

Behavioral characteristics of coach managers in Self-Managing Teams

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ABSTRACT,

How a coach manager of a SMT should behave in order to empower his team is an important question that is largely unanswered by the literature. A lot of research has been done about the behavioral aspects of leaders, but it was always done in a broad sense. Practical, behavioral advice for coach managers still misses in the literature and this research aims at giving practical implications about which behavior of the coach manager of a SMT is perceived to be the most effective to empower his team and under which circumstances. The qualitative research was conducted in a care organization that worked with SMT's. Data was collected via a case study, using semi-structure interviews among several members of different SMT's. In order to increase the level of reliability in this research, inter-coder reliability was applied. As a result of this case study, several practical implications were found that are about the following: To start with, the coach manager should always stimulate and facilitate his team members to update and extend their knowledge and capabilities. Secondly, under certain circumstances teams should be provided with autonomy and coach managers should always look for ways to create favorable circumstances for this provision, as it leads to better performance. Thirdly, the coach manager should always try his best to add to an individual's feeling of importance regarding his job for the organization, but also for the employee himself. These results indicate that there is a lot that the behavior of the coach manager can do in order to empower his team. Practical implications about this specific behavior are given, together with examples so that this will really help coach managers in their daily working life.

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Keywords

Self-managing teams, empowerment, behavior, autonomy, potency, meaningfulness, impact

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1. Introduction

The health-care environment is changing. According to the demands of patients, the care should be more flexible, more diverse and the quality of the care should be higher. In this changing environment, more is asked from the care personnel (Smets, 2014; Rijckmans et al., 2006). SMTs are teams that have autonomy and can be held accountable for their actions in the following activities: the execution of the work as well as the management of the work (Wageman, 2001; Carson et al., 2007). The leadership in SMTs is given shape in the way that the members of the team *'manage themselves, assign jobs, plan and schedule work, make production- or service-related decisions and take actions on problems'* (Kirkman and Rosen, 1999, p.58). The traditional team leader that was part of the daily operations is replaced by an external team leader whose actions can be described as functional actions as it is the task of this leader to handle whatever is not handled by the team because of a lack of potency (Morgeson, 2005).

Especially for the first two changing aspects in the healthcare sector, the demand of higher flexibility and diversity, the decentralized decision-making of self-managing teams is perceived to be useful. The reason for this can be found in the fact that the personnel of these teams have a lot of knowledge about daily operations in the health-care sector which provides them with the opportunity to make decisions that are most positive for the patients. Thereby, *self-managing teams are associated with high productivity, quality, customer service, job satisfaction and organizational commitment* (Kirkman and Rosen, 1999, p.58). These characteristics are useful in a changing environment. Wageman (2001) explains what real teams are. She states that, among others, a real team exists of a stable amount of members who are members for a longer time and therefore can behave as a collective. Membership for a longer time is also an antecedent for building and preserving a lot of knowledge of daily operations. She identifies a real team as the basis of three other conditions that are necessary to form an effective team, namely *a clear direction, an enabling team structure and a supportive organizational context* (2001, p560).

Kirkman and Rosen (1999) make a clear distinction between self-managing teams and empowered teams. Both kind of teams do have the autonomy and accountability, however, empowered teams experience the feeling that meaningful work is done by their team, which means that team empowerment goes deeper than self-management. According to Wageman (2001), autonomy is a necessary condition for a team to be self-managed. Kirkman and Rosen (1999) identified three other important constructs that were related to team empowerment, namely potency, meaningfulness and impact. Despite being highly correlated with autonomy, the explained variance of team empowerment of these four constructs together was significantly bigger than that of autonomy alone, meaning that these constructs are relevant factors preceding empowerment.

To be a SMT, a certain level of autonomy must be given. So it can be concluded that a self-managing team is always, till certain extent, empowered, as autonomy is an empowering factor. However, Kirkman and Rosen (1999) identified three other relevant factors that precede team empowerment, that together can bring the team to a higher level of empowerment than autonomy can by itself.

On the one hand, in order for the team to become self-managed and empowered, it must be given autonomy, feeling of potency, meaningfulness and impact, but on the other hand, the external team leader is there to help the team to handle the tasks that are not handled adequately. The latter will undermine the autonomy and the perceived level of potency, meaningfulness and/or impact, depending on the situation that is handled by the external team-leader, so it will negatively affect the level of empowerment that the team experiences (Morgeson, 2005). This is a contradiction that the external team-leader encounters, so to find a balance in this contradiction it is important to know what behavior the team leader needs to show in order to get to the balance point where he/she does enough to get the job done, while at the same time undermining the feeling of empowerment as little as possible.

Literature so far only mentions the existence of this contradiction but does not give a solution in the sense that it does not indicate how the team-leader should behave in such a situation. This means that there is a gap in the literature, which leaves the coach-managers that doubt on which behavior is perceived to be empowering for the self-managing teams with a question that the literature cannot answer. So I want to fill this gap in the literature by studying what leader behavior is perceived to be enhancing the four abovementioned factors and therewith the level of empowerment. Additionally to filling the gap in the literature, practical advice can be given to the leaders of self-managing teams about how they have to address this issue.

On basis of this, I have formulated the following research question:

In what way can the behavior of the coach manager enhance the empowerment of the self-managing teams in the health-care sector?

2. Literature review

The authority and accountability that are given to self-managing teams (Wagemans, 2001; Kirkman and Rosen, 1999; Marques-Quinteiro et al., 2016) is limited by the rules and goals set by higher management levels (Wageman, 2001). This indicates that, when the degree of self-management in teams is causally related to the performance of that same team, a theory that is supported by Carson et al., (2007) and Seibert et al. (2011), the performance of the team is influenced by higher levels of management, who have given the team certain amount of authority and accountability.

Rapp et al. (2016) developed a model where they linked Team Empowerment to Team Processes which they linked to Team Performance.

