners proposing the respective conceptualization. Therefore, at the current state of theoretical conceptualization of coaching, mentoring and supervision, any claims how any of these three approaches distinctively contributes to learning and professional development should be regarded biased or partial. Furthermore, due to limited research on the topic,

independent management consultants' professional development is a field which generally lacks clarity.

Additional empirical research on supervision, coaching and mentoring and on independent management consultants' professional development is necessary. To address these concerns, this thesis builds on the existing literature and investigates the lived experience of independent management consultants' supervision, coaching and mentoring. The next chapter is dedicated to the empirical findings and analysis of the practices of mentoring, supervision and coaching for independent management consultants. It aims at better understanding of these three approaches in the context of independent management consultants' professional development.

4. EMPIRICAL FINDINGS, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter comprises the present study's empirical findings, their thematic structural analysis and broader interpretation.

Prior to any detailed analysis, I listened to the interviews for the sense of the 'whole'. It demonstrated that supervision, coaching and mentoring are relationships are based on and initiated because of the needs of the independent consultants as coaching clients, mentees and supervisees. Supervision, coaching and mentoring emerged as processes of growth for both parties and include open communication and interpretations on personal and professional challenges. My listening for the sense of the whole also revealed that independent management consultants can take different perspectives on the same process and call it both supervision and mentoring. Moreover, coaching, mentoring and supervision are described in the same vein. During the process of transcription I listened and re-listened to every interview in order to identify the parts that concerned any experience related to professional development. Contrary to my pre-understanding and expectation that supervision, coaching and mentoring could be delineated in lived experience, listening for the sense of the whole and repetitive listening for transcription contributed to my confusion about the distinctions between coaching, mentoring and supervision. Therefore, I decided on approaching the thematic structural analysis following Rock

and Garavan's (2006) example and referring to coaching, mentoring and supervision as 'developmental process' and 'developmental relationship'. Correspondingly, coach, mentor and supervisor in the present chapter are signified by the more general term 'developer', while coaching client, mentee and supervisee are denominated by the newly introduced term 'developee'.

8 major themes were generated from the data. The following text aims to presents their essence and discussion. It finishes with overall interpretation of the empirical findings and their meaning.

4.1. Taking Responsibility for Learning

Independent management consultants revealed in their narratives that learning is the meaning and the objective of their developmental processes.

I told him I wanted to learn in details what he does. (Developee)

Because of these conversations with my [developer] I grew and became an organizational consultant. ... I learned more about the organizational consulting through the work with my [developer] than through the direct work with the clients... learning experience, learning by practicing (Developee)

In research literature learning is also recognized to be inherent in the processes of coaching, mentoring and supervision (Maynard, 2006, Griffiths and Campbell, 2009, Stoltenberg, 2005). Lankau and Scandura (2007) claim that '... significant learning involves personal development and change in behavior, attitudes, or even the dispositions of the learner'(p. 2), but point out that researches generally focus on how people acquire technical job knowledge and declarative and procedural information.

The specific way in which consultants talked about their experience indicated that they make sense of learning in terms of professional development. For them learning includes knowledge sharing, experience sharing, reflection and analysis, conclusions, acquiring and developing skills, changing one's behavior and facing personal challenges. Technical job knowledge and procedural information, however, are not of primary interest for the interviewees in the study.

They take for granted that these two aspects are dealt with in the developmental relationships and focus on the changes in behavior, attitudes and dispositions in what they also see as an inductive developmental process (Griffiths and Campbell, 2009).

According to Witherspoon and White (1996) the essence of a dyadic developmental process is action learning, which includes making decisions for action, implementing the action and continuous monitoring and evaluation of the results. Correspondingly, interviewees' accounts have disclosed the developees have insights during developee-developer conversations on intentions, goals and decisions, specific actions and reactions, results and their interpretations, which unequivocally indicates that the learning by doing approach is employed in the developmental processes under study.

Describing the learning process more in details, most researchers employ Kram's (1985) career and psychosocial functions or the instrumental and expressive activities described by Molloy (2005). The former categories include activities directed towards achieving developees' professional goals, while the latter encompass dealing with personal issues, emotions, morale, creating self-awareness and personal support. Identifying the limitations of dividing instrumental and expressive activities, Gray (2010) proposes an integrated transformational model and urges the developers to employ more holistic approach to their relationships with developees. Likewise, all interviewees in the present study share the understanding that professional development is achieved through work on personal challenges and issues. Gray (2010), however, points out that the transformational developmental processes are characterized by increased closeness and friendship, which may lead to complications with intimacy and boundary concerns. In accordance, the themes of trust and friendship and power have been also revealed as central in the lived experience of the interviewees. I will further elaborate on these two themes in the following sections.

Lucky (2004) claims that there are effective developmental processes in which the developer takes the responsibility for the developee's advancement. This means that the developer is the proactive partner in the relationship. Opposing Lucky's view, developees in the present study have reported that they are the proactive party that takes the whole responsibility for their own development.

