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Research Article

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## The scope of coaching in the context of organizational change

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ABSTRACT	ARTICLE INFO
<p>The aim of this paper is to explore the scope of coaching in the context of organizational change considering peculiar issues associated with the use of coaching in Latvia and Lithuania.</p> <p>This two-stage study seeks to answer the following research questions. How is coaching defined? What is the aim of coaching? Who are involved in coaching? What coaching outcomes are expected? During the first stage, the definitions of coaching are extracted from the literature and analyzed to identify the distinctive features of coaching. During the second stage, the experts are interviewed to explore the views of practitioners in coaching about a place of coaching in organizations. Literature review, content analysis and comparative analysis are used for the purposes of this study. Triangulation of research results is obtained through cross verification from two sources. A total of 41 definitions of coaching were extracted from the literature and taken for analysis. Based on the established criteria for selection, nine experts participated in an interview.</p> <p>As a result, content analysis and comparative analysis have revealed that coaching is defined as a regular, synergetic, learning and development, goal-oriented process. Facilitation is a primary aim of coaching. Coaching is more beneficial for people who provide decisions. Achieved results and personal growth is considered as the key expected coaching outcomes. Coaching provides greater goal clarity, better alignment with the roles in the organization. However, the possible threats and challenges, such as stereotype and misunderstanding, lack of systematic approach to coaching engagements as well as its alignment with organizational change needs, have also been detected. It is difficult to explain how effective coaching can be because coaching is not homogeneous and it is difficult to measure the results of coaching.</p>	<p><i>Keywords:</i> Coaching, Organizational change, EU New Member States</p> <p><i>Article History:</i> Received: 3 September 2015 Accepted: 6 January 2016</p>

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### 1. BACKGROUND

Nowadays, organizations operate in the dynamic, competitive and challenging global environment (Allen et al. 2013). As the global business environment continues to be uncertain, complex and ambiguous, organizations should be ready to initiate and manage change (Amagoh 2008). Change affects all organizations (By 2005). Dynamics in both external and internal environment can trigger a requirement for change (Spector 2007). The impact of external environment and the shift between life cycle stages can cause organizational change. Burnes (2004) defines organizational change as ‘an ever-present’ form of organizational life that focuses on both the performance of the whole organization and day-to-day operations.

Organizations respond to the trigger events in different ways: focusing on new behavioral patterns or enhancing the financial or technological effectiveness. It is worth mentioning that effective change involves both content – ‘what is being changed’ and process – ‘how are the changes being implemented’ (Spector 2007).

Rank et al. (2004) believe that creativity, innovation and initiative facilitate organizational change. Open innovation is considered as the latest corporate philosophy which integrates internal experience and capabilities and external knowledge and competence to accelerate the development of organization (Patra and Krishna 2015). Corte et al. (2015) argue that customers are a valuable source for innovation because they can contribute to organization’s innovative process by sharing their opinions and expressing their ideas.

To cope with the constraints on changes in the business environment, it is necessary to develop new knowledge and skills as well as the ability to apply integrated ways of thinking in a short period of time. Change demands from organizations the ability to manage change, to develop and apply new knowledge and skills. This is especially important in the current period of increasing globalization, deregulation and the high growth pace of technological innovation (By 2005). Ambiguity, uncertainty and inconsistency of business environment provide the impetus for organizational learning, diversity and renewal (Graetz and Smith 2010).

Change can also cause a number of problems. Individuals need to achieve goals and develop, at the same time, they have to deal with the troubles caused by change. In the period of organizational change, people face with the need to develop and carry out the established goals, and at the same time, they need to deal with organizational turbulence (Grant 2014). Therefore, there is a need to facilitate people in organizations in the period of change to enhance goal attainment, encourage development and support them to tackle change problems.

There are a variety of practices, including coaching, that facilitate people providing them support and accelerating the process of setting and achieving work-related goals (Meggison & Boydell 1979, Grant 2014). According to the opinions of different scholars (Kelley et al. 2005; Connor and Pokora 2007; Garvey et al. 2009; Cox et al. 2011; Audet and Couteret 2012; Cox 2013; Bozer et al. 2013; Page and de Haan 2014), coaching can promote sustainable organizational change.

However, coaching in EU New Member States is not a widespread practice and is not yet studied thoroughly. 2012 ICF Global Coaching Study demonstrated a very diverse distribution in professional coaches across the globe. Comparing to Western Europe where the ratio of coaches per 1 million population is more than 44, the ratio of coaches per 1 million population in Eastern Europe is about eight.