Figure 1



Source: Rapp et al., (2016)

They found evidence claiming that there were positive relations between the three variables respectively, which indicates the importance of team empowerment.

The literature identifies several behavioral aspects that in some way enhance the empowerment of self-managing teams. Seibert et al. (2011) found evidence that high-performance managerial practices like training, information transparency, decentralized decision making and involving team members in that process and an aligned compensation strategy were all positively related to empowerment. A supportive leadership style, where the leader should be a role model and give constructive feedback was also found to be positively related to team empowerment. Other researchers were more explicit in this, identifying the transformational leadership style (Zaccaro, Rittman and Marks, 2001) as really suitable for positively influencing the potency of the team, because transformational leaders *'energize, inspire and communicate high performance expectations'* (Kirkman and Rosen, 1999). It was also found that teams who were allowed to determine their own goals experienced to be more empowered than teams that did not have this authority (Kirkman and Rosen, 1999; Wageman, 2001), which might indicate that communicating high performance expectations is empowering because it implies the trust of the team leader in the ability of the team, but that the setting of goals should be left to the team itself, being empowering on the authority aspect. Additionally, Rapp et al., (2016) found evidence supporting that Team-Based HR and Organizational Supports were positively related to Team Empowerment. Team-Based HR and Organizational Supports can be compared to an important part from the measures used by Carson et al. (2007) to measure coaching given by the external leaders, whereas they also found evidence that coaching was crucial for shared leadership, and therewith authority, in teams to emerge. Seibert et al. (2011) also found that socio-political support, which can be compared to the Organizational Support identified by Rapp et al. (2016), was positively related to team empowerment.

Thomas and Velthouse (1990) identify empowerment as motivation that comes from within people, which can be generalized to teams, being that the motivation comes from within the empowered team. Langfred and Moye (2004) elaborated on this definition, arguing that authority leads to greater motivation in general, however, being varied by inter- and intrapersonal differences regarding authority, which means that authority is perceived different by people and under certain conditions (Endler, Kantor and Parker, 1994). Zaccaro,

Rittman and Marks (2001) also identified motivation as a form of empowerment. They used the transformational leadership style as they found that leaders working according to this style merged the personal goals of team members with that of the team, aiming for a clear and shared purpose that team members are motivated to work towards, which is one of Wagemans (2001) conditions for a real team. Being a real team means that the members participate more in a network which is positive for their sense of potency, an empowering factor (Manz, 1990).

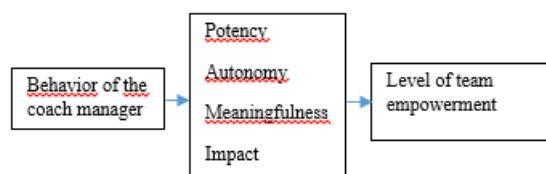
There are several behavioral aspects that have a positive relationship to empowerment. However, the literature points out that despite these aspects being positive they lie close to undermining the level of empowerment that the team experiences. Morgeson (2005) found in his study that almost any form of involvement by the external leader, whether it is preparation or active, supportive coaching is considered a negative influence by self-managing teams. Only leader sense-making in highly disruptive situations is perceived to be effective and therefore positive by the self-managing teams. This finding was also supported by Kirkman and Rosen (1999) as active involvement in management of the team by the external leader undermines the level of autonomy of the team, leaving it less empowered. However, Rapp et al. (2016) found in their research that outsiders, such as team coaches were frequently better able to empower teams than external team leaders are. This implies that there are certain aspects that are perceived valuable to the team, yet they cannot be provided effectively to them by their external leaders. This might have its cause in the fact that many external leaders are reluctant to help their team to get self-managed and empower them, as that means that they are losing control over the team (Rapp et al., 2016; Kirkman and Rosen, 1999). The team therefore can also be resistant to trusting their external team leader having the best intentions with the team, while this resistance does not exist when it comes to external team coaches because they do not have authority to lose.

Communicating high performance expectations should be done by the coach manager (Kirkman and Rosen, 1999; Wageman, 2001) but as communicating actual goals is perceived to be undermining the level of empowerment, it is possible that the actual goalsetting should be done by the team members themselves. Therefore, initiating leadership, which focusses on the organization of work, the work relationships and goals of a team (Robbins and Judge, 2003) is not appropriate. This way of leadership would undermine the autonomy of the members of the SMT instead of being an empowering way to lead. Instead, a considering way of leadership, which focuses at relationships, helping each other, *mutual trust and respect for the employees' ideas and regards for their feelings* (Robbins and Judge, 2003, p.215) seems to be more appropriate. This form of leadership leads to an increased motivation, which is one of the primary goals of the coach managers, motivate the members of the SMT's as empowered teams are teams that perform better than teams that are not empowered (Rapp et al., 2016). Yukl (1989) identifies the essential behavior of team

leaders as influencing team members, building relationships, giving and seeking information and decision making. He perceived influencing as, among others, motivating the team members, also identified as an important factor from considering leadership. Team building and supporting the team was identified as an important aspect of building relationships, also a factor from considering leadership. In SMTs it is important for the coach managers to provide the teams with autonomy, a condition that is already so by definition, but that can be varied upon as leaders are more or less free to decide how much authority they want to delegate to their team. Another behavioral aspect of external team leaders and coaches from SMTs is their flexibility with regards to decisions that are taken by the team members. Coaching is also an aspect that is identified as a behavioral characteristic from leaders from SMTs (Druskat and Wheeler, 2003).

On the basis of the literature, which identifies potency, autonomy, meaningfulness and impact as leading factors for empowerment, I made a model. This model contains the four abovementioned variables, that are preceded by the behavior of the coach manager. This represents the influence of the behavior on the four variables. The four variables on their turn precede team empowerment, which represents the relationship between the four variables and team empowerment, as is identified by the literature (Seibert et al, 2011; Kirkman and Rosen, 1999).