...utter freedom and letting the [developee] take the whole responsibility for her learning. There has never been a moment when he has been proactive in making me do something. He has always encouraged me, but never said 'now you should…'. It has always been my initiative. (Developee)

...the responsibility for choosing a topic … is mine. I can show the session with a client that I believe is my best one and I can show my worst one. The [developer] works with what you propose. It is material you want to work on. (Developee)

According to the developees, they take the initiative for starting a developmental process and they choose which objectives to aim at in a developmental process. Objectives are usually implicit and change according to developee's needs at the different stages of the process, but developees claim that they engage in developmental processes only if they feel in charge. Thus, interviewees support Griffiths and Campbell's (2009) recommendation to the developers to hold the developees accountable and to leave them take actions on their own initiative.

4.2. Sustaining Trust and Friendship

In addition to describing the developmental relationship as a learning partnership, Maynard (2006) argues trust is among its primary characteristics. The ability to establish trust is mentioned as a basic competence that every developer is required to possess (Pack, 2009, ICF, 2011, CIPD, 2008, Eby, 2007, Lankau and Scandura, 2007, Maynard, 2006). Correspondingly, the theme for trust was implicitly or explicitly mentioned in all the interviews as a crucial prerequisite in order the relationship to be at all addressed as meaningful and a developmental one.

There are two persons meeting and the transformation is possible because of the trust between them and the interpersonal chemistry (Developee)

While in the literature on developmental relationships establishing trust is considered to be one of the first stages of the developmental process, interviewees' lived experiences in the present study have revealed that when the developmental relationship is initiated trust already exists between the independent management consultants and their developers. Moreover, in contrast with the widespread idea that developers are the ones to maintain the trust (Pack, 2009, ICF, 2011, CIPD,

2008, Eby, 2007), my findings indicate that developers tend to only support people they trust. Interviewed developers have shared that they usually know their developees personally or at least have information in advance, so that they can commit with trust to the developmental relationship.

The degree of informality was also particularly referred to. While a more formal relationship was linked to a more *structured*, *businesslike* and *professional* interaction, the more informal relationship was claimed to be *undefined* and *intuitive*. Concerning the informal relationships, Baugh and Fagenson-Eland (2007) comment that '[t]hese exchanges could appear to an observer to be casual meetings, although it is likely that the members of the dyad have established their own norms with respect to appropriate meeting configurations' (p. 237). In accordance, informants have also described informal developmental relationships as *voluntary*, emotional and *personal* encounters and claimed they are more beneficial compared to the formal ones to the degree that the latter were pronounced worthless. These findings correspond to Eby's (2007) understanding that informal relationships are more resilient to the potentially negative effects of relational problems and to Baugh and Fagenson-Eland's (2007) conclusion that informal developmental relationships are more long-lasting than the limited in time formal ones.

I had an assigned [developer] who was supposed to take care of my professional development. But we did not actually do anything together. She was my formal [developer]… It was unsuccessful because we … did not choose each other voluntarily … At the beginning we established trust and nothing happened after that (Developee)

While this independent management consultant denied any possibility for a formal developmental process to contribute to his professional development, another one appreciated the structure and the predictability innate to a formal process. Baugh and Fagenson-Eland (2007) demonstrate that the formal relationships have their advantages in organizational context where the relationship contributes to achieving the organizational goals and the informal ones are driven by the needs and desires of the developee and the developer. Therefore, independent management consultants who do not belong to any employing professional body naturally tend to initiate informal relationships. My findings also reveal that when developees choose their developers *voluntarily,* they select them so that the relationship is informal and even based on friendship. In research this phenomenon is linked to Kram and Ragins' (2007) observation that the continuum

formal/informal mentoring overlaps with the quality continuum. The more informal relationships are considered to be with higher quality, usually due to similarities between developers and developee which influence the frame of reference the shared understandings are consequently based on. Since the theme for frame of reference may shed more light upon the significance of the informality and it is another major theme revealed by the empirical findings, I will further discuss it in deeper detail.

Kilburg (2006) claims that friendship is the basic form of a helping relationship and there are not any clear lines dividing a friendship and a developmental relationship. Similarly, in independent management consultants' lived experiences friendship between the developer and the developee emerged as both a foundation and an outcome of the developmental process.