Therefore, the aim of this paper is to explore the scope of coaching that is the extent of the subject matter in the context of organizational change considering peculiar issues associated with the use of coaching in Latvia and Lithuania.

The paper seeks to address the following research questions:

RQ 1 How is coaching defined?

RQ 2 What is the aim of coaching?

RQ 3 Who are involved in coaching?

RQ 4 What are expected coaching outcomes?

For the purposes of this study, the authors employed two-step research: content analysis of both coaching definitions extracted from the literature and experts’ interview with subsequent comparative analysis of the obtained results.

## 2. THE NATURE OF COACHING: LITERATURE REVIEW

Coaching is becoming increasingly popular in today’s business environment (Hamlin et al. 2011); more and more organizations are using coaching as a means of improving performance, developing skills and capability, facilitating leadership development, as well as career managing. CIPD’s (Chartered Institute of Personnel Development) Coaching Climate survey report (2011) proves this fact. As it was stated, compared with CIPD coaching survey 2009, the number of respondents who reported that coaching is focused on improving good performance increased from a quarter to almost half. More than 60 % of respondents reported that the purpose of coaching is to aid leadership development, this is three times more compared to 2009. Almost a quarter of

respondents always focus on improving personal effectiveness delivering coaching assignments. Supporting career transition is also among key areas of coaching agenda, 10 % of respondents always and 44 % frequently address this issue in coaching agenda.

Vidal-Salazar et al. (2012) offer empirical evidence of the positive effect of coaching on organizational change. The results of Baron and Morin (2010) study suggest that coaching can have a real practical impact on the development of strong self-efficacy that enables to perform tasks more effectively. As a management developmental activity, coaching promotes organizational change and leads to sustainability (Bozer et al. 2013). As an interactive form of organizational learning and leadership development (De Haan et al. 2011, Page and de Haan 2014), coaching enhances the executive's behavioral change through self-awareness and learning, and thereby contributes to individual and organizational success (Bozer et al. 2013, Berg & Karlsen 2011). Behavioural change within the organizational change opens a number of opportunities for coaching as a tool in implementing and sustaining change (Stober 2008). Coaching can be used to encourage teamworking of existing groups, develop newly-formed teams, improve the communicating skills of team leaders and develop cross boundary teams (Connor and Pokora 2007). Coaching promotes the development of entrepreneurial skills through facilitating implementation of the own strategic vision (Audet and Couteret 2012). Coaching facilitates moving beyond innovative technologies from finding ideas and developing them to linking innovations to the company's strategy and the markets for what they have done (Kelley et al. 2005).

During its long history, coaching has been associated with individuals' professional and personal goals attainment, performance improvement, and personal potential enhancement (Garvey et al. 2009 Garvey 2011). The goal-oriented nature of coaching lies in its historical roots. At the same time psychology, psychotherapy, education, sport and business influenced the development of coaching (Stojnov and Pavlovic 2010). Incorporated range of therapeutic and personal development approaches enable to diversify coaching and expand its implementation as developmental practice. The Dublin declaration on coaching (2008) proposed the recognition of the multidisciplinary roots of coaching and recommended to affirm the nature of coaching as a specific synthesis of "a range of disciplines that creates a new and distinctive value to individuals, organizations and society".

Cox et al. (2011) investigated theoretical approaches genres and contexts of coaching. They ascertain a tight relationship between cognitive-behavioural approach and genres and contexts of coaching used in organizational context, such as, for instance, executive and leadership coaching, team coaching. They argue that coaching adopted the cognitive-behavioural approach focuses on the replacement of dysfunctional thought patterns with more adaptive versions. As a result, executives as well as managers learn to become efficient in managing their emotions, maintaining an appropriate level of self-confidence and developing high level of interpersonal and communication skills (Cox et al. 2011).

Although coaching has become incredibly popular, there is still a lot of uncertainty and vagueness around what coaching is really about (Ives 2008). There is no general agreement on the definition of coaching among scholars and practitioners (Ladyshevsky 2010) and no coherent approach to define coaching (Passmore and FilleryTravis 2011). The essence of a 'typical' coaching intervention still remains difficult to define (Kempster and Iszatt-White 2013). Bond and Senéque (2013) have stated that early definitions of coaching were focused on the improvement of individual and organizational performance while more recent definitions have defined coaching as a process emphasized a stronger link with learning and development.