Figure 2



Rapp et al., (2016) state that *‘to their knowledge, this is the first study to examine how team-oriented behaviors emanating from team coaches and external leaders influence team empowerment, and ultimately processes and performance’*. I cannot agree with this completely as the meta-analytical study from Seibert et al., (2011) also assesses the influence of external team leaders and coaches on the team performance. However, more insight is needed in what behavior of the coach manager has a positive influence on the team performance and under what conditions these behavior comes to its full potential. The goal of this research therefore is to find out which behavioral aspects of the coach manager that enhance the empowerment of the team are perceived valuable by the members of the self-managing team and how this behavior can be best showed to the teams, keeping in mind the above mentioned struggles like resistance to trust and meddling in the affairs of the team by an external team leader being negative for the team empowerment. By this findings, a gap in the existing literature can be closed and practical advice can be given to the team leaders on what behavior to show in order to get the highest level of empowerment in their teams.

3. Methods

Research context

The research was conducted in the health-care sector and more specifically in the organization Livio. This is a Dutch organization that offers care in the region of the city of Enschede. The organization employs approximately 2500 employees who are divided over 60-80 teams. Recently Livio switched from the traditional hierarchical structure of leadership to self-managing teams. The intention of the research is to investigate the concept of self-managing teams in an organization that works with self-managing teams in the health-care sector. As this organization fulfills both conditions it was chosen for the research.

Research design

The design of a research should make sure that the evidence that is gathered is helping to answer the research question in an unambiguous way (De Vaus, 2001). It is therefore important to make a research design, which consists of the research question, the research method and the empirical evidence in which the research method is aiming at finding empirical evidence that can be used to answer the research question (De Vaus, 2001). To be able to do this, it is necessary to decide what kind of evidence is needed for finding out what behavior of the coach manager is perceived to be empowering. On the basis of this, the most effective way to gather this data can be identified.

The research question is: ‘In what way can the behavior of the coach manager enhance the empowerment of the self-managing teams in the health-care sector?’. In order to be able to answer this question, it is necessary to investigate which behavior of the coach manager is perceived to be effective. Once this is known the focus can be laid on how these coaching activities can enhance the level of empowerment.

The research had to be done to gain new insights in this field of study, as it is a relatively young field in which there is a gap in the literature. Exploratory, qualitative research aims at finding new insights in the how’s and why’s (Marshall, 1996; Kothari, 2004), which is the case in this research too. The data will be gathered at a specific point in time from a population, making it cross-sectional data from a cross-sectional study (Dooley, 2001).

Interviewing

A semi-structured way of interviewing seemed the best way to gather data as it gives some structure, but it is also flexible, not restraining the interviewer to just stick to the questions noted in advance. It also provides freedom to elaborate on the answers that are to be given by the interviewees and gaining deeper insights in discussions with the interviewee by asking follow-up questions on basis of these answers. An additional advantage of semi-structured interviews is that it allows the interviewees to express themselves in their own words (Cohen and Crabtree, 2006; Lonhurst, 2003), which is profitable in this situation as the study aims at finding out more about

the perceptions of the team members about the team leader behavior. This freedom of expression gives the interviewees a chance to express what they feel and think. These characteristics are true for focus groups too, however with focus groups there are two disadvantages that can occur: 1) the participants can just say what the rest says too, not thinking actively about new perspectives, ideas etc. that are not brought to the table yet; 2) the participants can go ‘free riding’, thinking that someone else in the group will come with stuff to talk so that they can listen without active participation from their side. With interviews, it is possible to ask for examples and questions that arise about the examples can be asked to the interviewee, enabling the interviewer to gain a deeper insight in the situation.

Sample

The sample can be relatively small, as the sample should be large enough to be able to answer the research question. This finds its reason in the fact that after several interviews, new insights and perceptions will stop coming, called data saturation, indicating that the sample size is large enough. According to research, this effect might already occur when the sample size is 10 (Marshall, 1996; Guest et al., 2006). With this study, the aim is to reach the data saturation point, however whether it is going to be reached is also influenced by the limited possibilities at Livio, the research organization. The only unit of analysis in this study is the behavior of the external team leader, which will be studied in only one organization, two indicators of a case study (Scapens, 1990)

Operationalization

Table 2: The operationalization of the research variables

Variable	Definition	Questions
Behavior of the coach manager	The behavior of the coach manager contains the building of relationships within the team, respect the employees' ideas and feelings and supporting the team in its wishes and needs. Delegating autonomy is a crucial thing to do for the coach manager SMTs, as well as being flexible with regards to the decisions that the team members make. Coaching and motivating the team members are also important behavioral trait for coach managers (Robbins and Judge, 2003; Yukl, 1989; Druskat and Wheeler, 2003)	In what way can the coach manager enhance the team's feeling of potency? How can the coach manager enhance the level of autonomy of your team? How can the meaningfulness of the team be enhanced by the coach manager? In what way can the coach manager enhance the experienced impact of you and the other team-members?

Table 1: Information about the sample

	Function	Team	Location	Duration of interview
R1	EVV	Team A	Enschede	00.40.30
R2	Nurse 5	Team A	Enschede	00.47.10
R3	3IG	Team B	Boekelo	00.40.27
R4	3IG	Team C	Enschede	00.36.07
R5	Nurse 4	Team D	Haaksbergen	00.30.16
R6	Nurse 4	Team E	Haaksbergen	00.32.27

Reliability

Despite the fact that the reliability of qualitative data is often not such a big issue, as the perception of the researcher is of great importance for the data gathering process, there is researchers bias. This means that the researcher is subjective in choosing what he deems relevant for the research (King et al., 1994; Le Comte, 2000). In order to eliminate this researcher bias as much as possible and get inter-coder reliability, I have encoded together with a fellow student, an effective method that is often used to increase the inter-subjectivity of qualitative data (Burla et al., 2008).