I have some friends that have been friends of mine for more than 20 years and they are in the same professional area. .... I feel free [to discuss with them], whenever there is something that is in my mind ... everything is informal ... Every time we go through certain subtopics of the discussion. I have this approach that I need to clarify the goals and how goals of an intervention correspond to the current situation. With these discussions these friends provide me with [development]... (Developee)

We are friends and even more than friends. Our relationship became friendship during the [developmental] process (Developee)

Friendship encompasses the personal engagement with the developmental process each of the participants demonstrate, their acceptance of each other and the supportive nature of the relationship (Baugh and Fagenson-Eland, 2007, Kram and Ragins, 2007). The interviewees reported that friendship with the developers mainly contributes to developees' professional development, but it also reaches beyond it and may concern other areas of developees' lives. With regard to friendship, Gray (2010) warns that, on one hand, intimacy can be unproductive and boundaries can be crossed. On the other hand, he gives examples how desire to avoid complications may also have negative impact on the learning relationship. In the present research, however, the positive aspect of the friendship between developees and developers was acknowledged to be a part of the essence of an independent consultant's developmental relationship. Interviewees' accounts demonstrated that developees and developers feel free to

continue or quit the developmental processes at any time according to their respective needs. They focused on the benefits of being friends with their developers and did not make any implicit or explicit references to negative impact of a developer-developee friendship on the developmental process.

4.3. Sharing Frames of Reference

The theme of the frame of reference in a developmental process emerged through two sub-themes – the theoretical/methodological background and the experience of the parties.

McManus and Russell (2010) note that similarities between the developee and the developer are related to increase in positive reports on vocational support, psychosocial support, role modeling and satisfaction with the developmental relationship. They demonstrate that these similarities could be either demographic or attitudinal – in terms of perceived intelligence, personality, ambition, education and methodological approaches to work. Building upon McManus and Russell's findings, the informants in the present study claimed that a developmental process happens only when people have common theoretical and methodological background.

We have the same background. And I think that this is a little bit limiting and self-soothing. On the other hand, in my opinion, in order to have this [developmental process]… you and the other people have to work in the same framework. (Developee)

I only [develop] people [working] in the same paradigm. … Concerning the approach and the methodology we use … we [totally agree]. There is one approach and one methodology, another one does not exist [for us]. (Developer)

The interviewees reported that common background and shared theoretical frameworks serve as a basis for the communication between developers and developees as they employ the same paradigm and the same terminology to make sense of words and behavior. Moreover, interviewees recognized that the skills to conceptualize when analyzing the problems and making decisions for appropriate intervention are mainly acquired in a developmental relationship, which have to be based on common theoretical grounds (Holloway, 1995). Drawing from a formal body of knowledge, however, is not how management consultants primarily approach their work.

They rather use fragmented scientific knowledge from diverse fields and 'accumulated knowledge of varying management situations' (Alvesson and Johansson, 2002, p. 230). Thence, experience sometimes proves more important than formal knowledge base.

Implicitly acknowledging this situation, both developers and developees referred to previous experience as a frame of reference and a source of mutuality and reciprocity. Sometimes but not necessarily linked to giving advice, experience was disclosed as a prerequisite for analysis and sense-making. Taking into consideration that developmental processes are processes of action learning (Witherspoon and White, 1996), independent management consultants regard experience coupled with conscious observation and analysis the source of learning and development.

I need somebody who has similar experience as mine, who has gone through the same anxieties. ... Otherwise, I feel I am like a strange bird. I [also] need [a developer] in order to use her experience instead of re-inventing the wheel. (Developee)

While Gallacher (1997) defines that a developmental relationship includes a more experienced developer and a less experienced developee, other researchers depict developmental relationships in which neither of the parties is assumed to have more experience than the other (Kram and Ragins, 2010). Independent management consultants' accounts partially contribute to shedding light upon this issue by claiming that stories about experience are in the core of the developmental process (Marx, 2009). My interviewees shared stories in which they looked for support from generally less experienced colleague or switched roles between developers and developees. Thence, their accounts showed the fluidity in the developmental relationships which includes the ability to move easily between expert and non-expert role and give credit to others without losing one's self-esteem (Fletcher and Ragins, 2007).

In accordance with traditional views on developmental relationships, interviewees linked experience to the professional status and the authority of the developer/the developee (Fletcher and Ragins, 2007).

4.4. Power

All the informants explicitly or implicitly disclosed the theme of power in the developer-developee relationship. The sub-themes more explicitly mentioned are *status* and *authority*.

In the discourse on learning and development that informants employed, it is embedded that developers possess experience, knowledge, self-perception, status, authority etc. that developees want to achieve or at least come closer to (Fletcher and Ragins, 2007). This perception results in power differential inherent in the relationship. It allows the developer and the developee to obtain their respective roles and hierarchical power positions. In addition to influencing the way developers and developees shape their dyadic relationships, management consultants shared that such perceptions are projected in a broader social context and, thus, reinforce the power differential.

Not only did developees claim the developers have higher status and more authority when a relationship starts, but they also revealed their own efforts to gain more power at different stages of the developmental process. This revelation corresponds to Kilburg's (1997) observation that in developmental relationship developees often work towards meeting their needs for power, social recognition and prestige.