### 3. COACHING IN LATVIA AND LITHUANIA

Coaching is still a relatively new professional field in Latvia and Lithuania. Global Coaching Survey 2008/2009 defined the life-cycle stage of coaching for each European country. Under the Survey, coaching in Latvia was in pre-introduction phase while coaching in Lithuania was in transition between introduction and growth stages. Based on the overview of the answers, it was stated that in Latvia and Lithuania people do not fully understand the essence of coaching and tend to confuse coaching with consulting.

The online study has been conducted by the authors to investigate the current state of affairs in the field of coaching in Latvia and Lithuania with special emphasis on the use of coaching for organizational purposes. The observation of the current situation is presented in the table (see Table 1).

While gathering information, it was revealed that the interest in coaching among organisations is growing. The increasing number of leaders and managers participating in different coaching events proves this. The surveys in 2011 and 2013 conducted by TNS, demonstrate positive dynamics of the topic development. The

number of top managers who are aware of coaching is increased by 5 % in 2013. The comparison of the results of two surveys about executives' perception of coaching shows that there is a rise in opinion that coaching can contribute to the achievement of the organization business objectives. However, the view on coaching as a fashion trend is increased as well. The author of the TNS survey considers that this is explained by the fact that a considerable number of company executives (45 %) still do not know what coaching is.

Coaching in Latvia and Lithuania is viewed from different perspectives – as means of achieving one's individual goals, business targets, implementing change management, etc. Coaching in organizations is mostly focused on the development of a new style of leadership as well as on the support provided to entrepreneurs to implement their new ideas. International accredited professional business coaching training program "Leader as a Coach" is created for leaders, managers and HRM specialists. The aim of the program is to facilitate development of basic skills of people management in the coaching style. A special annual event Coaching Week has been running for the last few years. Different events such as lectures, workshops, master classes, coaching sessions and activities take place.

**Table 1** Implementation of coaching in Latvia and Lithuania

Means of implementation	Latvia	Lithuania
International coaching organisations	International Coach Federation Latvia Chapter; European Coach Federation	International Coach Federation Lithuania Chapter; International Coach and Trainer Association (ICTA)
National coaching organisations and other coaching related organisations	Baltic Coaching Centre; Riga Coaching School; Riga Coach Club; Eiro Personāls Ltd Personības pilnveidošanas centrs; Franklin Covey ; Talentor	Association of professional coaches in Lithuania; Baltijos koučingo centras
Projects and programs	Pilot project Career Mentoring and Coaching, 2010; JOSEFIN - Joint SME Finance for Innovation, 2009–2012; 2014–2016 "Coaches of SMEs: 5POINTS Trainings"; International accredited professional business coaching training program "Leader as a Coach" Certified training program "Workplace Coach"	Master degree program "Ugdomasis vadovavimas / Koucingas" (Coaching) in Mykolas Romeris university; Coaching Excellence Club (CEC) in OVC
Survey, research, books	TNS Latvia, 2011 TNS Latvia, 2013	Coaching Opportunities Evaluation of Lithuanian Organizations. Consultants' Survey, 2012; Practical coaching aspects in Lithuanian organizations, 2013; Tomas Misiukonis (2013) <i>Koučingo technikas</i> , VAGA,
Events	Coaching Week Master classes Seminars, conferences	Coaching Week Master classes, Winter and Summer schools Seminars, conferences

#### 4. METHODS

The paper employs two-step research: content analysis of both coaching definitions extracted from the literature and experts' interview with subsequent comparative analysis of the obtained results. Triangulation of research results was obtained through cross verification from two sources.

The definitions for analysis were drawn from the published articles as well as books relating to coaching. General definitions of coaching, definitions of executive coaching and definitions of coaching in different business contexts were taken for analysis. The articles (Bozer et al. 2013; Moen and Federici 2012; Passmore and Fillery-Travis 2011; Stober 2008) were chosen from the academic peer-reviewed journals including:

Coaching: An International Journal of Theory, Research and Practice, Journal of Management Development. In addition, books on coaching (Cox et al. 2011; Cox 2013;

McCarthy 2014) and the definition accepted by International Coach Federation (ICF) in ICF Code of Ethics were explored as well.