Validity

The validity of the data that is to be gotten from the interviews should be measured using the research question, as the aim of this study is to gain a deeper insight in the behavioral aspects that are enhancing empowerment. *'Validity refers to the appropriateness, meaningfulness and usefulness of the specific inferences made from the measures'* according to Dooley (2001) on basis of American Psychological Association (1985, p9). So whether this data is valid is to be measured by checking whether the answers from the interviewees are about the behavior of the external team leader that they perceive to be enhancing their team empowerment. To draw conclusions from qualitative data obtained from a case study, one must be careful, as validity of such data is not lost, but generalizing conclusions is dangerous (Siggelkow, 2007).

Team autonomy	Team autonomy means the level of freedom that the team experiences to make their own decisions ;	To what extent do you and your team have freedom to take decisions without consent of your coach manager? What capabilities do you need to do your job?
Potency	Potency is about the capabilities of the team, so to what extent they are capable to do their job in a SMT;	What factors show the importance of your work to you?
Meaningfulness	Meaningfulness means the extent to which the team members find their own work important;	How do you notice that your work is important to Livio as an organization?
Impact	Impact is about the perception of Livio about the work of its employees and what they notice from that; (Kirkman and Rosen, 1999; Seibert et al., 2011)	
Team empowerment	When a team is empowered, it means that they are intrinsically motivated to perform. A high level of autonomy is an important leading factor for team empowerment, but potency, meaningfulness and impact add to the team level empowerment too (Thomas and Velthouse, 1990; Zaccaro, Rittman and Marks, 2001)	In what way does this autonomy add to your motivation to perform? Till what extent do you get motivated from the capabilities that you have? How does this meaningfulness add to your motivation? How does this impact add to your motivation?

The table above shows the different variables that I used to operationalize this research, their definitions and the questions through which I measured these different variables. The operationalization of the different, but related concept is in the following way: first the interviewee was asked about, for example, the team autonomy, so to what extent the team had freedom to take decisions. After that, I asked how the coach manager could enhance the autonomy of the team, to finally conclude with questions about the influence of the team autonomy on the motivation of the employees.

Coding the data

In order to be able to use the data that is gathered, it should be transformed into results, a process which is called analysis. However, qualitative data is till certain extent always biased, as it are human beings who gather the data and they make choices based on their interests and sense-making (Le Comte, 2000). Because qualitative data is not countable, it is much harder to analyze than quantitative data. For coding the qualitative data of this study, and to create structure in this data, the method of Le Comte (2000) will be used, which consists of the following 5 steps:

1. Tidying up the data, which means that the field notes, transcriptions etc. will be stored in a neat way;
2. Finding units of analysis, which means that units that are relevant to answering the research question will be identified;
3. Creating categories of units of analysis, which means that the units will be grouped into taxonomies that are relevant to answering the research question;
4. Creating patterns of these units of analysis, which means that the taxonomies will be put into logical patterns;
5. Creating groups of related patterns, which means that the related patterns will be clumped together to form a structure;

In the process of encoding, I identified the four leading factors of empowerment as themes. These themes form the basis for the whole encoding process. In the interview questions, I carefully grouped the questions per theme, first asking the interviewee about a specific theme, then about the ways that the interviewee thinks that the coach manager's behavior can enhance that theme, to conclude with the question whether the theme had a motivational function for the interviewee. I followed the same order with encoding, looking first for aspects that the interviewee linked to, for example, potency. This is what I have called the categories. After that, I looked for ways that the interviewee indicated that they thought the coach manager's behavior could add to their level of potency and in which way. In the encoding process, this were called the codes, which represent the aspects on which the coach manager's behavior can have influence in a specific way. These were followed by quotes, which indicated the actual behavior that the coach manager can show to enhance the level of potency. Finally I asked the interviewees whether their level of potency enhanced their feeling of empowerment. I followed this procedure for the four themes, which resulted in several categories. All the categories go with codes and quotes about how the team members see that the category is connected to the particular theme.

4. Results

Potency

Table 3: Categories and codes of potency

Categories:	Theme: Potency
Giving feedback	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advice from the coach manager about feedback Lobbying for formal training
Being flexible	Coach manager's authority should be used to forcefully enhance flexibility of team members
Cooperation with regards to team tasks and specific tasks as a team's sum is greater than its individual parts (Katzenbach and Smith, 1993)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Give openness about team performance to enhance involvement of team members Advice from the coach manager about communication Lobbying for formal training
Dividing team tasks using general capabilities and affinities	Identify team tasks suitable for rotation and divide according to general capabilities and affinities
General experience and capabilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facilitation with learning materials Lobbying for favorable team circumstances

In the table above, five categories about potency are identified with several codes. Below, the quotes that go with the codes are worked out.

Giving feedback

From the interviews, several capabilities that were considered important by the employees came to light. To start with, giving feedback was identified as an important capability for members of SMT's. The team members considered it the task of the coach manager to give them advice about how to give feedback in a constructive way, and they found it important that a training regarding this subject was offered them by Livio. Some employees indicated: *Some colleagues experience feedback as an attack* and others said *Epecially giving feedback about someone's flexibility regarding the roster is difficult, as that is some private area.*

Being flexible

Another capability that was considered important by the employees was being flexible, especially regarding the roster. Since the introduction of the SMT's, more openness was given in the financial performance of the teams, which gave the employees insight in the costs of extra personnel. Many teams had negative financial performance for a long time, a problem that they solved by rostering in a more efficient way. However, to make this efficiency possible, more pressure on the flexibility of the employees was necessary. As employees said: *you need to be flexible in order to be able to make a roster and in case of sickness of one of the colleagues, the team must solve that problem by themselves. In this case, some colleagues are always willing to come and work more, while others are not so flexible in such cases.* This results in an uneven balance of hours that are worked, which means that some team members work much more than they should according to their contract, while others structurally work less than they should. According to the employees, this flexibility had grown significantly in the

last 2 years, however it is still not always good enough. In such cases, the team has already tried to solve the problem, but failed. At this point, the employees *want that the coach manager solves this problem, using the authority that she has.*