One of the people [developers]… was a trainer in the first two trainings [in my life] when I was a co-trainer. My first imprinting was with her… And one of them was a university teacher of mine (Developee)

The second stage that lasted very long was to build my own authority. … I was in his shadow. He has a very powerful presence and my authority was lost. So the second stage was to build my authority – first as my own attitude and self-perception, then to achieve it behaviorally. (Developee)

One of the informants reported that in a developmental relationship the developee adopts the developer's patterns of thinking and behavior. It is a process of socialization and role-modeling in which the developee strives for achieving a more powerful position (Kram and Ragins, 2010, Marx, 2009). Changes in the power differential in the dyad, as a consequence, shape new power positions for the developer and the developee in their professional context.

They make a position for themselves at the moment when we start talking the same language, when we start intervening in the same way. Then they make position for themselves, but it takes a lot of effort. (Developer)

As opposed to the propositions described by Fletcher and Ragins (2007) where developers and developees need to be willing and able to put aside hierarchical roles and experience the relationship as a place of mutual vulnerability, the interviewees referred to this power imbalance as a permanent characteristic of the relationship, although the power differential decreases in time. However, independent management consultants acknowledged the value of the mutual vulnerability in the developmental relationship and gave examples that show both parties' abilities 'to admit not knowing, to seek help and expertise with no loss of self-esteem' (Fletcher and Ragins, 2007, p. 10). Therefore, a case could be made that independent consultants' developmental processes are also characterized by fluidity in the power imbalance.

4.5. Giving and Receiving Feedback

All informants emphasized that feedback have a critical role in the developmental process. Feedback has been reported to concern developee's analysis, points of view, decisions, intentions and behaviors. In accordance with Gallacher (1997) and Clutterback and Lane (2005), interviewees claimed it supports and fosters reflection, increases their awareness and changes their attitudes and behavior.

Then there was a conversation between the client and the consultant followed by a feedback session about how we felt and what we perceived. The observer gave feedback on the general atmosphere of the conversation, which words were especially strong, the body language. ... Since it was a learning process we were very open and it was very important for us to hear how it looks from outside. (Developee)

Denton and Hasbrouck (2009) claim that a development process is characterized by an observation and feedback cycle. Correspondingly, informants reported that feedback is a result of both direct and indirect observations. Direct observation happens when the developer and developee have the opportunity to experience the situation at the same time or the developer listens or sees a recording. Indirect observation was claimed to include developee's accounts of

past situations. Both types of observation allow focused and *eyes-opening* feedback, but in contrast with indirect observation, direct observation provides more evidence-based feedback. Some of the informants expressed their opinion that direct observation provides more meaningful feedback.

The other main difference is that during my first [development process] everything I shared, what I was giving as facts was selected in a very subjective way depending on what I was seeing as important. Nowadays I hand in recorded session and the [developer] has the opportunity to built understanding about the situation by himself (Developee)

[It is] only possible in the context. Just meeting in order to share cases is not working for me. (Developer)

Feedback was also reported as a means for validation of developee's sense-making and interpretations, goals, decisions, approaches, even the propriety of one's emotions. Researchers use the term formative feedback to denote the effect this kind of validation has on the developees (Gallacher, 1997), while informants linked it directly to the quality of their work.

Sometimes, I know what and how to do. I have done it many times before, but it is better if you have somebody to discuss with. And every time I have the opportunity, I call somebody. Event for five minutes I tell somebody what I do and what the situation is. Just to validate it for myself. (Developee)

In accordance with Maynard (2006), the way the developers give their feedback was referred to as a personal style. The informants give examples of direct/indirect feedback and pointed out that it can include observations, interpretations, advice, confirmation and evaluation.

4.6. Reciprocally Motivating

Independent management consultants revealed that motivation is another major theme in a developmental process in dyads. Both developers and developees claimed that being in such a relationship increases their motivation.

On one hand, developees received the opportunity to undertake a quest towards finding the roots of their motivation (Smith, 2005) or just make use of the developer as a form of external control and, thus, a source of extrinsic motivation.

One of the topics that was very long time alive for me was whether there was a point at all in doing organizational consulting or it was an illusion, an intellectual effort that was pleasure for the consultant but did not bring any benefit for the management or the organization. This was especially important ... I had a lot of moments when I reconsidered my motivation to do this kind of work and the benefits. (Developee)

I have had some situations when I have been overloaded and it has had immediate impact on my motivation and I have slubbered. When a person knows that there is external control, that one has to go to [the developer] and to tell what happened, then [it is different] (Developee)

On the other hand, developers reported they are generally more motivated when working in a dyadic developmental relationship.

When I have a co-referent [a developee], I am very motivated to work. I do things that I do not do when I am alone. This is my Ego. I do not need to prove myself to the clients, but I prove myself to [the developee]. (Developer)

These findings of the present research are in line with Fletcher and Ragins' (2007) claims that one of the main sources of motivation in the developmental process is the mutuality in the growth-fostering interactions and their outcomes. Independent management consultants revealed that developees and developers prove themselves to the other party in the relationship and this dynamic increases their feelings of worth.