The list of definitions was supplemented by coaching definitions gathered by Hamlin et al. (2008) for their study into 'conceptualizations and definitions of coaching'. The definitions provided by Fournies (1987), Orth et al. (1987), Evered and Selman (1989), Popper and Lipshitz (1992), Mink et al. (1993), Hargrove (1995), Burdett (1998),

Clutterbuck (1998), Hudson (1999), Redshaw (2000), Grant (2001, 2006), Peterson (1996), Kampa-Kokesch and Anderson (2001), Parsloe (1995), Grant and Cavanagh (2004), Zeus and Skiffington (2000), Kilburg (2000), Peltier (2001), Orenstein (2002), McCauley and Hezlett (2001), Hall et al. (1999), Caplan (2003), Plunkett et al. (2004), Dingman (2006), Sanders (1996), Hill (1998), Storey (2003), Bacon and Spear (2003), Clegg et al. (2003), Taylor (2007) were taken for the analysis to get a broader view.

In total, 41 definitions of coaching were taken for the analysis. The aim of the analysis is to identify the characteristics of coaching which are frequently used in the definitions and, based on it, identify the distinctive features of coaching.

Two types of coding: open coding and axial hierarchical coding were applied. The aim of open coding is to generate as many codes as possible to identify relevant themes. The aim of axial coding is to generate the interconnections between these themes.

The second stage of the research was the experts' interview. The aim of this stage is to explore the views of practitioners in coaching about a place of coaching in organisations based on their personal opinion and professional experience. The interview contains two meaningful parts and consists of basic 12 questions. The interview questions are developed to capture the essence of coaching in organizational context. Supplementary questions are asked based in the individual experience of the practitioners. The duration of interview is one hour.

Online interviews were conducted from September to December, 2013. For the purposes of the research it was decided to focus on the key informants, i.e. experienced practitioners in coaching, to generate primary data for qualitative analysis. The selection of practitioners was based on the following criteria: participation in the training programme for coaches, work with organizations, and experience in the field of coaching for more than 3 years as well as a genuine desire to contribute to the research. Based on the established criteria, four coaches from Latvia, three coaches from Lithuania, one coach from Poland and one coach from Germany took part in the interview. The experts from Poland and Germany were invited with the aim to trace the tendency of development of the subject matter in the countries that might have influence on the Baltic countries.

All most all respondents have graduated from accredited coach training programmes; among them one interviewee has gained Master's degree in coaching and another one is working to get this degree. All respondents identified that they work at organizational level defining their professional background as an executive coach, organisation leader, HR and training specialist, consultant. The practitioners indicated that their average experience in coaching is 3–5 years. The coaches were asked to define the industry sectors that used their coaching services and the size of the companies. The analysis of responses shows that the respondents work in different industries and with the companies of different size. The coaches are engaged in Retail and Wholesale, Banking and Finance Services, Information Technology, Manufacturing and Production, Education, Health Care. Most coaches identified that they work in the companies of the size from 51 to 250 employees.

## 5. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### 5.1 Addressing research question: How is coaching defined?

The analysis of 41 selected definitions showed that there is no unified approach to the definition of coaching. Coaching is defined from different perspectives, as a result, not all of the research questions are addressed in each definition. Therefore, a sufficiently large number of definitions ensure the reliability of the results.

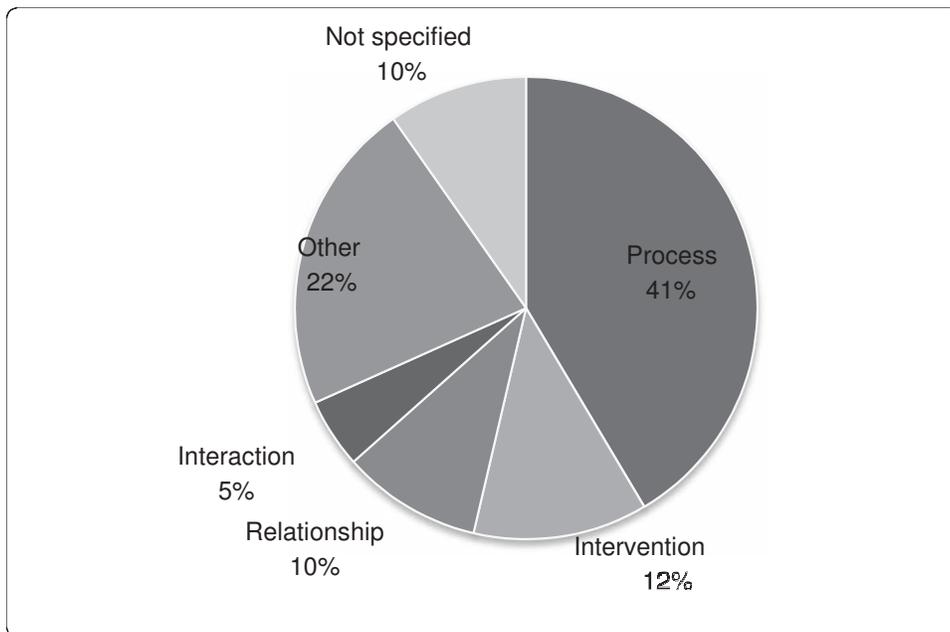
More than 40 % of definitions characterize coaching as a process (Fig. 1).