Cooperation

A third capability that came to light during the interviews was the cooperation of the members of the SMT's, where cooperation contains the approach of team tasks together, and also helping each other with specific tasks in care. Since the introduction of SMT's the employees started to realize that they have to do it together now, without the help of some manager that takes care of all of the team's problems at the moment it gets somewhat more difficult. According to the employees: *this awareness pressured the members to focus on their cooperation skills, as well as that it made them more involved in the affairs of the team.* The team members found that being more committed to each other also had advantages, as they indicated that *lines for discussion are short because hindering layers of management ceased to exist. Being a member of a SMT made us also aware that using each other's knowledge was often the easiest way to freshen up your mind about specific tasks that don't occur often.* Here lays an opportunity for the coach manager as she needs to give openness about the team performance to enhance the level of involvement of the team. Another aspect of cooperation that was indicated by the members of SMT's was communication, as they found it *very important to be able to communicate very well* and they saw communication as *a necessary component for good cooperation.* The task for the coach manager here is to give advice about effective and constructive ways to communicate as well as that she should try to arrange formal training about communication.

Capabilities and affinities

The teams were told that the team tasks should be rotated so that on the longer term, all the team members would be able to execute all the team tasks, enhancing their flexibility. This brings us to the fourth aspect regarding potency that was brought up by the team members. They indicated that *it is important to let the people choose team tasks on basis of their capabilities and affinities. For example rostering, recruitment and keeping track of the financial performance of the team are tasks that require very specific capabilities. And for rostering and the track-keeping it is important that the people executing this tasks do have some affinity with it, while the tasks require quite some time every week.* To stimulate the effective execution of the team tasks while at the same time fulfilling the requirement from Livio as much as possible, the coach manager should identify which tasks are suitable for rotation and which are not. After that she should keep track of whether the team rotates the tasks that are suitable, so that on the long term, the flexibility of the team members is as big as possible.

General experience and capabilities

The fifth aspect regarding capabilities that was indicated by the employees was the general experience and the capabilities that are a necessity to have when working in

the care sector. *An electronical learning portal is in place, so the coach manager cannot do much to enhance these skills. She only reminds us every once and a while that we have to keep our qualifications up to date.* The coach manager can do two things to enhance the general skills of the employees. To start with, she can facilitate the team members with literature, congresses etc. to update their knowledge, and secondly, she can make the conditions for the teams better, causing the results to be better: *when the workload is too heavy, our performance will drop. Not because we are not competent any more, but too large amounts of stress cause deterioration of our performance because we start forgetting things.* The coach manager should do everything in her power to make sure that there is enough personnel in a team to divide the workload in an efficient way.

Autonomy

Table 4: Categories and codes of autonomy

Categories:	Theme: Autonomy
Solving problems and the shift of the problem owner	Coach-manager should behave as a back-up for when teams cannot handle the problems themselves
Doing things as the team wants	Coach-manager should give the teams the freedom to decide against her advice
Increased insight in financial performance	Openness should be given about the team's budget and autonomy about the way it is spent
Division of autonomy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The coach-manager should divide the autonomy on basis of the team's performance and with consultation of the team The coach manager should reward the teams with autonomy when they are performing well

In the table above, four categories about autonomy are identified with several codes. Below, the quotes that go with the codes are worked out.

Problems and their owner

Several aspects of autonomy came to light during the interviews. To start with, the way in which the team solved its problems and the shift of the problem owner. Some teams have, unconsciously, been dealing with their own problems for a long time as their team manager, in the old situation already bounced the problems with a little piece of advice with the message that the team members should solve it themselves. *Since the introduction of SMT's it has become even tougher, as the problem should now, actually, be solved by the team without that piece of advice.* Other teams indicated that *the problem, which had been theirs already, should now also be solved by the team, being the problem owner.* They mentioned this shift to be *sometimes difficult, but other times challenging, and in the end stimulating for the sense of responsibility of the team.* According to the team members, *coach managers should be there as a back-up for when things get more difficult than we can handle.* On the basis of this, it can be concluded that the coach manager should not intervene too fast, as teams identify the process of problem solving as challenging,

stimulating and adding to the sense of responsibility of the team, an advantage that goes away at the moment that the coach manager handles the situation. Other teams, performing less well and being under a lot of stress, at least partially due to being understaffed, mentioned that *sometimes the workload is already heavy enough with general tasks. At such moments, problem solving should be done by the coach manager in order to not burden the team any further.*

Growing as a team

Another aspect of autonomy that occurred was that some teams decided against the will of Livio, while they used the argument: *we want to develop as a team, so implementing rules that we all disagreed with seemed to be a bad idea. Luckily for us, some other teams did the same and in the end, Livio gave some ground on this aspect.* Till certain extent, the coach manager should give the team autonomy to decide against her advice and that of Livio as long as the team has good reason for doing so and it is not proven that the way of working that way is worse than the recommended way.

Increased openness in financial performance

The openness about the team's financial performance that Livio has given to the SMT's and the team task that goes with that worked really motivational for the teams. However, not all teams are treated equally on this point, as some indicated that they are *very entrepreneurial, organizing small projects for example about PR for Livio, for which we can spend some budget, while such projects are stimulated by the organization.* Other teams said they *have a budget, but we cannot spend it in the way we want. For everything we buy, permission of the coach manager should be asked.* This was indicated as a lack of autonomy, which was perceived to be demotivating. The coach manager should treat the teams as much as equals as possible and also give them authority about the budget.