4.7. Dealing with Emotions and Boundaries

Anxiety, fear and dissociating oneself from the clients' emotional experiences emerged as the sub-themes of the theme on emotions and boundaries in the informants' stories.
Developees reported fear and anxiety as a prime challenge in their work as independent consultants and a major issue during the developmental process.

I had very strong apprehensions and anxiety. For example, one whole morning I plucked up courage to say something [in front of the clients]. This is the level of anxiety I am talking about … The first and most important thing I tried to do, and he [the developer] encouraged me to do, was to overcome my fear and to try doing something. (Developee)

Stoltenberg (2005) links anxiety to the early stages of work with clients and developees' focus on their own behavior, thoughts and emotions. Interviewees in the present study partly disputed this view by sharing that episodes of anxiety in professional context exist in their lives even after years of professional experience. And they partly verified Stoltenberg's claims by telling stories which paint the picture of overcoming anxiety by switching their attention from their own experiences and thoughts to the client. For example, one of the developees and his developer shared that the moment they realized that the developee was focused on his own thoughts and emotions was a breakthrough moment that resulted in rapid expansion of the developmental process.

The empirical findings demonstrate that developers are available and provide safe environment where emotions can be expressed openly. In accordance with researchers observations (Pack, 2005, Maynard, 2006), they show empathy, acknowledge emotions, support developees' processing of emotions and encourage reflection on the boundaries between professional relationships and personal relationships in a professional context. Developers, however, tend to focus on the professional context and do not tend to take further steps into linking emotional conditions to unconscious psychological conflicts, defense mechanisms or neurotic trends (Maynard, 2006).

These are very personal issues. I am not a therapist. It is far more important for me to know how the person feels, what his/her emotions are and in what way I can help him/her to dissociate from these emotions, and how to separate them from what happens. For me this is the core. … We separate the personal issues and the professional role ... It is not easy to achieve that – it is very difficult (Developer)

In the present study work on boundaries was referred to as work on the extent to which emotions are to be acted upon in a professional role. Kram and Ragins (2007) argue that developers serve as role models to the developees how adeptly to manage their emotions in a professional context.

In addition, my research shows that developers are also seen as the agents providing opportunities for releasing emotions that cannot be expressed in professional setting.

I could only share with my [developer]. Because of my role I could not even discuss my experiences with the people in the organization. It was difficult because I had to keep everything for myself, while the others around me had the opportunity to discuss and ease up. (Developee)

As a consequence, developees argued that dyadic developmental relationships prevent stress and contribute to overcoming loneliness inherent in the professional role (Pack, 2005).

Independent management consultants also linked emotions and boundaries to moral choices and ethical issues.

It is about the emotional support I receive and the ethical issues – and these are related. If my behavior is unethical, then I have a lot of emotions to overcome. (Developee)

4.8. Making Use of Developmental Networks

Higgins and Kram (2001) argue that developmental relationships does not exist one at a time, but they usually are parts of developmental constellations or networks than include more than one developmental relationship happening simultaneously. The independent management consultants who took part in the present study reflected this viewpoint by mentioning the theme of a developmental network in all accounts of dyadic developmental relationships.

In accordance with McCauley and Douglas (2004) who claim that 'It is unlikely that one person can provide all the roles needed… there are just too many diverse roles for one person to handle with them all, and no one person should be burdened with all those expectations… exposure to breadth of viewpoints and experiences is important and overdependence on one individual can actually limit a person's career progression' (p. 94), interviewees recognized the impossible omnipotence and omniscience of one single person to able to provide support in every professionally challenging situation.

There are other people apart from these three. The circle is broader…. I realized that from different people I can receive different kind of support. Also, I have realized that there are people

who cannot help me for certain things. Then I talk to them only about those aspects I know they can help me. (Developee)

Further building upon Kram and Ragins (2007), informants pointed out the limitations of single developmental relationship in terms of its duration and the developer's availability. Their implicit belief emerged to be that more developmental support is better (Rock and Garavan, 2006). In addition, interviewees revealed that the positive effects of a developmental relationship is difficult to sustain when the context and the needs of the developees change, but having a developmental network opposed to a single developmental relationship provides perception for sustainability of the outcomes across time and contexts.

If people do not have a network for support the effect [decreases], the wheel goes too fast and sweeps it [the effect] away (Developer)

Informants described their developmental support as multiple dyadic developmental interactions in a network of professional developers that they approach individually in relation to specific issues. In line with the conceptualization of Fletcher and Ragins (2007) of a developmental episode that focuses the attention to developmental situation rather than developmental relationships, in the interviewees' accounts some of the developmental interactions appeared sporadic or isolated. However, referring back to the theme of trust and friendship, even seemingly exceptional every developmental episode described in the present study is in the context of a trustful relationship that exists between the developer and the developee even if its developmental value is not often manifested.

Furthermore, independent management consultants' accounts demonstrated that there is a variation in the breadth and the depth of the developmental relationships they employ for their different developmental needs (Higgins and Kram, 2001). For example, interviewees shared that they have around 3 primary relationships which they employ often and a lot more in their 'extended' network which they use comparatively rarely.