Based on commonly used characteristics, coaching is defined as a regular (KampaKokesch and Anderson 2001; Grant 2006), synergic (Zeus and Skiffington 2000; Storey 2003; Grant 2006; McCarthy 2014), learning and development (Caplan 2003; Cox et al. 2011; Cox 2013), goal-oriented (Hall et al. 1999; Grant 2001, 2006; Grant and Cavanagh 2004) process.

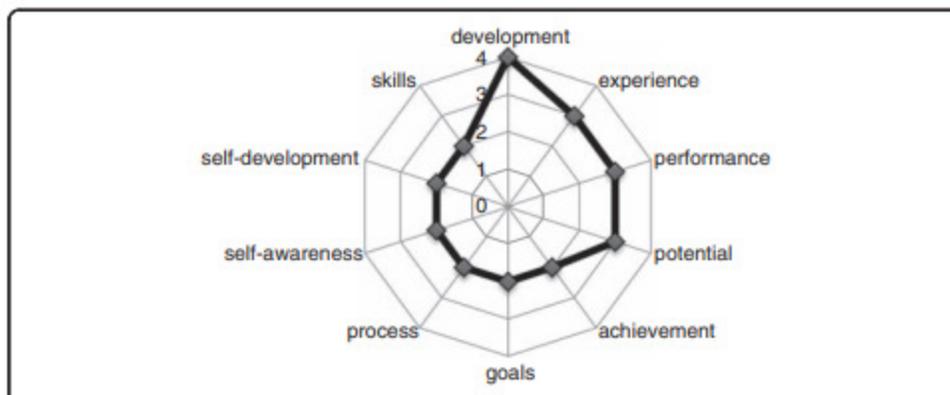
The first question of the experts' survey was about key words what coaches use to define the sense of coaching. Content analysis of the experts' answers identified 21 words that coaches named as key ones. Frequency of words was computed via SQL query to table containing key words from definitions of coaching provided by experts. The word that was used more frequently was the word development. Figure 2 graphically illustrates the results.

The results of the study suggest that by experts' opinion, development characteristic is a key feature of coaching. Coaching was also defined as an art and science to support person or a group of people in exploring and promoting self-awareness that influences people potential and growth.