Division of autonomy

Another aspect that was mentioned was wrong division of autonomy, where *some things that are currently done by the team should be done by the coach manager and vice versa.* This opinion means that the division of autonomy was not right, as on some parts the autonomy from the team was too high, and on other parts too low. The coach manager should divide the level of autonomy on the basis of two things: the performance of the team and also by consulting the team, not following, but using their opinion in a choice. This is linked to the following: *Autonomy is a reward for good performance. Our performance is a reason for our coach manager to trust us, resulting in freedom to spend our budget in the way we want, but also to order things needed for the care of our clients without explicit permission till €1000,-, a formally set limit from Livio.* This autonomy resulted in a higher sense of responsibility, causing teams to be better able to provide each other with feedback. This on its turn leads to better performance of the team, so it is a constructive, upwards circle.

Meaningfulness

Table 5: Categories and codes of meaningfulness

Categories	Theme: Meaningfulness
Use of knowledge to perform and/or coach	The coach manager should give freedom to teams to coach each other instead of creating special departments for that
Quality of work in the sense to be able to spend enough time and resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The coach manager should act to improve or stimulate the improvement of the knowledge and skills of the team members The coach manager should take care that enough resources are available
Appreciation from the client	The coach manager should act so that the team members can give care on a level as high as possible
Pleasure about job	The coach manager should aim for favorable team composition and circumstances

In the table above, four categories about meaningfulness are identified with several codes. Below, the quotes that go with the codes are worked out.

Knowledge

Several dimensions through which team members saw the relevance of their work on an individual basis were found during the interview. Knowledge was one of them, where some indicated: *using my knowledge where the client misses it, so I can add value there, is the most important part of my job*. Others said: *using my knowledge to teach others, making them more capable of doing their job without having to ask for help the whole time is really important for me*. The coach manager can add to this to stimulate the knowledge of the team members, which is already discussed more extensively under potency. Another aspect where the coach manager can stimulate the coaching behavior among team members is to pressure that instead of the traditional special departments where team members used to be able to ask questions. With coaching, lines are shorter, involvement is bigger and care can be given better.

Quality

Another indicator of meaningfulness was quality of work, as people found the fact that they *could take care for people, giving them some personal attention next to it*, the most important aspect of relevance in their job. This means that they could take enough time and resources to help their clients in the best way possible. Lying close to that, but not exactly the same is *appreciation from the client*, something indicated as the most important factor of relevance by others. It is not exactly the same as quality because not everybody expresses their appreciation, while the quality of the care is the same, leaving absolute quality as a more intrinsic and appreciation more as an extrinsic motivational factor. The coach manager's task here is that she should enhance the knowledge and skills of the team members or stimulate the development thereof. In addition to that, she should provide the employees with enough resources to do their jobs as good as possible.

Pleasure

My work is meaningful to me as long as I go to work with pleasure in the morning, was a factor that was identified relevant by others. However, one employee indicated that she does not always have pleasure in her work, her most important indicator of meaningfulness. This finds its reason in the fact that the workload and amount of stress was too high due to the team being understaffed. So to add meaningfulness for this team member, the coach manager could try to attract extra staff. This would, till certain extent, relieve the workload and amount of stress that is experienced by the team members which, in the case of the interviewed member, would add to her perceived meaningfulness.

Impact

Table 6: Categories and codes about impact

Categories	Theme: Impact
Appreciation from the Coach Manager	The coach manager can make compliments to the team members about their performance or effort
Appreciation from the organization	The coach manager can lobby for more indirect time for the team members to do their team tasks
High production: numbers about performance of the team (external audit)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The coach manager can communicate numbers about the production of the team members as proof of their performance and effort The coach manager can influence the composition of the team to improve their performance

In the table above, three categories about impact are identified with several codes. Below, the quotes that go with the codes are worked out.

Appreciation from the coach manager

The interviewees indicated several factors that add to their perceived impact. To start with, the appreciation from the coach manager was important to some of the employees: *the coach manager shows her appreciation with our performance, and also mentions her content with our team, our development of becoming a SMT in particular*. Someone else indicated: *the coach manager bounces question from other teams, that are addressed to her, through to me because of my knowledge. This can then be used throughout other parts of the organization*. Others indicated: *the coach manager finds it important how we feel, I appreciate that a lot. However, she doesn't give us enough compliments, while there is always something that we can/should improve. Our team needs a compliment every once and a while, as we all give a lot of effort*. Naturally, the behavior of the coach manager can do some good here. As teams give her some feedback too, she should apply that in the very best way she can, continue with what is appreciated and improve where necessary.

Appreciation from the organization

Another aspect of perceived impact was the appreciation from the organization, which means higher up in the chain of command. Two kinds of reactions came to light here. On the one hand, some teams indicated that the

CEO had been in their team, interested in the flow of events in their teams, in their opinion about Livio and in possibilities and options to improve. They indicated that this was perceived to be very thoughtful and that it was appreciated a lot. On the other hand, other teams said: *we are good to get the job done but, contrary to our coach manager, Livio does not seem to care how we feel, nor seems it to do the utmost to improve the situation for our team.* Some added to that: *team tasks are indirect time, meaning that Livio needs to pay us but no income is generated at that moment. Livio wants us to be self-managing so these team tasks are an inevitable consequence, but they do not want to give us enough time for that. That is not fair.* Till what extent the coach manager had influence on that was unknown by the employees, but they found that it was the coach managers job to at least do her utmost to solve this situation, giving the teams somewhat more breathing space as some *don't do specific team tasks that were not so relevant because of a lack of indirect time.*

Performance and production

Another way of appreciation from Livio to the teams were *numbers about the production of the team* meaning that there is data about the amount of clients that teams serve on basis of which the teams are evaluated. Someone else said: *there was an external audit, where our performance as a team, especially regarding self-management, was rated. On the basis of this audit we were complimented as our performance is really well.* The coach manager may be able to influence these numbers about production, and the performance level. The interviewees who gave these answers gave as reason for their performance that *they had a great team which is the major leading variable for this.* So by sending members of well-functioning teams to less well-functioning teams, she might be able to positively influence the performance of all the teams together. The coach manager could consider to interchange team members from different teams, especially from teams with a top performance and those from poor performing team in order to let the team members from the other teams and enhancing the performance of poorly performing teams.