4.9. General Interpretation

The thematic structural analysis demonstrates that independent management consultants experience supervision, coaching and mentoring as learning and professional development relationships which include instrumental and expressive activities as knowledge sharing, experience sharing, acquiring and developing skills, creating awareness and self-awareness, dealing with emotions, boundaries, morale, and ethical issues, as well as generic activities as observation, reflection, giving and receiving feedback, acknowledgment, challenging and encouragement. Similarly to what is described in literature, independent management consultants disclose these relationships to be based on trust, mutuality, reciprocity and professional and/or personal friendship, and inherently including power imbalance. Supervision, coaching and mentoring are only possible in case the developer and the developee have similar preconceptions based on shared theoretical and methodological frameworks, but also on similar previous experiences. As a result, the developee overcomes the feeling of loneliness, developee's and developer's motivation increases; the developees change their attitudes and behaviors and achieve more favorable professional status.

The meaning of mentoring, coaching and supervision appear to be related to the professional situation of the independent management consultants who find themselves in the space in-between and to develop professionally need a buffer between them and the clients and between them and the professional community in order to be able to distance and learn from their experiences. Moreover, independent management consultants who shared their lived experiences as developees described mentoring, supervision and coaching as very personal and insightful relationships which relieved the tensions of being 'independent' and, therefore, anxious, lonely and insecure. Thence, the meaning of coaching, mentoring and supervision for independent management consultants is related to the conflicting needs to belong and to distance. The independent management consultants have to infiltrate in the networks of relations and practices and become temporary insiders, while keeping the distance and boundaries allowing them to intervene professionally. In order to preserve this distance, they consciously or unconsciously build developmental networks that meet their need to belong by providing environment for expressing and working on all questions, doubts, skills and attitudes, emotions, interpretations, perceptions and self-perceptions, roles and responsibilities that exist in the space in-between, the

space between the independent management consultants and their clients. Thus, the meaning of coaching, mentoring and supervision is related to professional development through relationships that aim at balancing belonging and distancing.

Concerning the differences between supervision, coaching and mentoring, the lived experiences the interviewees shared revealed that the terms can easily be used interchangeably. Two of the informants describe the same developmental process from the developer's perspective and from the developee's perspective and name it respectively supervision and mentoring. One of the interviewees differentiates coaching by 'peeling off the professional layer' and working on one's personality. However, another interviewee's account included an example of experience sharing and skill development directly related to the current professional role of the coaching client. Supervision was also claimed to be more formal and planned in one of the examples, but in another example the same person described supervision as totally unstructured process depending on the stage of the consulting process and the supervisee's initiative. Mentoring was also characterized by happening on mentee's initiative, but including sharing of ready-made solutions by the mentor. In other accounts, however, mentoring was primarily described by giving non-judgmental feedback, while coaching and supervision were mentioned to include suggestions for specific action.

As a result, interviewees'' lived experiences contributed to the understanding of supervision, coaching and mentoring as interchangeable developmental processes each of which include instrumental, expressive and generic activities and each of which the individuals in the dyadic relationship shape as a unique contribution to their professional development. In addition, the empirical findings disclosed the meaning of these developmental relationships as parallel and complementary interactions with different developers that support the developee in dealing with different issues. They confirm Rock and Garavan's (2006) conclusion that 'different [developmental] roles might fulfill developmental needs and … several [developmental] roles can be fulfilled in a single relationship' (p. 332). Therefore, empirical findings, their analysis and interpretation point to reconceptualizing supervision, coaching and mentoring for independent management consultants into concurrent multiple developmental relationships which might overlap and fulfill the same or different developmental needs. What makes these relationships developmental ones is the constant search for balance between belonging and distancing by self-

initiated learning, fluid power imbalance, reciprocal motivation, giving and receiving feedback, dealing with emotions and boundaries, drawing upon previous experience and shared theoretical background, and sustaining trust and friendship.

5. CONCLUSION

This chapter presents the final conclusions of the study based on the dynamic interplay between the empirical material, the relevant theories and my hermeneutical reading of the material. In addition, I give recommendations for futures studies on the topic.