**Fig. 1** The analysis of coaching definitions (source: authors)



**Fig. 2** The key words frequency (source: authors)

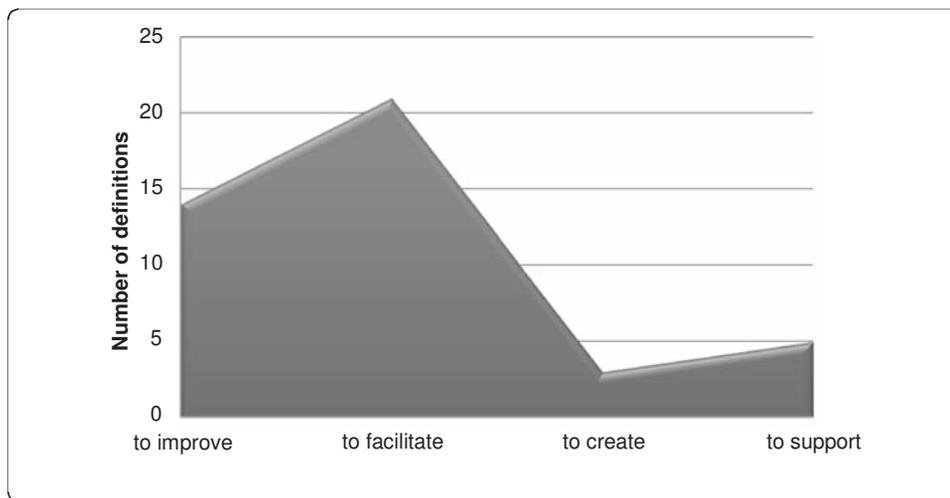


5.2 Addressing research question 2: What is the aim of coaching?

Since the emergence of the concept of coaching, the purpose of this practice has been changing. The aim of coaching switched from performance problems (Fournies 1987) to developmental perspective (Cox et al. 2011). Coaching facilitates discovering opportunities (Orth et al. 1987; Hill 1998) and creating ‘a culture of development’ (Popper and Lipshitz 1992) to enhance performance and efficiency (Orth et al. 1987; Burdett 1998). Mink et al. (1993) understood coaching as the process in which established relationships between coach and clients ease learning. By its nature, coaching can be directive and non-directive (Clutterbuck 1998). Coaching that teaches to generate results (Hargrove 1995) and guides others into enhanced capacity, commitment and self-confidence (Hudson 1999; Redshaw 2000) is mostly run to the directive approach. More recent definitions consider coaching as facilitating activity for self-directed learning and personal growth and change (Grant and Cavanagh 2004; Grant 2006; Peltier 2001; Stober 2008).

Content analysis of coaching definitions reveals the key words that describe the aim of coaching. Under the analysis, coaching is used to improve, to facilitate, to create and to support (Fig. 3).

**Fig. 3** The analysis of the aims of coaching (source: authors)



The analysis shows that facilitation is a primary aim of coaching. Coaching facilitates learning and development (Mink et al. 1993; Parsloe 1995) focusing on experiential learning (Hudson 1999; Dingman 2006) and self-directed learning (Grant 2001, 2006; Grant and Cavanagh 2004). Coaching helps increase performance (Grant 2006; Grant and Cavanagh 2004; Kilburg 2000; McCarthy 2014) as well as promote self-awareness (Passmore and Fillery-Travis 2011; Bozer et al. 2013; McCarthy 2014) and personal growth (Grant and Cavanagh 2004; Stober 2008). Coaching enables both people to recognize opportunities to enhance their performance and skills (Orth et al. 1987) and business to find new peculiar solutions and insights (Hill 1998; Bacon and Spear 2003) to achieve sustained change (Peltier 2001; Stober 2008; Cox et al. 2011).

5.3 Addressing research question 3: Who are involved in coaching?

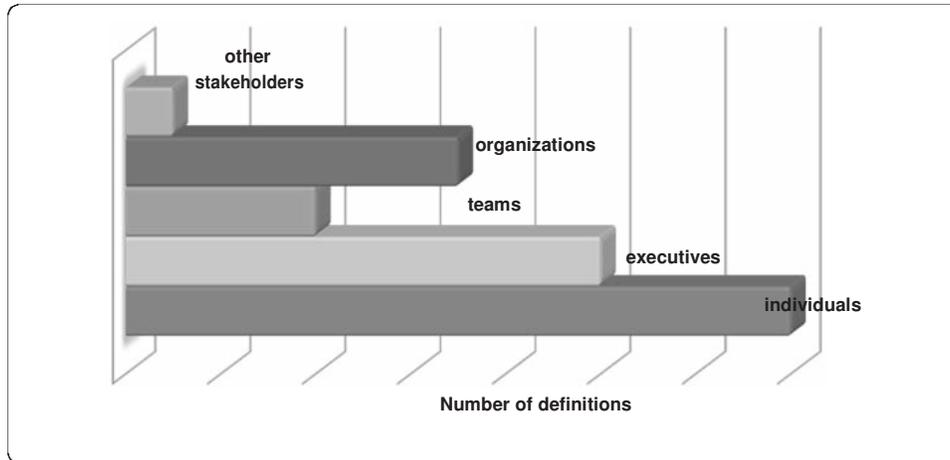
Implemented in organizations coaching is beneficial for both a person and a client’s organisation (Fig. 4). Coaching has been referred to as the activity that enables individuals and teams to achieve results (Evered and Selman 1989). Coaching generates client’s sustainable behavioural change in working and personal life (Zeus and Skiffington 2000; McCauley and Hezlett 2001; Grant 2001). This positive change may result in enhancing the entire organization (Peltier 2001).