Motivating factors

Table 7: Empowering factors

Factor	Impact on empowerment of the team
Potency	Being capable is perceived as an important empowering factor by the team members as it adds to the performance
Autonomy	Having autonomy motivates the team members as it frustrates them to be in a bureaucratic system and it allows them to do their job better
Meaningfulness	Importance of the job on an individual level adds to their motivation to do their jobs
Impact	When the organization considers their jobs important adds to their motivation to perform for that organization

In the table above, reasons are mentioned why the several factors were considered to be empowering. More extensive descriptions are given in the foregoing chapter where the results from the interviews are mentioned and explained.

5. Discussion

Several aspects were found on which the behavior of the coach manager was perceived to have a positive influence. Despite the influence of the coach manager was not perceived to be equally divided over the four abovementioned leading factors of empowerment, from the interviews I learned that there was a way for the coach manager to influence all four of them. In the following part, these ways are described in more detail, examples are given and practical implications are given for the coach managers of SMT's.

To start with, the coach manager could stimulate the team members to update their knowledge and provide them with literature, congresses etc.. The electronical learning portal is an ESS which is perceived to be effective and easy to use. The coach manager can only stimulate her team members to also actively use the portal in order to become and stay as potent as possible. Formal training and a supportive organizational structure were identified as enhancing aspects for the empowerment of a team (Seiber et al., 2011; Rapp et al., 2016; Carson et al., 2007). Wagemans (2001) identified being capable as one of the four factors of being a real team. She investigated that a team being capable and autonomous felt responsible for its performance and kept track of that performance, and with that information always tried to improve. So adding to the level of potency of the team is a fruitful thing to do, and the employees identified the facilitation of literature, congresses etc. as an effective way to do so. Another way to make the team members more capable, especially regarding being a member of a SMT was to provide training in giving and receiving feedback and communication. The employees indicated that giving each other feedback was essential for boosting performance, and that it was, together with communication, a crucial factor for cooperation. However, they also said that it was really difficult to give feedback in an effective way and that clear communication was hard too. Therefore they would appreciate training regarding these two aspects, as it would boost their performance as caregivers and members of SMT's.

Another capability that was indicated as important by the team members was being flexible. However, in their opinion it is hard to give feedback about someone's flexibility, as that is some private area. Therefore it was considered that it was a good thing that the team had a coach with more authority who could give feedback about such sensitive subjects. Another two aspects were mentioned about the authority of the coach manager. To start with, team members, especially from teams that were not so far in the development of being a SMT indicated that they were glad that the coach manager had more authority than anyone else in their team as a back-

up for difficult situations, so that she could take final decisions when the team could not come to an agreement. Teams that were further in the development process indicated the same, with the difference that the last time that they used this opportunity was a long time ago. Another aspect from the coach manager as back-up which was also recognized by the teams was positive coaching, which means that the coach manager provides some advice in case of problems and gives informal rewards in case of success as a SMT (Morgeson, 2005; Wageman, 2001; Kirkman and Rosen, 1999). The second thing that was mentioned about the authority was that, according to the team members, the tasks were divided in the wrong way, meaning that some tasks they were responsible for should be under the authority of the coach manager and vice versa. This came to light during an interview with a team that was not performing so well with regards to being a SMT. These aspects that were found mean that the coach manager should get a clear picture of the progress of the team in the process of becoming a SMT. She should also get insight in the extent to which the team is ready to pick up certain team tasks. On the basis of this she should figure how the autonomy should be divided between her and the team. In this decision, she should on the one hand consider the input of the team, as that will increase the chance that the final decision that she will make will be supported (Cawley et al., 1998) and so that chance of undermining the performance is reduced. On the other hand, the coach manager should make a decision that challenges the team and stimulates the team members in their progress of becoming a SMT. When the coach manager provides the teams with authority on the basis of this, she deals with the different perception of autonomy that teams have due to their circumstances and their interpersonal differences (Langfred and Moye, 2004; Endler, Kantor and Parker, 1994).

Livio made some regulations about the team tasks, which say that every team member should be responsible for a specific team task for one year, after which tasks were rotated. This system was invented so that every member could do every team task. Employees pointed out that they were partially satisfied with this system, which is worked out more extensively in the next paragraph.

The appreciation from the coach manager meant much for the team members. They consider it important that the coach manager is showing her appreciation to them and they indicated that being heard was one thing, but being listened to was another. In general they thought the coach manager was doing well on that part. However, there is always room for improvement: the team tasks should be rotated every year so that everybody could perform every task. The employees indicated that they found that a reasonable demand from Livio, however they think that certain team tasks as rostering, keeping track of financial performance and recruitment should be excluded from this regulation as these tasks demand for a great deal of specific, non-regular capabilities and affinity with the task was important too as the tasks cost a lot of time on a regular basis. Therefore, they indicated that the coach manager should respect the autonomy of the team on this

point, and let them decide whether a task is suitable for rotation. In this way the coach manager acknowledges the experience of the team members and takes their opinion in consideration, which is identified as empowering (Wageman, 2001; Seibert et al., 2011). However, this could result in some difficult situation on the long term, as people responsible for a crucial task fall ill. Therefore, the coach manager should carefully identify which team tasks are not suitable in this system, and then take care that at least two team members can get away with this task, in an as subtle way as possible, or by creating support for this approach.

Appreciation from Livio as an organization was another important factor for the employees. However, indirect time, hours for which Livio has to pay them, but no income is generated, is a point of discussion. This doesn't add to the feeling from the employees that Livio considers them important. Therefore, they indicated that the coach manager should do everything in her power to give them more room for breathing on that point. Giving the teams several tasks that before always had been done by several layers of management but expect them to do it in their own time is not perceived to be fair.