5.1. Conclusions

The present short study reveals some significant aspects of the meaning of supervision, coaching and mentoring in the context of independent management consultants' professional development. It demonstrates that *independent management consultants unequivocally relate the meaning of coaching, mentoring and supervision to professional development.* They actively initiate processes of supervision, coaching and mentoring, when they identify their needs for support in order to advance professionally, to redefine and clarify their standards for professional work and to situate themselves in their professional landscape. The study also shows that when they choose a developmental relationship, independent management consultants focus on the meaning and the outcomes of the developmental process and identify people who can support them with their specific developmental needs. As a result, it proposes a viewpoint which reveals *coaching, mentoring and supervision as labels not necessarily indicating different developmental processes.* The empirical findings, on one hand, support the claims in the scientific and practitioners' literature that there is confusion in the concepts of mentoring, supervision and coaching. On the other hand, the empirical findings refute my assumption and the claims in the research literature (Gray, 2010, Lucky, 2004, Gallacher, 1997) that differentiating coaching, mentoring and supervision would result in more adequate choices of relationships appropriate for the developees' goals and needs. Independent management consultants pick out developers and

relationships in line with their developmental needs, and often avoid assigning specific denomination to their relationship. Based on the lack of clear and distinct concepts, they refrain from defining their relationships in specific terms or readily use the terms interchangeably. To provide visibility of this current state and address the essence of this phenomenon, I subsitute the terms coaching, mentoring, supervision, coach, mentor, supervisor, coaching client, mentee and supervisee with the more general expressions 'developmental process', 'developmental relationship', 'developer' and 'developee'.

In addition to demonstrating the lack of clarity concerning the concepts of coaching, mentoring and supervision, the present study reveals that the tendency not to name their relationships in specific meaning-laden terms reflects the *management consultants' practice to shape their developmental processes idiosyncratically in line with their individual understanding*. The empirical findings also demonstrate that these individual understandings are mainly informed by management consultants' lived experience and sense-making efforts, while theoretical conceptualizations have limited impact and are more often disputed than embraced.

The empirical findings of the present study and their analysis bind the essence of the developmental relationships to 8 major themes. One of these themes refers to the networks of developmental relationships. In accordance with Higgins and Kram (2001) and Rock and Garavan (2006), the developees claimed that only one developmental relationship cannot provide sufficient support to independent management consultants' with their various needs with respect to professional development and disclosed that they employ a developmental network to address the variety of their needs. In their developmental networks independent management consultants may receive support for professional development from many people at any point in the time. Moreover, one developer in a development network can provide support on several developmental needs and several developers can provide support on the same developmental need (Gray, 2010).

Drawing upon the meaning the informants reveal by accounts of their lived experiences and informed by Higgins and Kram's (2001) conceptualization of a developmental network, I consider that the essence of supervision, coaching and mentoring needs to be reflected in a new conceptualization which proffers the view of *mentoring, coaching and supervision as alternative designations of the manifestation of the same multiple developmental relationships phenomenon*.

Based on the change of my preconceptions as a consequence of the theoretical analysis and the empirical findings, instead of uncovering the meaning of mentoring, supervision and coaching by focusing on their distinctive characteristics, the present research reveals their essence as alternative perspectives to the same phenomenon. It is a multiple developmental relationships phenomenon that is shaped by the empirical finding as the concurrent existence of various dyadic relationships for professional development. When these relationship revolve around the professional development of the same developee, the sum of these relationships forms her developmental network. *Thence, independent management consultants' conscious or unconscious strategy for professional development is based on employing multiple developmental relationships in a developmental network.*

Compared to the work of Higgins and Kram (2001), who claim that such a network necessary function on individual and network level, the contribution of the present research is in demonstrating that *a developmental network exists at the level of individual dyadic relationships without necessarily including any interactions among individuals at the network level.* Interactions at a network level are revealed as possible, but not mandatory for the existence of the network. Since the present research investigates the multiple developmental relationships phenomenon manifested in developmental networks in which the individual dyadic relationship is central, the essence of the phenomenon appears through the meaning of the individual developmental relationship.

In terms of the discussion in the literature on who takes the responsibility for professional development in a dyadic developmental relationship, the study demonstrates that in the context of independent management consultancy developmental relationships exist and contribute to the professional development only when they are initiated by the *developees who take full responsibility for their action learning* by choosing the subjects of discussion.

Although other researchers focus their attention to difference between activities employed in different developmental relationships (Kram, 1985, Molloy, 2006), the present study reveals the taken-for-grantedness of instrumental activities as knowledge and experience sharing, conceptualizing and skills development and points out the generic activity of feedback giving and receiving and the expressive activity of dealing with emotions and boundaries as essence of the multiple developmental relationships phenomenon. In accordance with Maynard (2006), the

interviewees claim that *learning occurs mainly as the result of feedback given by the develope*r and, thus, it appear the basic instrument of developmental intervention. Maynard (2006) also reports that the outcome of the feedback depends on the way it is given and that it happens in 'context of psychological safety' (p.74). Similarly to her conclusions and Stoltenberg's (2005) types of interventions, the interviewees report that the feedback could range from encouragement through advice to challenging, because it reflects the developer's personal style and the developee's needs. Receptiveness to the feedback and its value as intervention appear as contingent upon the other two central themes, namely trust and power.