By experts’ opinion, executives or top management should be at the top of the list of those who need coaching. Middle level management and high potential employees are on the next position respectively. The experts were not provided with a list of potential target groups, they mentioned the coaching recipients who need coaching based on their experience and assumption. Almost half of experts consider that coaching should be started from top managers and then gone down. If senior executive does not know what coaching is, does not support it and is afraid that some manipulations are happening or he is implementing different kind of

leadership, like pushing, then coaching most probably does not work at lower level. Top managers have to have an opportunity go to the coaching conversation, or “receive a pack of bonuses where coaching should be”.

Answering the question “Can coaching be considered as an effective intervention for all people?” coaches mentioned that coaching is more beneficial for people who provide decisions, first of all it means: top and middle managers. These levels of management generate decisions, and coaching might be really useful in this case because in order to make good decision managers have to be quite competent, they have to know themselves and have to recognize their behavioural patterns. At the same time, the experts highlighted that coaching will be effective if recipients of coaching are ready for coaching. The experts explained that the clients have to be ready to be responsible for themselves and make decisions of their own.

**Fig. 4** The parties involved in coaching process (source: authors)



5.4 Addressing research question 4: What are expected coaching outcomes?

Achieved results and personal growth is considered the key expected results (Fig. 5).

Coaching designs atmosphere that empowers employees and organization to produce results (Evered and Selman 1989; Hargrove 1995; Storey 2003; Bacon and Spear 2003; Dingman 2006). Coaching is expected to contribute to the individual’s personal growth and development (Popper and Lipshitz 1992; Kampa-Kokesch and Anderson 2001; Grant and Cavanagh 2004; Grant 2006).

The expert’s were asked about key benefits of coaching for individuals and organisations as well as challenges in the implementation of coaching organizations. The benefits and challenges were grouped and summarized in Table 2.

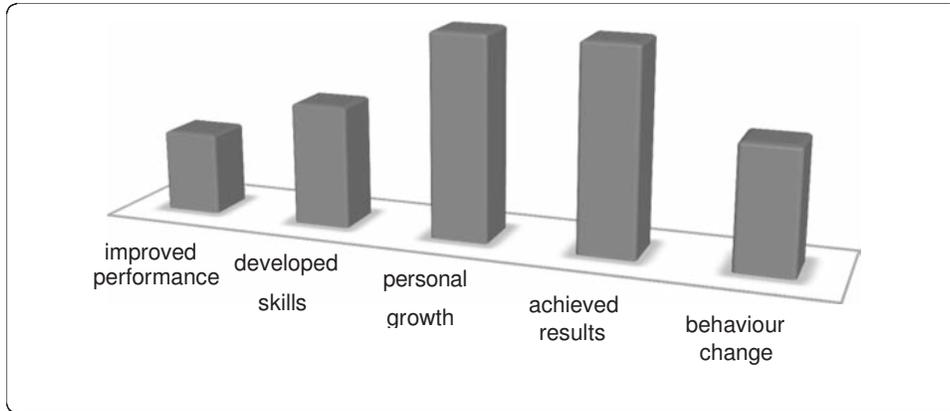
There are a lot of advantages of the coaching use for individual and organizational development. The main thing is that people get new opportunities for development of their self-awareness. That is extremely important for managers especially in the period of organizational change when managers have to often rely on themselves in decisionmaking. As a result of coaching sessions, people are becoming more open and more tolerant to different views, this helps organize relationship within organization based on trust and respect. This change in relationships very positively reflects on employees’ and managers’ motivation to support change. Coaching also stimulates the ability to organize individual’s thinking process more clearly and more structural. In respect to organizations, coaching provides greater goal clarity, better alignment with the role in organization that facilitates change in the style of management.

However, the experts focused on possible threats and challenges of coaching as well. As a result of simplified approach to coaching from the side of some organizations, there is a lot of misunderstanding what happens around the coaching. The organisations misunderstand what coaching is and what coaching can do, who should need coaching, and what coaching is for. There is also misunderstanding from the other side of those who deliver coaching. Sometimes coaching is wrong intervention and people need training or mentoring that will

be more effective than coaching. The dependence on coach is also considered as potential threat. The experts consider that coach is responsible to recognize if the client is dependable.