Another aspect to add meaningfulness is to take care that the team is not understaffed. Being understaffed heavily undermined the meaningfulness of the team members as they were under a lot of stress, which also negatively influenced their performance. Therefore, the coach manager should do everything in her power to find personnel to ease the burden of workload. This is another aspect of a real team that was identified by Wageman (2001) as she stated that a real team also meant a supportive organizational context. The coach manager is one aspect of such a context. This problem of being understaffed also undermined the perceived impact of the employees. This finds its reason in the fact that they get the feeling that Livio does not do whatever possible to solve the problem, despite the fact that the team members regularly notify the organization with their problem and that they quickly need a solution.

The coach manager could also consider to interchange team members from different teams, especially from teams with a top performance and those from poor performing team. Despite the arguments in favor of this idea are good, it has several disadvantages too. The first reason for doing this is the exchange of ideas, in particular, those members from a top performing team can implement their experiences in the poor performing team and the members from the poor performing teams can learn from the top performers. The second reason is that members from top performing teams can start missing a challenge when everything goes smooth. The third reason in favor is that autonomy is given to teams as a gesture of trust, and that this autonomy on its turn has a positive influence on the team performance, a reason for coach managers to trust a team. These top performers joining a weaker team can boost the performance, giving the coach managers a reason to trust the team and give them more autonomy, on its turn boosting the performance again. So in theory, it is a continuous,

upwards circle. However, there are disadvantages too. The first one is that some practice that is working in one team is not guaranteed to be working in another. So a top performing team can use certain practices that work really well for them, but that do not work in another team. A second disadvantage is that there must be support for this structure, as top performing team members must be willing to leave their easy spots and the weaker performing team members must accept the member from the other team to come in their midst and share his experiences and opinions. That person, at least at first being some sort of outsider and/or intruder needs to be accepted for this structure to work. However, in one of the teams this structure already took place because of an unfortunate team that was understaffed, which had a large negative influence on their performance. A member of another team, that was, according to her, performing well, but it could be better, indicated that she expected a positive influence on the performance if this structure took place.

Implications

All in all, this research has given dimension to broad terms that were used in the literature as Team-Based HR, Organizational Support and High-performance Managerial practices. Behavioral aspects of the coach manager that enhance team empowerment are discussed. An example thereof is that the coach manager should provide teams with more autonomy and she herself taking more a coaching role on the basis of the performance of the team. Another example is that the coach manager should persuade the organization that the teams need certain elements to effectively do their jobs. Indirect time to perform team tasks is one of them. The coach manager should 'fight' for the teams to get this in a satisfying amount. This also brings practical implications where coach managers should identify the needs and wishes of the teams in order to provide them with what they need, want and are able to handle. When the coach manager cannot provide the team with an element that is considered necessary, she should do whatever is in her power to get this.

could be made for coach managers to use and adapt their behavior to in order to come concede to the wishes of their team members.

Limitations

As this research was conducted as a case study, data was gathered at one specific point in time. This is a weakness about this study as it is therefore impossible to compare the level of empowerment at one point in the progress with another point. This weakness was compensated partially by interviewing teams that are in different stages of development as a SMT. This way, I could still identify the needs of the teams in several points in the process of development. A second limitation of the study was that there was not enough input for data saturation to occur. A lot of information was gained from the interviews that have been held, but every interview brought a new, different perspective to light, so it is an interesting question what insights would have been gained if more interviews had been conducted.

Future research

This brings to implications for future research. To start with, a broader study among members of SMT's should be held, including more members with several backgrounds. During the interviews it was found that employees with different educational backgrounds seemed to have slightly different insights and wishes regarding the behavior of the coach manager. However, no conclusions could be made on basis of this as the sample was not big enough. Despite these differences being relatively small, it does not mean they are not important, nor that they cannot make a difference, so therefore more research is needed on this.

Another aspect of future research is that the behavioral aspects of the coach managers that are indicated to be empowering by the members of SMT's should be compared on the basis of hard, quantitative data about the performance of the team and the point where that specific team is in the process of becoming a SMT. On the basis of this, conclusions can be drawn about whether there is a difference between the perceived effective behavior of the coach manager in order to enhance the empowerment of a poor performing team and a top performing team.

6. Conclusion

As Livio continues to invest time, resources and effort in the process of creating, developing and empowering SMT's, it is really useful to know what the behavior of the coach manager can add to this process from the teams. Literature so far only mentioned the relevance of this behavior in vague, broad terms. This study provides with a detailed approach on how the behavior of the coach manager can add to the empowerment of the SMT's. Practical implications for coach managers are given and although I do not suggest that this research covers everything that can be mentioned about the behavior of a coach manager of a SMT that is perceived to have a positive influence on the empowerment of the team. However, this research adds to the body of literature about team leader behavior and empowerment of SMT's and the practical implications that can be given to coach managers.

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9. Appendix

Interview protocol

On the basis of the constructs, the following questions, which will be basis of a semi-structured interview, are developed:

1. How do you experience potency in your team?
2. In what way can the external team-leader enhance the teams feeling of potency?
3. How do you experience the relationship between potency and the intrinsic motivation of your team?
4. What level of autonomy does your team have?
5. What level of individual autonomy do the team members have?
6. How can the external team-leader enhance the level of autonomy of your team?
7. How do you experience the influence of the team-level of autonomy on the level of empowerment of the team?
8. Which factors do add to your feeling of meaningfulness?
9. How can these factors be positively influenced by the external team-leader?
10. How do you experience the relation between meaningfulness and the level of empowerment of the team?
11. Which factors add to your feeling of impact on the organization?
12. In what way can the external team-leader enhance the experienced impact of you and the other team-members?
13. How do you experience the relation between the perceived level of impact of the team and the intrinsic motivation of the team?