Trust is claimed in the academic and practitioners' literature to be a foundational characteristic of each of the referred to in the literature overview approaches to professional development (Pack, 2009, Maynard, 2006, Eby, 2007, Lankau and Scandura, 2007). The present study contributes to building understanding of trust in dyadic developmental relationships as based on friendship and shared understanding stemming from shared theoretical and methodological framework and similar previous experience. Friendship is usually mentioned by researchers to be an effect of a developmental relationship or to be characteristic for the last stages of such relationship (Stoltenberg, 2005). The interviewees' lived experiences add new dimension to the role of *the friendship for professional development as a prerequisite for initiating and building a developmental relationship* because it creates ambiance for more honest sharing and personal engagement by both parties. Wareing (2011) creates the picture of friendship being a hierarchical erosion, while Caroll (2006) even assumes that professional friendship means power balance. In contrast with these perspectives on the relation between friendship and power, independent consultants' lived experiences demonstrate that together with friendship *power imbalance is mandatory for the existence of a developmental relationship*. If there was not power differential between the developer and developee, the developer could not contribute to the developee's learning and professional development. However, power imbalance in independent management consultants' developmental relationships emerges to be fluid and allowing for vulnerability of both parties.

Informality of the developmental relationship is another aspect of the trust and friendship theme. Contrary to some researches (Fletcher and Ragins, 2007) that conceptualize the duration of the relationship and the regulation of the meetings between the developer and the developee,

including how often they meet and for how long, as critical factors in term of the effectiveness of the developmental relationship, the present study identifies that in the context of informality, based on trust and friendship, these factors are self-regulating and no special attention is mandatory to be paid to them.

Researchers generally relate reciprocity to mutuality and trust in developmental relationships (Fletcher and Ragins, 2007, Maynard, 2006 , Lankau and Scandura, 2007). Adding a new aspect to the understanding of reciprocity, the present study reveals its meaning in relation to motivation and morale. Therefore, it argues that *both the developer and the developee benefit in terms of motivation, morale, job satisfaction and professional development* from a development relationship.

Clutterback (1998) identifies one of the roles of the developer as a counselor who enables the mentees to gain an understanding of their own emotions, perceptions, judgments and actions and Stoltenberg (2005) demonstrates that the developee should be able to focus on her personal issues and emotions as a part of the developmental process. In a similar vein, the present study leads to the conclusion that a *developmental relationship means a relationship that gives opportunities and encourages the developee to express her emotions, while receiving support in overcoming the limiting ones*, for example fear and anxiety. It is, however, important to point out that this research contributes to understanding of work on emotions and boundaries as distinguishing between personal and professional roles and reactions, but does not include interventions dealing with unconscious psychological conflicts, defense mechanisms or neurotic trends (Maynard, 2006).

The Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (2008) distinguish between modes of professional relationships based on the developer's expertise and previous professional experience related to the issues introduced by the developee. The understanding of a developmental relationship the empirical findings shed light upon includes a shared frame of reference in the heart of this relationship. The shared frame of reference is as much defining for a developmental relationship as the trust and friendship, the feedback, the dealing with the emotions and boundaries, the power and the existence of multiple networks. In this sense, the developer's previous experience is depicted as relevant to the developee's needs, but not necessarily linked to applying expertise which is expected from the developee to acquire or

further develop. Furthermore, *developers' and developees' expert roles appear to be fluid*. This fluidity allows the consultants to take a stance of vulnerability and admit not knowing and knowing without losing their self-esteem (Fletcher and Ragins, 2007).

Common theoretical and methodological grounds are also referred to as crucial for achieving shared understanding and for sense-making. Management consultants, however, do not base their work on a unified body of formal knowledge, but employ diverse and fragmented scientific concepts and highly value knowledge acquired in experience. Alvesson and Johansson (2001) not that the lack of unified knowledge base contributes to the lack of professional standards which guide the professional development. Despite that fact, management consultants' continuous strive for learning and professional development is seen as a survival strategy by academics, consultants themselves and their clients. This research demonstrates that *independent management consultants make use of multiple developmental relationships in order to sustain their professional development and interiorize a set of professional standards embedded in the social context of balancing between belonging to the client system and distancing from the client system by belonging to a developmental dyad*.

5.2. Recommendations for Future Research

Based on the research process and findings, I suggest the following recommendations for future studies on coaching, mentoring and supervision for independent management consultants' professional development.

Firstly, my data collection was to some extent constrained due to time limitations and access to informants. I future and more comprehensive study would benefit from employing larger number of independent management consultants able to provide more diverse perspectives to processes of learning and professional development. All interviewees in the present study defined themselves as organizational consultants. Taking into consideration the broad spectrum of consultants that call themselves management consultants, a future study could benefit from employing independent IT consultants, independent marketing consultants etc.

Secondly, professional development is a continuous process that spans over decades. Further insight into how multiple developmental relationships are employed across stages of independent

consultants' professional development could be gained by a future study adopting longitudinal design.

Thirdly, taking place in Bulgaria, the study contributes with revelations based on lived experiences in the context of Bulgarian culture and Bulgarian business context. Building on this, a future study would positively benefit from comparing how developmental relationships are employed in different countries and cultures.

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