There are also a lot of challenges in coaching process. The experts argue that it is not possible to start coaching process if the client is not engaged or interested in it. It is difficult to explain how effective coaching can be because coaching is not homogeneous and it is difficult to measure the results of coaching. The other challenge is how to look at coaching in a systematic way when coach gets in touch not only with a client but with client’s leader, manager or HR specialist to ensure that coaching engagements are in line in organizational change needs.

**Fig. 5** Expected coaching outcomes (source: authors)



**Table 2** Benefits and challenges of coaching

Benefits	Threats
For individuals	
New opportunities for development	Stereotype of coaching
People are becoming more open	A lot of simplified interventions in coaching
Development of relationship based on trust and respect	A lot of misunderstanding what happens around the coaching
Ability to organize individually thinking process	Dependence on coach
Self-awareness and social awareness	Sometimes people need training or mentoring
For organisations	Challenges
Change in the style of management	Not possible to start coaching if a client is not engaged or interested in.
Greater goal clarity	Difficult to know exactly how and at what level coaching is effective.
Better alignment with the role in the organization	It is challenge how to look at the coaching in the systematic way.
Impact on employees' and managers' motivation	It is difficult to measure the outcomes of coaching

(source: authors)

## 6. CONCLUSIONS

The article explored the essence of coaching in the context of organizational change. Change was considered as a trigger event that stimulates the development of organization. At the same time, change demands from organizations the ability to manage change and to cope with a number of problems. Coaching was studied as a practice that is able to facilitate people to in the period of change to enhance goal achievement, encourage development and support them to tackle change problems. Coaching was also explored as a possible means to promote sustainable organizational change.

Taking into consideration the fact that coaching in EU New Member States is not a widespread practice and is not yet investigated thoroughly, the article was focused on the study of the scope of coaching considering peculiar issues associated with the use of coaching in Latvia and Lithuania. The study attempted to answer the research questions relating to the distinctive features of coaching, the aim of coaching intervention, the parties involved in the process and the expected coaching outcomes.

The study employed a two-steps approach. Firstly, general definitions of coaching, definitions of executive coaching and definitions of coaching in different business contexts were extracted from the literature and taken for analysis. The aim of the analysis was to identify the characteristics of coaching which are frequently used in the definitions and, based on it, identify the distinctive features of coaching. The second stage of the research was the experts' interview. The aim of the interview was to explore the views of practitioners in coaching about the essence of coaching based on their personal opinion and professional experience.

The analysis of 41 selected definitions showed that there is no unified approach to the definition of coaching. Content analysis of the experts' answer about key words what coaches use to define the sense of coaching identified 21 words that were named as key ones. However, based on commonly used characteristics extracted from definitions, coaching was defined as a regular, synergic, learning and development, goal-oriented process. Development was the word the coaches used more frequently defining coaching. Organizational change demands the ability to develop new knowledge, skills, and patterns of behavior, in this case coaching can be a valuable practice to support individuals of organization in encouraging their self-awareness that influences people potential development and growth.

Content analysis and comparative analysis of coaching definitions revealed the key words that describe the aim of coaching, they are to improve, to facilitate, to create and to support. Facilitation was defined as a primary aim of coaching. To achieve sustainable change, organizations need to be able to recognize opportunities and develop a culture that facilitates change. Coaching as facilitating practice can contribute to individuals' experiential learning and self-directed learning and thus develop their ability to recognize opportunities and to find new business solutions and insights.

Definitions of coaching and experts' answers demonstrated a basic agreement in the implementation of coaching. Both sources considered that coaching is beneficial for a person and for a client's organization because coaching is referred to as the activity that empowers top leaders and employees to achieve the results.

Achieved results and personal growth was considered as the key expected coaching outcomes. Experts highlighted a lot of advantages of the coaching use for individual and organizational development, among them the opportunity to develop self-awareness. Coaching also can stimulate the ability to organize individual's thinking process more clearly and more structural. In respect to organizations, coaching provides greater goal clarity, better alignment with the role in organisation that facilitates change in the style of management.

At the same time experts mentioned that it is difficult to predict how effective coaching can be because coaching is not homogeneous and it is difficult to measure the results of coaching.

As far as the paper focuses on the investigation of the essence of coaching, it has not reported on the other authors' related investigations, such as the study of the similarities and differences between coaching and other facilitating activities, namely: mentoring, consultancy, counseling, therapy, mediation. In the future, the additional research will need to be conducted to study the relationship of coaching and leadership and to explore the application of the theories for organizational learning to coaching.

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